Rising Gas Prices Affect Vehicle Purchase Decisions

5 Gas Saving Tips From the Editors of Kelley Blue Book

Gas prices in the U.S. are climbing steadily again with the national average already more than $2.00 a gallon. Experts in the industry are currently forecasting that gas prices will reach the $3.00 mark by summer. A recent study from Harris Interactive and Kelley Blue Book Marketing Research indicated that 41 percent of in-market car buyers have either changed their minds or are thinking strongly about vehicles they normally wouldn't consider due to high gas prices. And in February 2005, 30 percent of car buyers indicated that if gas prices rose a mere 25 cents (based on a national average of $1.99 per gallon for regular unleaded), they would seriously consider a more fuel efficient vehicle.

"Over the last five months we have seen a slow and steady decline in large SUV consideration. Additionally, shoppers have been telling us that even small increases in gas prices will lead them to consider more fuel efficient models," said Rick Wainschel, Vice President, Marketing Research, Kelley Blue Book. "We have never hit the $3.00 a gallon mark. If we hit that mark, it could be an interesting sales season. We will continue track purchase intentions and vehicle sales as fuel prices climb."

If you do a good amount of driving, you might as well save a few dollars on gas this year. Here are a few things the editors of Kelley Blue Book recommend, no matter what type of vehicle you own.

1. If your vehicle does not require premium grade gas but you use it anyway, it is ok to change to a lower grade to save a few dollars. In fact, you may find that you get better fuel economy with a lower grade of gasoline. Try two tanks of each of the lower grades and see for yourself. (Check your owners manual first, if your vehicle requires premium grade gasoline, stay with a premium grade.)

2. Four tanks of gasoline with an engine and valve cleaning additive like Techron or V-Power can clean your fuel injectors as well as most professional grade cleaners. Clean injectors will help your vehicle get better gas mileage.

3. Turn off or lower your air conditioning, but don't roll down your windows. Both create drag on your car, requiring more gas to keep up your speed. It takes about 5-8 horsepower to run the air conditioning. Using the recirculation feature is another option. Of course if it's more than 80 degrees outside, you may want to run the air intermittently.

4. Check your vehicle's air filter and tire pressure. A clogged or dirty air-filter can slow your vehicle down and use more gasoline. A clean filter will promote less gas waste. Under-inflated tires could also cause excessive drag, slowing the vehicle down and using more gas. This could become a safety hazard as well.

5. Accelerate normally from a fully stopped position and avoid flooring or stabbing the gas pedal. The flooring or stabbing action pushes more fuel to the engine than is needed to move forward.

And, if you are in the market for a more fuel-efficient vehicle, Kelley Blue Book's editors recommend logging on to kbb.com for New Car Blue Book pricing, reviews and further shopping research of the following 2005 model year vehicles.

RANK	MAKE/MODEL	CITY	HWY
1	2005 Honda Insight	61	66
2	2005 Toyota Prius	60	51
3	2005 Honda Civic Hybrid	48	47
4	2005 Volkswagen Golf	38	46
	2005 Volkswagen New Beetle TDI		
	2005 Volkswagen Jetta TDI		

5	2005 Toyota Echo	35	42
6	2005 Toyota Corolla	32	38
7	Scion xA	31	38
8	2005 Honda Accord Hybrid	29	37
9	2005 Dodge Neon	29	36
10	2005 Hyundai Accent	29	33

In contrast, there are several great looking vehicles on the road today, but they don't get the greatest gas mileage. Some of those vehicles include the Hummer H2, The Dodge Ram SRT 10, which both get about 10 miles per gallon. Other great luxury vehicles get few miles per gallon like the new Volkswagen Phaeton, Mercedes S-Class and G-Class. Keep in mind, most high-end sports cars get fewer miles per gallon because of their high performance engines.

For more information on new vehicles, log on to www.kbb.com.

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Kelley Blue Book is the most trusted vehicle information resource by both consumers and the auto industry. The company provides research tools and up-to-date pricing on thousands of new and used vehicles, including the company's New Car Blue Book Value, which reveals what a new car is actually selling for. Since 1926, car buyers and sellers have relied upon Kelley Blue Book for authoritative and unbiased information to make well-informed automotive decisions. The company reports vehicle prices and values via products and services including the famous Blue Book Official Guide™, software and Internet site, kbb.com. Kbb.com has been rated the No. 1 automotive information site by Nielsen//NetRatings as well as No. 1 and first visited automotive site by J.D. Power and Associates seven years running. No other medium reaches more in-market car-buyers than kbb.com; one in every four American car-buyers complete their research on kbb.com.

SOURCE: Kelley Blue Book

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