



VIRGINIA
AUTOMOBILE
DEALERS
ASSOCIATION

1800 West Grace Street
P. O. Box 5407
Richmond, VA 23220
Phn: (804) 359-3578

MEDIA RELEASE

Contact:

Michael Allen
Director of Public Affairs
804.545.3012 *office*
804.301.1777 *mobile*
mallen@vada.com

Apparent Drop in Fuel Economy for 2008 Models: *No Actual Reduction In True Fuel Economy*

SYNOPSIS

- 2008 model-year vehicles may appear to have reduced fuel economy when compared to 2007 model-year vehicles.
- The EPA has updated its methodology for calculating vehicle fuel economy, last updated in 1984.
- New methodology is designed to more accurately reflect modern driving habits including vehicle operation at higher speeds, faster accelerations, and increased use of air conditioning.
- New vehicles continue to provide increased fuel economy on average over previous model years.
- Consumers can directly affect the fuel economy they actually experience through minor changes in how they operate their vehicles and how they maintain their vehicles.

WHAT

When compared to 2007 Models, 2008 model-year vehicles will appear to have reduced fuel economy. However, in actuality most will have improved their fuel economy. The way fuel economy is measured is undergoing significant changes. The new method of measuring the fuel mileage will more accurately reflect modern driving habits, as opposed to the fuel economy measurements previously obtained and reported.

The EPA last updated its testing methodology in 1984. Since that time Americans' driving habits have changed significantly. Starting with the 2008 model year, vehicles will be tested to account for higher speeds, increased use of air conditioning, and operation in colder temperatures.

WHEN

Fuel economy ratings using this new methodology will take effect with 2008 models, which began to arrive in dealerships as early as January 2007, but will become much more common in August and September. When compared with 2007 model year vehicles which will still remain in many dealership inventories, the 2008 model years may appear to achieve lower MPG ratings.

WHY

The Federal Government has updated the method of measuring fuel economy in order to more accurately reflect modern driving habits. Currently drivers have very different driving habits than those in 1984 including increased use of air conditioning and driving at higher speeds with more frequency.

HOW

The EPA is employing a new measuring system in which the cars will be tested in conditions more accurately reflecting modern driving habits. The new tests will be conducted in conditions which include increased in highway speeds, higher use of air conditioning, and quicker accelerations than in previous tests.

Consumers may perceive that vehicle fuel economy has decreased when in actuality there has been no change in the efficiency of modern vehicles. Most vehicles will actually provide increased fuel economy over previous years.

It is important to note that the fuel economy drivers actually experience may still vary from these EPA fuel economy ratings. These ratings are performed using standardized safe driving habits. Drivers who operate their vehicles outside of these safe driving habits (like exceeding the speed limit, accelerating quickly from a stop, and not properly maintaining their vehicle) will experience lower fuel economy.

IMPROVING FUEL ECONOMY FOR THE INDIVIDUAL CONSUMER

Fuel economy is based on different variables, and variations in how and where vehicle owners drive will affect the overall fuel economy. Slowing down is a key change that consumers can make to increase fuel economy. Each 5 mph over 60 mph is essentially paying an additional \$0.15 per gallon. Also, aggressive driving which includes rapid acceleration and braking uses excessive gas.

Consumers who properly maintain their vehicles and ensure that necessary maintenance is performed will maximize their fuel economy. This includes using the proper grade of oil, aligning and inflating tires appropriately, replacing the air filters, reducing vehicle weight by removing unnecessary cargo, and getting regular tune ups. Also, consumers should consult their vehicle's owners' manual for manufacturer scheduled service intervals.

Consumers need to be smart about driving. Carpooling, mass transit and telecommuting are all ways to save on gas, money and time in the long run.

LINKS

URL	SUBJECT MATTER
www.fueleconomy.gov	Gas Mileage Tips New Fuel Economy Ratings Energy Efficiency
www.epa.gov	Regulations & Standards What You Can Do
www.motortrend.com	Car Care Driving Lean, Driving Green
http://autos.yahoo.com/green_center-article_153/	What has changed Manufacturer's response
www.edmunds.com	Fuel Economy Guide Shop for Fuel-Efficient Cars