



Sustaining Dunbar

Travel Advice Fact Sheet 9 - Eco-Driving, Car Sharing, Car Clubs and Greener Cars

There are times when the car is the only realistic option for a journey, but you can still keep your carbon footprint to a minimum by using eco-driving techniques, arranging a car share or using your local car club. When replacing your car, consider greener options and buy the smallest car practicable for your circumstances.



Eco-Driving

You don't have to get rid of your car or change it to save money on fuel and help the environment. By adopting eco-driving techniques and looking after your car a bit more, you could save up to 15% in fuel bills. As well as saving money and fuel, eco-driving will reduce wear and tear on tyres, gearbox and clutch. Regular maintenance will ensure engine efficiency.

Top Eco-Driving Techniques

Shift to a higher gear as soon as possible - change up between 2,000 and 2,500 revs.

Anticipate - drive smoothly, anticipating road conditions ahead. Avoiding sharp acceleration and heavy braking will save fuel and reduce emissions.

Maintain a steady speed. - Driving at a steady speed requires little effort for the engine, considerably reducing fuel consumption.

Drive a bit slower - the most efficient speed is usually between 45 and 50 mph. If you travel at 70 mph you could be using 10% more fuel than at 50 mph. Stick to 70mph on the motorway. By travelling at 80-85mph, fuel costs can increase by 25% or more.

Switch off air conditioning - unless absolutely necessary. However, at speeds above 50mph keeping the air conditioning on low is better than opening a window, which would increase drag and fuel consumption.

Take off your roof boxes and roof racks - if you don't need them, again they increase drag.

Remove unnecessary luggage - the less you carry around, the more miles you'll get from the gallon of fuel. Ditch the buggy, golf clubs and four man tent that you've been lugging around for months.

Switch off your engine if you are stuck in traffic or waiting for someone - Switching off your engine if it's safe and you're not going to be moving for more than a minute, will save you even more money, and reduce pollution.

Keep your tyres at their recommended pressure - tyres which are not inflated properly cause poor road holding and dangerous driving. They are also responsible for excessive drag and resistance, increasing fuel consumption.

Buying a Green Car

If you want to buy a greener car, have a think about what you will be using the car for:

- What mileage will you be doing?
- What sort of driving will you be doing?
- In town or motorway?
- How big does your car have to be? For maximum savings, you should buy the smallest car possible. You can always hire a large car if necessary.
- How will you be using the car? Daily or just now and again? If it is just now and again, perhaps a car club would be a better option for you. It is estimated that if you do less than 6,000 miles a year, joining a car club could save you £3,500 each year. There is more about SpareWheels, Dunbar's car club later on.

Look at fuel efficiency figures. All new cars will have a fuel efficiency label, or you can go online to www.dft.gov.uk/vca/fcb/new-car-fuel-consump.asp or visit the energy saving trust website www.energysavingtrust.org.uk. If you do not have access to a computer, phone them on 0800 512012. The difference between the most and least efficient family cars could be as much as £1000 in extra fuel and 2 Tonnes in CO₂ emissions each year. Some examples of fuel efficient, low CO₂ cars are:



88-124g/km CO₂
Smart fortwo Cabrio - Diesel



129g/km CO₂
Nissan Qashqai Pure Drive - Diesel



148g/km CO₂
Lexus RX - Petrol Hybrid

Low CO₂ Car...



104g/km CO₂
Ford Focus 1.6 Estate Economic - Diesel



89g/km CO₂
Toyota Prius - Petrol Hybrid



114g/km CO₂
Volkswagen Passat Saloon Bluemotion - Diesel



Fuel Choices

Diesel is more efficient, so has lower CO₂ emissions, but emits more non-CO₂ pollution such as nitrogen oxides and other small particles which can cause health problems. If you are thinking about a diesel car, make sure it has a good filter. If you need a family saloon, it might be worth considering a hybrid car such as a Toyota Prius or a Vauxhall Ampera which have both a petrol engine and an electric motor, reducing emissions by between 25 and 50%. Totally electric cars come in a small range of sizes, mostly at the smaller end, and are expensive to buy but there is a government plug-in car grant of £5000 available, and you won't have to pay road tax. It is estimated that you can do 100 miles for £2 worth of electricity.

Using the Car Less

The best way to reduce CO₂ from travel is to use your car as little as possible, especially for shorter journeys. Almost half of the car journeys in the UK are less than five miles, the minimum distance needed to get your catalytic convertor working. The conventional combustion engine is only 20% efficient and cold engines are less so, using nearly twice as much fuel, so think about walking or cycling for short journeys instead. This will save you money, improve your health and is a far more sociable option for journeys like the school run, giving you time to chat and spend some fun time with the kids.

Taking the bus or train whenever possible for longer journeys could also save you money, time (it's much quicker to take the train to central Edinburgh than drive) and give you time to relax or work as you travel. We can give you all the information you'll need to make the most of local buses and trains, with up-to-date timetables and factsheets to help you.

Another way to reduce your driving is to plan your activities. Make a list and buy all the groceries you'll need for the week in just one shopping trip and perhaps take your rubbish to the recycling centre at the same time. Arrange appointments so that you visit the dentist, optician and hairdresser at the same time. Internet shopping is another option to consider, and think about working from home whenever possible.

Car Sharing

This is an excellent way to reduce costs, congestion and CO₂ emissions; a 10% rise in car sharing would result in a 9% reduction in traffic, and it has been estimated by Tripshare.com that on average, you could save over £750 each year by car sharing. Basically, the passenger gives the driver a cash contribution towards the fuel costs, or if the driver and passenger share regularly, they may prefer to take turns to drive. Car sharing is becoming increasingly popular; it is estimated that over half of drivers would share a car to work if possible. If you commute to work, ask your employer if they have a car sharing scheme. There are also a number of online services available to make it easier to car share. Drivers can search for people to give lifts to, while passengers can search for lifts to their destination, and the cost of the travel is shared. The main car sharing website for the Dunbar area is www.tripshareeastlothian.com

Car Clubs

A Car Club is an organisation which owns cars and hires them out by the hour or by the day to its members. Members are attracted by the convenience of having easy access to a car without the hassle of actually owning one. It has been estimated that if you drove fewer than 6000 miles last year, joining a car club could have saved you £3,500.



Dunbar's local car club, SpareWheels has four cars for hire to its members: an electric Nissan Leaf, a Ford Fiesta, a Mini One and a 7-seater Mazda 5. Joining SpareWheels is easy and costs only £25, with hire charges from £4.75 per hour, plus 13p per mile. This includes all taxes, fuel, insurance and maintenance. To find out more phone 0845 602 8030 or visit the website at www.sparewheels.org.uk.

Other Opportunities

Energy Saving Scotland offers eco-driving lessons to help you get better fuel efficiency. The cost is £12, and there's no test at the end! To book your lesson, contact www.energysavingscotland.org.