ECO-SAFE DRIVING

The effect of greenhouse gases has been a hot topic of debate and discussion amongst the international community in recent years, However we as citizens of the plant earth choose to do very little to safeguard the wellbeing of our future generations.

The global temperatures are predicted to rise by between two to three degrees and as a result the icecaps will melt causing severe fluctuation in weather conditions. Continent such as Africa will become barren land whilst other parts of the world will be ravaged by hurricanes, tornados wide spread flooding and devastation, countries whose altitude is near sea level such as Holland be submerged and will disappear altogether under the sea.

To give an idea about how immense the problem of the amount of pollution we are pumping into to the environment, hold your arms out at sides like the person in this illustration, and imagine there's the same kind of bubble around you.

That's roughly the space 2.4 kilograms of CO2 will take up in the atmosphere that is produced by just burning one litter of petrol. A driver will drive on average of 12.000 miles per year using approximately 1500 litres of fuel and will be polluting the environment by 3.75 tonnes of co2 gases.

In UK there are 22million licence holders and say only 15 million are driving the average mileage that would equate to a colossal amount of 56 million tons in one year, that is only in UK now thinks about the whole planet.

There are many measures we can take to minimise the effects of global worming and one of them is to use our vehicles in a responsible way. Here are some ways you as a driver can help the environment by minimising the effects of global worming whilst driving safely as well as saving money at the same time.

Driving is a modern day necessity that can not be dispensed with entirely however many journeys are futile and can be minimised by using phone, fax, email and text messaging.
Before getting into the car considers walking or cycling, either of these activities will not only help Mother Nature but will help level of your fitness.
Consider using a bus or train as there are economies of scale in using mass transportation as well as reduced traffic congestion. If you must travel in your vehicle consider sharing your journey with others.

Before purchasing a vehicle think about the use it will be put to, higher engine vehicles consume more fuel and pump out more CO2 gases without significant benefits in performance, especially in urban traffic conditions. Automatic vehicle will have higher fuel consumption then manual gear shift.

When driving here are some measures you can take to make efficient use of your vehicle. Fuel efficiency is all about using less fuel for the distance you travel.
Your fuel efficiency is determined by your driving habits, the maintenance level of your vehicle and environmental conditions.
To achieve maximum fuel economy Have your vehicle serviced at regular intervals. Ensure the tyre pressures are at correct levels for the type of your vehicle and for the loads you are carrying, lower then the recommended tyre pressure will result in higher fuel consumption and tyre damage, higher pressures will result in less contact with road surface thus increases the risk of skids. Either way it will result in premature tyre failure.(check pressures when tyres are cold – pressures increase in hot tyres).

When travelling to new destinations 20% of your time will be spent on being lost and re-routing yourself, plan your journey in advance and review your journey plan regularly

An engine that is not running at optimum temperatures can consume up to 50% more fuel. Plan your daily schedule to minimise the mileage covered and the travel time taken avoiding short journeys.

Your vehicle will use 30% less fuel at 50mph then at 70mph. Roof-racks and trailers can greatly increase fuel consumption by up to 20%.

Avoid driving in rush hours as you will spend more fuel sitting in traffic listening to your hi fi then travelling. When at a standstill in long traffic queues switch off the engine, idling more then 10 seconds wastes fuel.
Switching on your air-conditioning will consume 20% more fuel (for speeds up to 30mph it is more economical to have the windows open).

When driving do not over rev the engine in low gears as it will consume more fuel without benefiting you in performance, drive in the highest gear possible without labouring the engine (most vehicle manufactures recommend the optimum speed for a gear change at about 2000 rpm on standard unloaded passenger vehicles).

Use defensive driving skills
Attitude. Many drivers are too fast aggressive and inconsiderate; they are happy with the way they drive and do not see themselves as dangerous while blaming others of incompetence.
Attitude determines how knowledge and skills are used. It shapes our style towards being co-operative or competitive and therefore how safely and well we drive.
Our behaviour on the road is first influenced at a young age by watching how our parents and other road users behave, then by the people we mix with socially and at work. Having passed the driving test many of us see ourselves as motoring experts; with experience we begin to view ourselves as the best drivers since Ben Hurr and the Highway Code's status is relegated to learner drivers .**(Skilled driver is not necessarily a safe driver)** The prevailing driving culture might be considered as normal, but how far is it acceptable?

Mastering the following principles will help you to identify the dangers on the road and help you to respond to risks you come up against. They have very little to do with your hands and your feet but more to do with linking what is going on inside your head with what is going on the road.
They are all about reading the road and applying the vehicle controls in a measured way

Scan, Plan, Prepare and Perform
Scan. Look as far as you can see for any potential hazards whether they are static road features or situations being caused by other road users. Look well ahead and perceive potential problems early. Take up safe road positions that allow you to see and be seen. Be attentive; focus on the driving task - don't let your mind wander. Keep your eyes moving and scan the road well ahead. Avoid staring at any single point ahead or to the side. Concentrate on the available space (i.e. the gaps), not the obstructions. With experience you will begin to recognise what is important and what is not. Ignore the superficial

information you can see. For example don't concentrate on identifying individual drivers or pedestrians or the make, model or the colours of vehicles. Instead concentrate on the position, speed and potential course of other vehicles and/or pedestrians both to the front, rear and sides of your vehicle.

Plan. Collect information on what is going on and look out for hazardous situations developing, not looking in the right places or ignoring what can be seen increases risk. One example is where traffic signs have been placed approaching a road works, but the driver only responds when the actual construction activity comes into view and therefore having to brake heavily, so increasing the likelihood of a rear end shunt as well as wasting fuel and causing discomfort to the passengers.

Prepare. Monitor the movements of following and overtaking traffic around you. You must not only rely on peripheral vision, but also glances frequently in the interior and exterior mirrors and constantly considers your vehicle overall stopping distance. When you sense that something is going to involve you, scan your mirrors and inform others around you of your intentions.

Perform. Take up positions that best suits the road situation, adjust the speed in good time leaving margin for error and misunderstandings.

Adapt a no brakes and intelligent accelerator strategy

Next time you are driving keep a check on how often you have to brake, on each occasion you brake you are dispersing the energy which would have allowed you to travel that further, by planning ahead and preparing your approach you could have released the accelerator early and in doing so you would have made the vehicle travel further for the amount of fuel used, resulting in less wear on your brakes and the vehicle not to mention the fact that you would have caused that much less pollution, given your passengers less concern about there safety and saved yourself some money whilst doing so.

There are many techniques that can be used to improve your driving standard and in doing so you will not only contribute towards better road safety along with fuel economy but the effect on environment and the legacy we live behind for our future generations.

There is not enough space in this article to explain all the ecologically friendly advanced driving techniques however should you want learn more about them you can visit our website www.monk1.com where you will find useful information on matters related to driving.

Wishing you all eco-safe driving.

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