



## SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS TIP

### Fuel Economy Q&A: Which is better?

Which is better for the fuel economy of a vehicle – to drive with your windows down, or have your windows up and the air conditioning on? It’s sometimes hard to tell fact from fiction, but here are a few facts to help you make choices when driving.

#### Which is better: E85 or gasoline?

Vehicles that run on E85, also called flex fuel, have been around for more than a decade. But which fuel is better? E85 is 85 percent ethanol, a fuel based on corn or other plants that is mixed with 15 percent gasoline. Generally, E85 is cheaper per gallon; however, your fuel economy will suffer 15-27 percent, making the financial benefits negligible.

E85 reduces carbon dioxide emissions by 34 percent in comparison to gasoline vehicles. Ethanol is also a renewable resource and reduces dependency on oil.

**While E85 may be a wash financially, it is a greener choice.**

#### Which fuel type is better: regular octane (87), plus (89), or premium (91/93)?

You head to the gas pump and see three or more octane levels of fuel. Which is better? The rule of thumb is to use the octane recommended by the vehicle manufacturer. Cars that require premium gas are specially tuned to use it efficiently and do get better fuel economy than cars that use regular gas.

**For cars not designed for premium fuel, there is little fuel savings by going to a higher octane fuel.**

#### Which is better: using the air conditioner or opening the windows in the summer?

When the temperature rises, do you turn on your vehicle’s air conditioner or roll down the windows? Turning on the air conditioner will drop your fuel economy by about 5.5 percent. So is it better to roll down your windows even though it increases drag?

**The answer is yes.**

General Motors tested a sedan and SUV at various speeds. They found that while there is a slight decrease in fuel economy with the windows open, using the air conditioning uses more fuel at all speeds.



Some gas stations offer flex fuel in addition to regular gasoline grades.

