



### **Ethanol Blends Reduce Fuel Economy**

**COMPLAINT:** Gas mileage isn't as high as the customer expected after a Run-Rite fuel and induction system service.

**CAUSE:** Ethanol blends reduce gas mileage over older gasoline blends.

**CORRECTION:** Unfortunately there isn't much you can do about this, other than make sure the car is in proper condition to provide the best gas mileage possible.

Here are the details: Ethanol is only about 70% as efficient as gasoline. So the higher the concentration of ethanol in the gas, the lower the gas mileage will be.

Here's what the government web site had to say about ethanol as it relates to gas mileage:

All auto manufacturers approve the use of low-level ethanol blends. Ethanol blends (10% or less) are successfully used in all types of vehicles and engines that require gasoline.

From a consumer perspective, there is no noticeable difference in vehicle performance when low-level ethanol blends are used. Because there is a slight difference in the energy content of ethanol and gasoline, there may be a slight reduction in vehicle fuel economy when using ethanol.

The real problem comes in when the customer begins checking gas mileage after a fuel system service, expecting an improvement in efficiency. When gas mileage isn't up to par, they assume the service wasn't effective.

Here's what you should do:

First, make sure the car's in condition to run efficiently. Check the tires and tire inflation, the ignition system, and the computer system to make sure everything's up to par. Pay particular attention to the oxygen sensors, which can have a dramatic effect on fuel efficiency. See CPTB0009 for more on the oxygen sensors.

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## Technical Service Bulletin (continued)

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Let the customer know the importance of driving efficiently. Remind them that “there’s nothing we can do under the hood to overcome a lead foot on the gas pedal.” This is critical; driving behavior is where most gas is wasted.

Finally, warn the customer about the limitations of ethanol. That’s going to be the limiting factor in their cars’ efficiency, and it’s one that neither you nor the customer will have any real control over.

Making your customers aware of the impact of ethanol will provide solid consumer education and build the trust that every service provider is looking for.