

Save Money and Clear the Air

“Eco-Tips” for Owning and Operating a Motor Vehicle

There are many reasons to practice good vehicle maintenance and to take steps to reduce your vehicle’s impact on the environment and public health. A properly maintained vehicle will last longer, pollute less and save fuel.

What's the problem?

Motor vehicles are the number one cause of air pollution in Oregon. Vehicles in Oregon produce over 119 million pounds of air pollution consisting of carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, benzene and smog-producing hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides *each day*. Traffic congestion and air pollution will only increase as the population of Oregon continues to grow.

Save money and help clear the air!

Avoid excessive idling. Excessive idling wastes fuel and can actually reduce the life of your vehicle. Newer vehicles (think “catalytic converter”) are designed to warm up in 30 seconds or less, even in “cold” weather.

Remember, you live in Oregon, not Antarctica. Get in, turn on and drive slowly for the first few blocks.

Turn your engine off if you're waiting for an extended period of time. Contrary to popular myth you typically don't use more fuel restarting your vehicle. If you wait over 10 seconds to restart your vehicle, you are saving fuel.

Say “NO!” to topping off the tank. Fuel spilled when your tank is over-filled usually evaporates and pollutes the air we are trying to breathe. Topping off also produces excessive gasoline vapors that contribute to bad ozone days and are a source of toxic air pollutants such as benzene.

Remember you pay for the gas that evaporates or is spilled on the ground. Be kind to yourself and your gas attendant even if they offer!

But let's also take a moment to bust the myth about topping off. Urban legend suggests you will get more fuel. Hardly. Actually there are several things that can happen and none of them are good including: the gas is spilled on the ground, the gas is trapped in the vehicles vapor recovery system until it evaporates or the gas backflows via the vapor capture on the pump nozzle and returns to the stations underground

tanks. Regardless, *you are paying for gas that never reaches your tank!*

Care for your tires. Keep your wheels aligned and your tires properly inflated to increase fuel efficiency and make them last longer. Studies show that a 7 psi under-inflation can result in 10% increase in rolling resistance. Under inflated tires can lower gas mileage up to 1 mile per gallon. Check the tire pressure once a month.

Combine errands to make fewer trips. Your vehicle burns more gas and pollutes more in the first few minutes after a cold start then when warmed up and operated for longer periods. Combine trips or seek alternative modes of transportation like walking, biking or public transit.

Watch your speed. The average vehicle loses nearly two percent in gas mileage for every mile per hour over 55. Driving at high speeds also causes tires to wear out sooner because rubber breaks down faster at higher temperatures. Why do you need a speeding ticket anyway?

Drive smoothly. Over-accelerating and braking quickly are hard on your vehicle. If you can drive smoothly, you'll save up to two miles per gallon. Fast starts use up to 50 percent more gas than slower starts. That stoplight two blocks away is probably still going to be red after you race up to it and screech to a halt.

Travel light. Clear out the trunk. For every 50 pounds of junk you lug around, you lose ¼ mpg. When not needed, remove rooftop cargo carriers to reduce drag and fuel consumption.

Avoid evaporation. During the summer fill up when it's cool to reduce hydrocarbons released by gasoline evaporation. These hydrocarbons create smog! Replace a lost gas cap. Also...

Choose your vehicle wisely. If you're shopping for a new vehicle, consider fuel efficiency as an important factor in your long-term investment.

Don't ignore the light. In newer vehicles, the check engine light on your dashboard will turn on if the on-board computer on your vehicle senses something is awry with your emission control equipment. Visit your mechanic and have your vehicle checked.



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Environmental
Quality

Air Quality

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www.deq.state.or.us

If you don't have a check engine light but your car sounds different, is running rough or emitting smoke visit your mechanic sooner rather than later. Small inexpensive repairs can turn into large expensive headaches if left unchecked.

In the Portland and Medford areas you can visit a DEQ Clean Air Station and receive a voluntary emissions test to help determine if your vehicle needs repair. There is no charge for a voluntary test, however, you cannot use the results to renew your DMV registration. Why wait and risk more expensive repairs later?

Patronize an Eco-Logical Business

The Eco-logical Business Program for Automotive Services recognizes Oregon auto repair shops that reach the highest standards in minimizing their environmental impact. See www.ecobiz.org for the latest list of certified shops.

Recycle your used car products

Exhaust isn't your vehicle's only environmentally harmful by-product. Most fluids from your car are toxic and must be handled carefully. You can dispose of many used and unwanted car products properly at a household hazardous waste facility. They'll recycle them or dispose of them safely. Batteries, tires, antifreeze, gasoline, motor oil and oil filters, diesel fuel, brake fluid and automatic transmission fluid can be recycled.

- **Antifreeze** is toxic to pets and harmful to humans. Don't pour it down the drain. Store used antifreeze in its original container.
- **Batteries** contain lead and acid that can be recycled. These materials can contaminate ground water if not disposed of properly.
- **Used motor oil** can be recycled at the curb in the Portland area. Pour the oil into an unbreakable, see-through container with a screw-on lid like a milk jug. Never pour oil down a household or storm drain where it can travel directly into streams and underground water sources or disrupt waste-treatment facilities.
- **Tires** can be recycled but services vary across the state. Idea: Check with your local tire dealer for disposal suggestions. Never burn tires. It's illegal. Tires emit highly toxic and noxious smoke when burned.

Also, if you live outside Metro boundaries or if you have business-generated waste, call (503) 234-3000 for additional options.

Alternative formats

Alternative formats (Braille, large type) of this document can be made available. Contact DEQ's Office of Communications & Outreach, Portland, at (503) 229-5696, or toll-free in Oregon at 1-800-452-4011, ext. 5696.

For more details, call Metro Recycling Information at 503-234-3000.

