

# Tow Canada

September-October 2007



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## Ontario

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**10**  
**WAYS**  
to Cut Your  
Fuel Costs

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# 10 Ways

# to Cut Your Fuel Costs

Here are proven ways to reduce fuel consumption.

Fuel represents one of the highest business cost, after labour, for organizations involved in transport, logistics, and other fuel-dependent services. Understandably, as fuel prices continue to rise, everyone wants to reduce exposure to rising costs.

We've compiled the top ten ways to help businesses reduce fuel consumption and therefore fuel costs.

**1. Train and educate drivers.** With proper training, your drivers can be your best way to improve your fleet's fuel efficiency. Eco-driving and fuel-saving strategies can make a huge difference to efficiency, economy, and emissions. Hard acceleration, speeding, and idling are the biggest causes of fuel waste. Initiate a training course for your drivers, reward participation, reward efficiency, and encourage seasoned drivers to participate in regular refresher courses.

**2. Decrease idling.** Letting an engine idle more than three minutes will harm efficiency. It also quickly consumes fuel that could otherwise be used for doing something productive. Excessive idling can add 50% to fuel costs and shorten the life of engine oil by 75%. Initiate a campaign to reduce idling, and reward those who participate. For long-haul rigs, mandate the use of engine idling alternatives such as shore power, generators, and inverters.

**3. Start off slower.** The first one off the line pays more for fuel—a lot more. Countless studies by universities, highway authorities, and engine manufacturers prove it. Jackrabbit starts save less than three minutes over 60 minutes of driving but end up using 40% more fuel and increasing toxic emissions by 400%!

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**4. Slow down.** It's not just dangerous; speeding also wastes fuel. Highway speeds over 100 kilometres per hour drastically impact fuel efficiency.

Cars travelling at 120 km/h instead of 100 km/h use 20% more fuel to cover the same distance. Trucks travelling at 120 km/h instead of 100 km/h use 50% more fuel. They also emit 100% more carbon monoxide, 50% more hydrocarbons, and 31% more nitrogen oxides—so, if drivers aren't endangered enough by speeding, there are all the toxic emissions, too.

**5. Lose weight.** Carrying excess weight places unnecessary strain on your vehicle's engine and greatly affects its fuel efficiency. Removing as little as 100 pounds from your vehicle can significantly improve your gas mileage.



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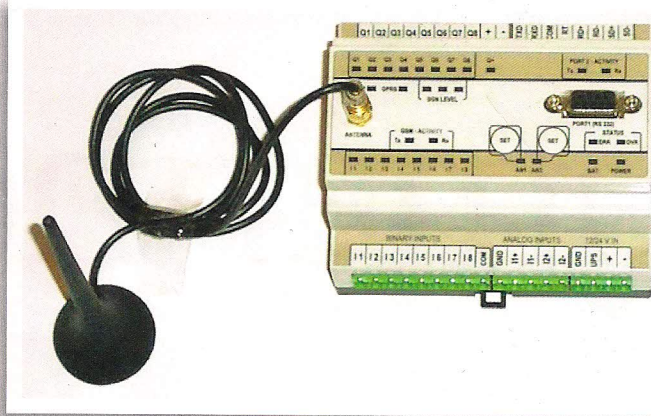
**6. Use a fuel management system.** Fuel management systems are the most powerful way to lower fuel costs and increase fleet productivity. Systems range from simple onsite refuelling (which saves up to 20 minutes per day per vehicle) to automated fuel tracking (which details every litre pumped into every vehicle by date, time, quantity, and fuel type) to telematics (which measures fuel efficiency, vehicle performance, and fuel waste due to idling, speeding, etc., and identifies critical areas where efficiency can be improved and fuel costs and emissions can be reduced). The technology exists. Look into it.

**7. Upgrade your fleet.** Whenever possible, invest in modern fuel-efficient vehicles. Today's modern diesel engines are far more fuel efficient, and they perform better with current diesel fuels such as ultra low sulphur diesel and biodiesel. While it might seem that the capital cost of new vehicles would raise overall costs, fleets which have upgraded to new diesel vehicles have reported savings of thousands of dollars in maintenance, fuel, and productivity per vehicle.

**8. Tune up your vehicles regularly.** Be sure to give your vehicles frequent tune-ups. A well-maintained vehicle performs better on the road, has decreased maintenance costs, and offers improved fuel efficiency.


**9. Pump it up.** Proper tire inflation not only improves gas mileage (it can save as much as two weeks' worth of fuel per year) but also yields several other benefits, including improved vehicle and braking performance and increased tire life.

**10. Implement advanced mobile asset management technology.** Advanced mobile asset management technology can help you "get your arms around"



Have you ever considered a fuel management system?

your fleet vehicles and extract valuable information on their performance, including: total miles travelled, average speed, and engine efficiency. This advanced technology can also help drivers and operators optimize routes with route planning and mapping software and eliminate thousands of unnecessary miles per week. Less time on the road ultimately translates into less wear-and-tear on vehicles, reduced fuel consumption, decreased expenditures, and increased productivity.

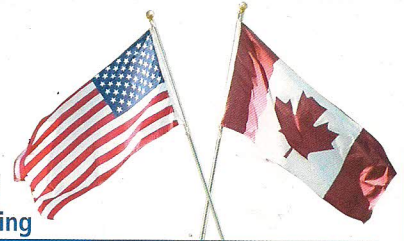
Making your fleet operations more efficient saves fuel—and that means you save money. With the cost of fuel only headed upward, it is time to take a hard look at these ten tips for cutting your fuel costs. 

By Nelson Hudes

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