

Los Angeles City Fire Department

TRAINING BULLETIN

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TRAINING BULLETIN NO. 20

FUEL CONSERVATION/DRIVING PROCEDURES

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INTRODUCTION

Controlled tests have demonstrated that fuel conservation of at least 10 percent is possible through proper vehicle operation, use, maintenance, and trip planning. Good driving habits can be developed and should be put into practice by all members.

A large trucking company recently conducted a controlled experiment to determine what effect driving habits might have on fuel economy. Results from the test indicated a 17.4 percent improvement in fuel economy could be achieved through a combination of training, speed control, and rewards for utilizing proper driving habits. This report went on to say that drivers make or break a fuel conservation program. Training and positive reinforcement are the keys to fuel-efficient driving.

VEHICLE OPERATION - NON-EMERGENCY

Proper driving technique is the most important factor in fuel conservation. Following are some fuel saving tips:

1. Abide by the maximum speed limit of 55 miles per hour. Most automobiles get about 18 percent better mileages on the highway at 50 miles per hour (mph) than at 65 mph. The average vehicle on the road today gets its best fuel economy at approximately 45 mph. In tests conducted at a Nevada test site, it was found that by increasing speed from 40 to 70 mph, fuel economy dropped by 25 percent.
2. Avoid prolonged idling. If the delay is more than one minute, turn off the engine. The recommended time for warming up an engine is 30 seconds to one minute.
3. Use a light foot when accelerating from a stop or out of turns. Test have proven that "Jack Rabbit" starts and fast "get aways" can burn over 50 percent more gasoline than normal acceleration.
4. Be extremely observant and drive defensively. This allows you to plan ahead and avoid needless braking and reaccelerating which is one of the greatest wastes in city driving.
5. Maintain a steady speed on the highway, varying speed only 5-mph can reduce economy by as much as 10 percent.

VEHICLE OPERATION - EMERGENCY

1. At emergency incidents, apparatus engines should not be allowed to idle for prolonged periods of time. As soon as it is practical, apparatus should be legally parked and warning lights should be shut off to eliminate the electrical drain on the batteries.

2. Maximize the use of individual apparatus pumping capacity.
3. Shutdown engines of apparatus engaged in manifolding operations where the pump is not needed.
4. Use hydrant pressure rather than running the engines on the pumps whenever practical.

VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

Proper maintenance is a sure and easy way to improve fuel mileage. Special attention should be given to the following areas:

1. Keep all tires-inflated to the recommended tire pressure. For every two pounds under recommended pressure, you lose about one percent in fuel economy. Tire pressure should be checked when the tires are cold.
2. Keep the engine in a well-tuned condition by performing necessary maintenance when required. An out-of-tune engine can drop mileage by a minimum of 10 percent, and will greatly increase the amount of pollution the vehicle produces.
3. Keep track of fuel consumption; this is an excellent way of monitoring vehicle condition.

TRIP PLANNING

Planning ahead can eliminate needless driving. Consider the following where possible.

1. Consolidate short trips. Avoid as many cold starts as possible - warm oil makes for much better gas mileage.
2. Use the telephone whenever possible instead of making a trip. A check should be made with neighboring stations before making trips to a common destination such-as Supply and Maintenance or Headquarters.
3. Leave for your destination a little early. Avoid trying to make up time on the road. Always think about fuel economy while you drive.
4. Use a car pool when possible.

CONCLUSION:

During the previous fuel shortages the cooperation and loyalty of members were responsible for the Fire Department being recognized as the leader in fuel conservation for all City departments. During present times of tight budget restraints fuel conservation is still important. As a driver of either a light vehicle or heavy apparatus, the success of a fuel conservation program is up to you.

Remember . . . The most important fuel saver of all is driver attitude.