

# Ten ways to cut fuel costs



## The Fuel Expert

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Remember the good old days...about a year and a half ago? Prices at the pumps were hovering below a dollar per litre and they stayed the same for weeks. Well, the good old days are gone forever and today we live in a world where fuel prices seem to go up by the hour. Now pundits speculate on living with oil prices running up to \$200 US per barrel.

As consumers many of us have adjusted our lifestyles. For companies, the good old days meant fuel up and go. Little attention was paid to managing fuel, but now fuel management is a necessity.

Any company can improve their fuel efficiencies. It takes work and commitment from the head office to your people on the road and at the job sites. More and more companies are making changes in their operating practices to cut costs now and to be prepared for even higher costs in the future.

### To help you adjust, here are 10 ways to cut fuel costs:

- **Train and educate your drivers:** Your drivers can control fuel consumption each time they fire up their engines, and proper training can improve fuel efficiency, economy and emissions. Hard acceleration, speeding and idling are the biggest causes of fuel waste. Initiate a training course for drivers and reward participation.
- **Decrease idling:** Be aware of the time engines idle. Excessive idling adds to your fuel costs by as much as 50% and can shorten the life of engine oil by 75%. Initiate a campaign to reduce idling time and reward participants. It all adds up.
- **Start off slower:** This is another lesson your drivers must be taught. Jackrabbit starts waste fuel and save less than three minutes per hour driving, but can result in using 40% more fuel and increase toxic emissions by 400%! Ease up on the gas pedal and your efficiencies will improve.
- **Slow down:** Speeding is dangerous, it wastes fuel and it creates higher levels of toxic emissions. Speeds over 100 km/hour drastically impact fuel

efficiencies – cars travelling at 120 km/hour use 20% more fuel. Trucks travelling at 120 km/hour use 50% more fuel and they also emit 100% more carbon monoxide, 50% more hydrocarbons and 31% more nitrogen oxides.

- **Lose weight:** Excess weight places unnecessary strain on your vehicle's engine and greatly affects its fuel efficiency. By removing as little as 100 pounds you can significantly improve your gas mileage.
- **Use a fuel management system:** This is the most powerful way to lower fuel costs and increase productivity. Available systems range from basic onsite refuelling (which saves up to 20 minutes in wasted time and fuel each 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 overall fuel efficiency, vehicle performance, tracks fuel waste due to idling, speeding, etc. and identifies critical areas to improve efficiency and reduce fuel costs and emissions.) The technology exists, and it can work for you.
- **Upgrade your fleet:** Whenever possible, invest in modern, fuel-efficient vehicles. Though it may seem expensive, new diesel vehicles can save thousands of dollars in maintenance, fuel and productivity per vehicle.
- **Tune-up vehicles regularly:** Do you have a stringent, well-managed maintenance policy? A well maintained vehicle performs better, improves fuel efficiency, reduces toxic emissions and, in the long run, will cost less to maintain.
- **Pump it up:** Proper tire inflation improves gas mileage.
- **Implement advanced mobile asset management technology:** You can measure and manage your fleet better when you have the right information. This information will help your drivers and managers optimize routes with better planning.

Once you have made a total commitment to managing your fuel better and changing some of your bad fuel habits, results will follow. Stick with it.

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