NACFE
NORTH AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR FREIGHT EFFICIENCY

Driver Tips for Increasing Fuel Economy

1 Watch your speed

A simplified rule of thumb is every mile per hour driven over 60 mph reduces fuel economy by one-tenth of a mile per gallon. A truck traveling at 65 mph will experience a fuel efficiency increase of about 27% compared to a truck traveling at 75 mph.

2 Drive at a constant speed

When you accelerate you burn more fuel. Continually slowing down and speeding up is an inefficient way to drive.

3 Find the engine's sweet spot

The sweet spot is the most efficient RPM at which to run the engine. Running your engine in its sweet spot requires that you drive at a constant speed that is usually slower.

4 Avoid harsh braking

Every time you touch the brake pedal you lose energy. Two of the best ways to reduce braking are to anticipate changes in traffic and follow at an extended distance.

5 Accelerate smoothly

Fast, hard acceleration wastes fuel and is hard on the engine. Try to anticipate acceleration points so you can use the appropriate amount of acceleration for the situation.

6 Check tire inflation pressure

Underinflated tires result in decreased fuel efficiency and increased tire wear. A 0.5-1.0% increase in fuel consumption is seen in vehicles running with tires underinflated by 10 psi.

7 Check condition of aerodynamic devices

Make sure all aerodynamic device are in good condition with no dents, rips, tears or dangling parts. Minimize the tractor-to-trailer gap.

8 Use cruise control

Cruise control helps maintain a consistent speed and avoids unnecessary accelerations and decelerations. Adaptive cruise is even better; use it if so equipped.

9 Minimize idling

A 10% annual reduction in idling is worth about 1% in fuel economy, translating to about $300 to $500 annually at $3.00/gallon fuel prices and 100,000 miles/year. Drivers are also a very important — if not the most important — part of successful management of idle times. Use a windshield curtain or solar reflector to keep heat loading out of the cab.

10 Watch your interval

Keep the appropriate amount of distance between you and the vehicle in front of you based on sped and road condition. This helps eliminate harsh braking.

11 Optimize routing/Reduce out-of-route miles

Take the shortest and quickest reasonable route with the least stops to your destination. Plan to avoid rush hour traffic.

12 Minimize shifting

If you are not using an automated transmission, minimize the number of shifts you make. Every time you shift the engine, rpms increase and you burn fuel. Try to shift to the next highest gear while still at a low rpm.

Bonus Tip

Drive like you are on ice all year round.

For more information on freight efficiency visit nacfe.org

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