



"serving those who serve us"

Monthly Newsletter

Summer Driving Update

The AAA indicates that a record number of families and individuals will be taking to the roads this summer for vacations and "getaways" despite gasoline prices currently hovering around the \$3 per gallon rate. Your Employee Assistance Program wishes to pass on some current information to make your summer driving as cost-effective and problem-free as possible!

The Cost of Speed: While we may not be able to do much to decrease the cost of gasoline, we can certainly do a lot to decrease our vehicle's rate of gasoline consumption. Researchers at the U.S. Department of Energy recently released the chart below, which illustrates the fuel efficiency and expenses for an average car traveling 500 miles with gasoline costing \$3 per gallon:

<u>Speed</u>	<u>MPG</u>	<u>Gallons</u>	<u>Cost</u>
55	32.4	15.4	\$46.30
60	31.4	15.9	\$47.77
65	29.2	17.1	\$51.37
70	26.8	18.7	\$55.97
75	24.8	20.2	\$60.48

So if your summer vacation involves a round trip of 2,000 miles, locking in your speed at 55 rather than 75 mph will save you a total of \$56.72.

The Cost of Scams: The Environmental Protection Agency warns that manufacturers of products and devices claiming to boost mileage are offering solutions in the form of "pills, powders, liquid additives and mechanical devices." Among these are magnets attached to the fuel line that "realign" fuel molecules, "vortex generators" that allegedly create mini-tornadoes inside the engine's combustion chamber and "top secret gas pills" that claim to boost fuel efficiency by 30% while cutting emissions.

The EPA and the Federal Trade Commission have tested more than 100 products that claim to boost fuel efficiency. All of them failed to demonstrate significant gains in mileage. According to EPA spokesman John Millett, "These claims tend to rely on magical thinking. If it really were a magic bullet, we would know about it." Master mechanic Ed Kriston, based in Towson, MD, whose shop is "highly rated" by the AAA Mid-Atlantic, says, "When gas prices go up, this stuff comes out of the woodwork. My advice is to keep air in the tires and make sure your vehicle is serviced before any long trips."

To review the Federal Trade Commission's analysis of all these devices, go to www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/auto/gasave.htm.

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