

How to be fuel efficient in your van

Spiralling fuel costs, sky high town centre parking charges, congestion charging—all of these factors have recently made running your van which is an integral part of your business an expensive drain on your resources. But don't give up and resort to a horse and cart to keep your customers. There are other ways to save on your transport costs, so now is the time to get creative, reduce unnecessary spending and drive those costs down.

Cut your spending on fuel

Fuel prices rocketed last year, with the price of crude oil peaking at just over \$147 per barrel in July 2008. Prices have gone down significantly since then, but the prices at the pumps have failed to match the falls. Here's how to save on your fuel costs.

- Shop around: Prices at the pumps vary from station to station, but driving around looking for the cheapest fuel just uses more. You can shop around for the cheapest prices for petrol, diesel and LPG by using free price check websites (check out petrolprices.com), which are updated daily to tell you the cheapest petrol stations in your area.

The savings can really add up there can be a difference of as much up to 20p per litre for fuel between forecourts, so if you shop around, you could save hundreds of pounds per year.

- Drive carefully: You may be in a hurry, but putting your foot down to get there on time, stopping and starting and darting in and out of traffic could be draining your fuel and your wallet. Speed up more smoothly (and don't over-rev), drive in the highest gear possible for your speed (below 3,000 revs) without labouring the engine and don't brake hard. You'll go further for less if you remember these rules. Careful driving also leads to cheap van insurance premiums.

- Lighten your load: The more your van carries around, the harder the engine needs to work, and the more fuel you use. Check the back of your vehicle, de-junk it of any unnecessary weight, take off roof racks and roof boxes when you're not using them, carry only what you need and you'll save fuel and money.

- Check your tyres: Underinflated tyres make your engine work much harder to keep up the same speed, so you use more fuel. Check the manual to make sure you're using the right pressure and your tyres will work harder for you and easier on your engine.

- Open the window: In-car air conditioning runs off the engine, which uses up your fuel. If you're driving about town, open your window and get some fresh air instead.

- Think green when buying: if you're investing in a new van, find out about the fuel efficiency and official CO2 emissions for the model you want (have a look at greencarsite.co.uk). Most new cars and vans in a showroom have a colour-coded fuel efficiency rating as a guide to the running costs you can expect so you can compare how much different vehicles cost to run. Choosing a van with a greener engine means that you'll reduce your CO2 emissions, burn less fuel, and you'll also save money on your [commercial van insurance](#).

- Petrol or diesel?: Depending on the type of travel you do (i.e. mostly town or motorway), different fuel types can mean better fuel efficiency and fewer emissions. The type of fuel engine you choose can also affect the price of your van insurance.

Follow these tips for tip-top fuel efficiency, lower running costs and more cash in your pocket.

About the Author

Julia Niven: One Van Insurance search a panel of the UK's leading van insurers to find you a great deal on your van insurance.

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