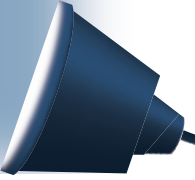


SPOTLIGHT: Gas Prices



Gas prices change all the time. During price spikes, many of us look at our driving habits to find ways to cut costs. While fuel economy can vary based on the type of vehicle you drive, there are some practices that can help you conserve fuel and stretch your dollar. **The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs (SCDCA)** offers these tips to help you get the most out of a gallon of gas:



- **Avoid dramatic changes in speed.** Rapid acceleration and hard braking impact your fuel economy as much as 15 to 30% on the highway and 10 to 40% in the city. Using cruise control can help maintain a constant speed and save gas.
- **Drive under 50 mph when possible.** It's estimated that each 5 mph over 50 mph will cost you an extra 22 cents per gallon of gas.
- **Combine trips to minimize the number of "cold starts."** Several short trips can use twice as much fuel as one trip covering the same distance on a warm engine.
- **Don't idle with the AC running before your drive.** Most AC systems will cool faster while the vehicle is in drive. To put less demand on your AC, start your drive with the windows open to let hot air out of the cabin. Turn on the AC after the cabin temperature has cooled down.
- **Empty your trunk.** An extra 100 pounds in the trunk can reduce a typical car's fuel economy by up to 2%.
- **Take advantage of fuel rewards programs.** Many gas stations offer discounts or rewards to those who register a phone number or download their smartphone app. Some credit card companies also offer cash-back rewards for purchases made with their card.
- **Use websites or apps that track cheap prices.** Sites like the U.S. Department of Energy's [fuel economy website](#) can help you find the gas station in your area with the lowest fuel price.

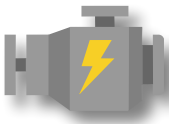
Maintenance Tips



- **Inflate your tires to the recommended pressure.** Find the information in your owner's manual or on the sticker in the driver's side door jamb. This number may be different than what's on the tire's sidewall.



- **Get regular maintenance checks.** Worn spark plugs, brake issues, transmission problems and faulty sensors are just some problems that can impact your fuel economy.



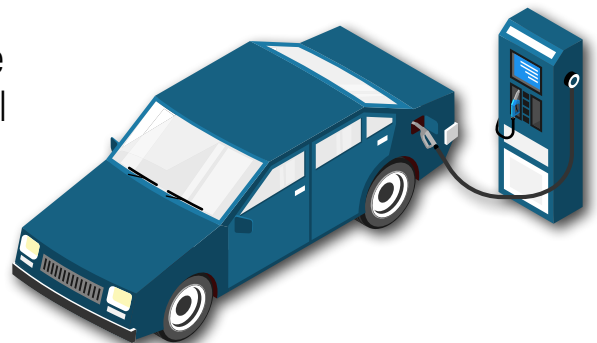
- **Don't ignore the check-engine light.** Even if your car seems to be working properly, it may alert you to a major problem.
- Additional fuel-saving tips can be found at [fuelconomy.gov](https://www.fueleconomy.gov).

Price Gouging

Seasonal price changes are not against the law. Supply and demand, changes in the global market, geopolitical events and natural disasters may all play a role in the price that stations charge.

South Carolina's price gouging law goes into effect when a State of Emergency is declared. Instances of suspected price gouging can be reported to the Office of the Attorney General by emailing reports to pricegouging@scag.gov, or calling (803) 737-3953.

Additional information on how to report possible violations can be found on the Attorney General's [website](#).



SCDCA strives to create a healthy marketplace through education, complaint mediation services, regulatory filings, and guidance for identity theft victims. Access our resources at consumer.sc.gov.

South Carolina
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
(800) 922-1594 • consumer.sc.gov

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