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Gas Mileage Drop

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Gas Mileage Drop

by **hcsem** » Fri Jan 02, 2004 5:53 am

I've got a Vibe base with manual transmission. 23,000 miles in 8 months and climbing fast. I had consistently been pulling 35-37 mpg for about the first 4 months, then it dropped to more like 25-27 for no clear reason. I travel a fair amount, and rarely put gas in at the same station twice in a row.

Just had it in at the dealer and they insist nothing is wrong. Big disappointment for right now, I loved getting 35-37 mpg.

Any suggestions?

Thanks.

hcsem

Posts: 7

Joined: Sun Apr 13, 2003 11:51 am

Re: Gas Mileage Drop (hcsem)


by **DavidPIL** » Fri Jan 02, 2004 6:25 am

hiya...
It's normal for mileage to go down in the Winter. Looks like you're in Minnesota so I'd have to assume it's down right brrrrr up there. Most cold weather states reformulate the gas in Winter, I'm also assuming again but I think it's to keep emissions down because of a variety of factors. I try to run a gasoline that doesn't add ethanol (10% added around here usually).

You also have to take into account the temperature on the mechanical parts of the car and the oils and greases. Until these warm up, they are a bit thicker due to the temperatures. This could cause a bit more drag in the parts. Again, I'm assuming all this because I'm not a mechanic. It all seems logical to me though.

Also, most people tend to let the vehicle warm-up a bit longer as it gets colder. This won't eat up a lot of gas but it will be one of the many factors causing the mpg to go down. Also some people tend to run the defrosters a bit more which again takes up some juice.

I was getting anywhere from 31-33 mpg but now I'm lucky to get 26. It's seasonal. It's always happened to me so it's expected. It hasn't been too cold here in Illinois yet but I can imagine the mpg will go down even further as the temps drop.



DavidPIL

Posts: 769

Joined: Sat Jun 14, 2003 2:38 pm

Once again, I'm assuming but it seems to be normal. Oh, you might want to check your tire pressure, as the temps go down the pressure drops in the tires. From what I've read, about 1 lb per 10 degrees or so. Lower tire air pressure can also cause a lowering of the mpg.

Dave



Re: Gas Mileage Drop (hcsem)

by pmh013 » Fri Jan 02, 2004 6:41 am

I'd blame it on the cold weather, too, as long as everything else is operating normally. In the summer, I get about 8L/100 km. In the winter, I get about 9L/100 km. Sorry, I'm feeling just too lazy to to the coversion right now. But I'd think that a 10% fluctuation between summer & winter is acceptable.

As a side note, if you don't have a regular station, at least try to keep to a "main stream" one. I used a cheap no-name station as my regular station, and their crappy gas plugged up my car.

2003 Satellite AWD Two Tone, traded off at **180,126 km**

Now the (fourth) catalytic converter is someone else's problem

Now driving a 2007 Dodge Grand Caravan



pmh013
Posts: 872
Joined: Fri Nov 01, 2002 12:25 pm

Re: Gas Mileage Drop (hcsem)

by joatmon » Fri Jan 02, 2004 6:43 am

If you had it for 8 months, and the gas mileage dropped 4 months ago, that would be August/September, so cold weather factors probably aren't responsible. Have you noticed any drop in performance/power or driving habits? Check out pmh013's ordeal, a major runaround from the dealer, wierd shifting behavior, mpg drop by 1/3 turned out to be a catalytic converter problem, no error codes in the car's computer.

<http://forums.genvibe.com/zerothread?id=2894>

Not saying it is the same problem, but it sure doesn't sound right to drop 10 mpg.



joatmon
Posts: 8843
Joined: Fri Mar 21, 2003 5:19 am
Location: SMC MD
Contact:

Re: Gas Mileage Drop (pmh013)

by Raven » Fri Jan 02, 2004 7:16 am

Quote, originally posted by pmh013 Å»

As a side note, if you don't have a regular station, at least try to keep to a "main stream" one. I used a cheap no-name station as my regular station, and their crappy gas plugged up my car. On many occasions I have seen the refueling truck in my neighborhood first filling the SHELL station and then crossing the bridge to fill up the "cheap no-name station" from the same tanker of fuel. For years I have heard tales of bad gas from "discount" and little-guy gas stations. There are not that many producers of gasoline and all stations, big and small are supplied with almost the same quality of fuel.



Raven
Posts: 2922
Joined: Tue Sep 30, 2003 10:58 am
Location: Lac Ste. Marie, Quebec

Re: Gas Mileage Drop (Sunny)

by pmh013 » Fri Jan 02, 2004 10:00 am

Quote, originally posted by Sunny Å»

On many occasions I have seen the refueling truck in my neighborhood first filling the SHELL station and then crossing the bridge to fill up the "cheap no-name station" from



pmh013

the same tanker of fuel. For years I have heard tales of bad gas from "discount" and little-guy gas stations. There are not that many producers of gasoline and all stations, big and small are supplied with almost the same quality of fuel.

Posts: 872
Joined: Fri Nov 01, 2002 12:25 pm

I only wish the Shell truck was refilling this station. They were basically buying whatever they could get their hands on. I'd seen several different trucks (none of them branded) fill up the tanks there.

I know that the Shell & Petro-Canada stations around here all get their gas from the Co-op refinery, because it's the closest one for 500 km or more. But, I used to get 75% of my gas from that one station, and my car was majorly bunged up. Haven't gone back, and I've since gone 40,000 km with no troubles. As a side note, the station is now closed down!

2003 Satellite AWD Two Tone, traded off at **180,126 km**

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Re: Gas Mileage Drop (pmh013)

by DavidPIL » Fri Jan 02, 2004 10:27 am

(this is actually to all who are posting here and not just to one person in partucular)
Hello...

I have always been told don't go to a gas station where the tanker is or has just filled their reservoir. Stirs up sediments in the tank. You could have run into a situation like that though I've heard the filters at the pump take care of that pretty much. Now, if the filter is bad or clogged, who knows. Just steer away from that.

Here I used to see a McDaniels tanker fill a Clark gas station then would see a McDaniels at a Speedway and Shell. The odd thing about that is the octane rating from Clark to Speedway is different. For premium, that is.

Some stations combine Premium with Regular to get a mid-grade, others have 3 separate tanks. The 2 different types of stations might get their gas from the same place but the way they're mixed might yield a variation in octane. I dunno... I just don't think all gas is the same.. or at least not from station to station.

I was told when searching for my Vibe that the name brand companies take from the top of the reservoir (tank) and the off-brands take the bottom. Someone mentioned they saw a tanker at a Shell then go over to an off-brand station. I would think that would be taking from the bottom of the tank. Sediments and such could possibly get into the stations tanks if they get the last fill. Kinda like how it's bad to let the gas in your vehicle get much below the last quarter or so. Well, I don't know this for any fact but it does seem to make sense.

I promise you that I get better mileage in the Summer than Winter and I get better throttle response and mileage on higher Octane Marathon w/o Ethanol than 92 octane with Ethanol... But no matter what I do I get a drop of about 10-20% mpg in the Winter as compared to Summer. He's in Minnesota, It could get cold in Minnesota in Sept... They may change the gas formulation up there earlier. I just don't think it's a big issue unless it was a lot lower... 1/3rd lower would make me very concerned.

Dave



DavidPIL


Posts: 769
Joined: Sat Jun 14, 2003 2:38 pm

Re: Gas Mileage Drop (DavidPIL)

by joatmon » Fri Jan 02, 2004 1:31 pm

his mileage dropped from about 36 to about 26, which is about 28% less.

t




joatmon
Posts: 8843
Joined: Fri Mar 21, 2003 5:19 am
Location: SMC MD
Contact:

Re: Gas Mileage Drop (joatmon)

by **DavidPIL** » Fri Jan 02, 2004 2:25 pm

yeah, it is kinda low... rather large drop. My old Ranger would drop from 26-27 down to 18 or so which is in that 30+% range but the next Spring it jumped back up. What I didn't realize is that I nearly doubled my city driving time compared to Highway per tank so once again, another variable which could cause the issue. If he driving is the same as it was previously, I would be concerned as well but with this happening in the Winter, it's really hard to say it's not normal. I just wouldn't be concerned unless it continues to go down or doesn't come back up in the Spring. He did mention station jumping... Maybe something from a bad fill-up is cloging somethin... That's always possible... Hell, it could be something major but I would think he'd notice some drop in performance, wouldn't he? Wonder if someone else in Minnesota can chime in on their mileage. I dunno.... I'm no expert, that's just my experience.

Dave



DavidPIL
Posts: 769
Joined: Sat Jun 14, 2003 2:38 pm

Re: Gas Mileage Drop (DavidPIL)


by **GlenW** » Sat Jan 03, 2004 1:20 am

I put on 7000 miles since I purchased my Base Vibe on 10/13/03 and I keep track of my fuel at every fill up. Heres a rundown:

Minimum mileage 12/16/03 - 21.73 mpg
Maximum mileage 10/20/03 - 35.03 mpg
Average mileage from 10/13/03 - Present - 28.26 mpg

I also noticed that I get a little better milage using mid-grade fuel as well.

2009 Red Hot Metallic GT
Hella Twin Supertone Horn
<http://us.st12.yimg.com/us.st....83567>



GlenW
Posts: 112
Joined: Wed Sep 17, 2003 10:49 am

Re: Gas Mileage Drop (hcsem)

by **hcsem** » Sat Jan 03, 2004 10:13 am

Thanks for the responses so far.

Anyone have any idea when they would have switched the fuel mixture around Minnesota? Somehow I think that happens in October, but I'm not certain on that.

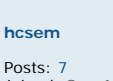
I jump stations, but generally it's a 66 station or a BP/Amoco.

Performance wise, things seem unchanged. 80mph @ 3000 rpm seems about the same as it was in July.

90% of my driving is highway driving with the cruise control set, so if anything I thought I'd see #'s closer to 37mpg.

Either way, I'm a #'s person so I'll keep watching at every fill up. Just not getting the high gas mileage I expected and wanted.

Thanks.



hcsem
Posts: 7
Joined: Sun Apr 13, 2003 11:51 am

Re: Gas Mileage Drop (hcsem)

by pmh013 » Sat Jan 03, 2004 1:43 pm

Good that you're keeping track of the numbers. You'll need those if you want to complain to GM about your mileage not being what you expected. I wonder if you've got fluctuating fuel pressure? That was one of the many diagnoses they made on my car during my catalytic converter episode. They changed out the fuel filter, but of course it didn't resolve the problem completely (it did make it a little better, but I think it was in my head). In any case, definitely stay away from "freshly refueled" stations. Why take the chance that some high school kid didn't put the filter back in and suck in all that crud off the bottom of some tanker?

Our "winter gas" doesn't usually come in until mid-October. I wonder if your local gas station could provide this info?

2003 Satellite AWD Two Tone, traded off at 180,126 km

Now the (fourth) catalytic converter is someone else's problem

Now driving a 2007 Dodge Grand Caravan



pmh013

Posts: 872
Joined: Fri Nov 01, 2002 12:25 pm

Re: Gas Mileage Drop (pmh013)

by huy397 » Thu Jan 15, 2004 7:50 am

I noticed my milage is down too. I figured it's because of the warm up time and winter gas too. As for gas, I usually gas in in Extra Food or SuperStore (for their super bucks) should I switch to 'main stream" gas station ?

thanks

Car: 2003 Two tone Base Frosty Vibe, Automatic, Safety & Security Package, Power Package and 16" alloys with 16" Blizzaks for winter
Navigation: HP iPAQ 2210 + LeadTek 9537 BT GPS + iGuidance V2.1.1 + German-D mount.

<http://www.howardforums.com>

Your Mobile Phone Community & Resource



huy397

Posts: 375
Joined: Sun Jun 08, 2003 3:11 am

Re: Gas Mileage Drop (huy397)

by pmh013 » Thu Jan 15, 2004 10:57 pm

Quote, originally posted by huy397 Å»

As for gas, I usually gas in in Extra Food or SuperStore (for their super bucks) should I switch to 'main stream" gas station ?

I don't know where SuperStore gets their fuel from. I can't recall ever seeing a tanker at the one in Regina, so it would be a guess. I do know that my fiance found that he got better mileage in his diesel Jetta when he stopped getting fuel at SuperStore. He now fuels up at Co-op.

It might be an interesting experiment, to switch to a Shell/Esso/Petro-Can and see if there's a difference. Of course, I'm weird, and I think these things are interesting. ☺

2003 Satellite AWD Two Tone, traded off at 180,126 km

Now the (fourth) catalytic converter is someone else's problem

Now driving a 2007 Dodge Grand Caravan



pmh013

Posts: 872
Joined: Fri Nov 01, 2002 12:25 pm

Re: Gas Mileage Drop (hcsem)

by hcsem » Fri Jan 16, 2004 1:06 am

Just a quick update.
I'm still keeping gas receipts.

I was in Wisconsin last week, and did see a slight improvement to around 29 mpg. Now that I'm back in Minnesota it's right back where it was before.

I got a "thank you" letter the other day from the dealer that looked at my Vibe and concluded

hcsem

Posts: 7
Joined: Sun Apr 13, 2003 11:51 am

nothing was wrong. I had to laugh at the line where they asked me to contact them if I'm not satisfied. They knew I wasn't satisfied when I picked it up. How could I be satisfied if they concluded nothing is wrong, and I've got gas receipts to say something is? Go figure.

In the VW Jetta that my Vibe replaced (don't ever buy VW), I used to use an engine cleaner called "Sea Foam" about once/month, and that was helpful. So I'm going to give it a try in the Vibe and see what happens.

Stay tuned.

Re: Gas Mileage Drop (hcsem)

by pmh013 » Fri Jan 16, 2004 1:29 am

Let me see if I understand this.
Your mileage in Minnesota sucks, but it's OK in Wisconsin?

What is different in the 2 states (other than a passion for rodents)? Gas stations. Altitude (hardly). Weather (maybe). Driving style.

Damn it, now I want to go to Madison for custard. Just thinking about Wisconsin makes me hungry. 😊

2003 Satellite AWD Two Tone, traded off at **180,126 km**

Now the (fourth) catalytic converter is someone else's problem

Now driving a 2007 Dodge Grand Caravan



pmh013
Posts: 872
Joined: Fri Nov 01, 2002 12:25 pm

Re: Gas Mileage Drop (pmh013)

by red » Tue Jan 20, 2004 4:59 am

well, after our recent round of below -30* weather....my mileage bottomed out at 16.77 mpg....and that doesnt include alot of idling...i have been averaging 18 -20 mpg in the 0* weather but it really drops when temp gets below -20*....if my awd kicks in alot the gas drops also! overall the mileage isnt that great in the winter, that was confirmed by the tech mgrn at the dealership also. Even in the summer i dont get great mileage..approx. 23-25mpg, but i take what i can get!!

red
Posts: 321
Joined: Sat Jan 18, 2003 12:16 pm

Re: Gas Mileage Drop

by joatmon » Sat Jan 24, 2004 6:45 am

Here's the info from the service manual(p. 6-563) on what to check if lower than expected, or lower than it used to be.

Preliminary Checks



joatmon
Posts: 8843
Joined: Fri Mar 21, 2003 5:19 am
Location: SMC MD
Contact:

- Check the air cleaner element for dirt or restrictions
- Visually and physically check the vacuum hoses for splits, kinks, and proper connections
- Check the owner's driving habits for any of the following:
 - The A/C system defroster mode is ON all the time
 - The tires are improperly inflated
 - Heavy loads are frequently being carried
 - Heavy acceleration and high speeds are common
 - Frequent short trips
 - Prolonged periods of idling
 - Driving on unpaved or rough roads
- Suggest that the owner refill the tank and recheck the fuel economy

Fuel System Checks

- Check the type, quality and alcohol content of the fuel. Oxygenated fuels have lower energy and may deliver reduced fuel economy

Check for the correct fuel pressure

Ignition System Checks

- Inspect the spark plugs for correct operation and good igation system performance.
- Check the ignition coil boots for cracking, chafing and loose connections.
- Observe the Spark parameter on the scan tool at idle, while operating the rear defogger, the A/C system or the headlights. If the scan tool display remains fixed at 10 degrees, check for a short to ground in the Diagnostic Request circuit from the powertrain control module (PCM) connector C4 terminal 20 to the data link connector (DLC)
- Check the knock sensor (KS) and the sensor circuit shielding. A faulty knock sensor or signal interference could cause excessive retard of the ignition timing advance. Observe the Spark parameter on a scan tool and compare with a known good vehicle. A typical value at 98 kmm/h(60 mph) with all engine accessories off is 26-32 degrees.

Cooling System Checks

- Check for the correct engine coolant level
- Check engine thermostat for always being open or for the wrong heat range.

Additional Checks

- Check the clutch adjustment in vehicles equipped with a manual transmission. **
- Check the transmission shift pattern and the torque converter clutch (TCC) operation in vehicles equipped with an automatic transmission.
- Check for dragging brakes
- Check for uneven or premature tire wear. A suspension misalignment can cause reduced fuel economy ***
- Verify that the wheels and tires are similar to OEM. Wide performance tires create more drag and taller tires can cause odometer discrepancies.
- Check for (*sic*) the speedometer for proper calibration.
- Check for green engine. Fuel economy may not be near expected levels until the engine has had 5,000 - 8,000 km (3,000 - 5,000 miles) to break in.
- Check for add-on equipment like luggage racks and carriers. Wind resistance can lower fuel economy.
- Check the Service Bulletins for any updates or information.

*If you take it in to the dealer, be ready to swear that you don't do any of the bad driving habits. Also be prepared for them to tell you to "refill the fuel tank and recheck the fuel economy", but you probably wouldn't be at the dealer over a single bad tank of gas.

**Interesting, didn't know there was a clutch adjustment. Checked , and it refers to a section on clutch slipping. possible causes for clutch slipping are weak diaphragm spring, oil contamination, or excessively worn, exploded or damaged disc. No adjustment though.

***Wonder if there is any correlation between people with fast tire wear and people with poor fuel economy.

Also interesting that there is no reference to the clogged exhaust problem like pmh013 had, maybe they figured that would show up as a performance problem instead of as a fuel economy problem.

Re: Gas Mileage Drop

by joatmon » Sat Feb 12, 2005 11:26 pm

I need to go throughh this list myself for my own car. Over the last 12K miles or so, my gas mileage has been dropping off, more than I would expect for just "winter gas", or at least more than it did last winter.

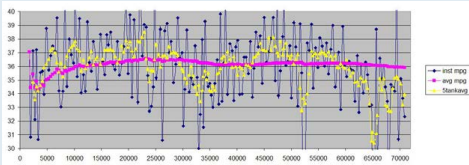


Attached files



joatmon

Posts: 8843
Joined: Fri Mar 21, 2003 5:19 am
Location: SMC MD
Contact:



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Re: Gas Mileage Drop (hcsem)

by [sylvainber](#) » Sun Feb 13, 2005 11:11 pm

i get about 28-30 mpg in summer and 26-28 in winter. (base 5spd). I have found that my mpg drops most if i step on it too much in the winter (more so that in summer). we had a very cold spell last winter and warming up the car did make a big dif in mpg. It hasn't been that cold this winter so i haven't had to warm the car ahead.

Salsa 2-tone Base
cargo nets, liner and seatback storage

The best thing about having my previous car totaled in an accident is that i got a Vibe to replace it



[sylvainber](#)

Posts: 94
Joined: Sun Jan 04, 2004 2:21 am

Re: Gas Mileage Drop (hcsem)

by [ToolGuy](#) » Mon Feb 14, 2005 12:24 am

Start with the basics, when was the last time your air filter was changed?



[ToolGuy](#)

Posts: 3584
Joined: Wed Jul 28, 2004 3:38 am

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