



News Release

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COST OF OWNING AND OPERATING VEHICLE IN U.S INCREASED 1.9 PERCENT
ACCORDING TO AAA'S 2012 'YOUR DRIVING COSTS' STUDY

Increases in gas and tires drive up average costs for sedans to \$8,946 yearly, 59.6 cents per mile; SUV costs up to \$11,360 yearly, 75.7 cents per mile

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va., (April 27, 2012) – AAA released the results of its annual 'Your Driving Costs' study today revealing a 1.9 percent rise in the yearly costs to own and operate a sedan in the U.S. The average costs rose 1.1 cents per mile to 59.6 cents per mile, or \$8,946 per year, based upon 15,000 miles of annual driving.

"The average driving cost for 2012 is up due to relatively large increases in fuel and tire costs, and more moderate increases in other areas," said Georjeane Blumling, Vice President of Public Relations for AAA Tidewater Virginia. "Those increases were offset by a decrease in depreciation resulting in an overall increase of 1.9 percent."

The findings of the 2012 'Your Driving Costs' study include:

<i>Based on Driving 15,000 miles annually</i>	<i>Small Sedan</i>	<i>Medium Sedan</i>	<i>Large Sedan</i>	Sedan Average	<i>SUV 4WD</i>	<i>Minivan</i>
<i>Cost Per Mile</i>	44.9 cents	58.5 cents	75.5 cents	59.6 cents	75.7 cents	63.4 cents
<i>Cost Per Year</i>	\$6,735	\$8,780	\$11,324	\$8,946	\$11,360	\$9,504

In-depth findings of this year's study, including a breakdown of specific costs by category of vehicle and various annual mileages, are contained in the 'Your Driving Costs' brochure which is available at local AAA Tidewater branch offices or may be downloaded at the [AAA Newsroom](#).

"Some driving costs fluctuate at different times during the year, such as what we have experienced with fuel prices since the middle of February," explained Blumling. "However, AAA's use of a consistent methodology for its study allows an accurate comparison of driving costs from year to year, and the figures can reliably be used to compare different categories of vehicles."

Blumling continued, "AAA understands that high fuel prices are a real concern for consumers, and those in the market for a new vehicle may want to be cautious and determine projected operational costs based on varying levels of fuels costs. To assist consumers in determining their individual driving costs, the AAA 'Your Driving Costs' brochure contains a worksheet that can be filled out and personalized for a specific area, driver and vehicle.

Fuel Costs Up 14.8 Percent

The cost of fuel had the largest percentage increase from 2011 to 2012, rising 14.8 percent to 14.2 cents per mile on average for sedan owners. The average cost of regular grade fuel (used by most of the study vehicles) rose 16.6 percent, from \$2.880 to \$3.357 per gallon. Several vehicles included in the 'Your Driving Costs' study had increases in fuel economy, resulting in the overall average fuel cost increase being slightly less. The fuel costs in the 2012 study were calculated using the national average price for regular, unleaded gasoline during the fourth quarter of 2011.

Tire Costs Up 4.2 Percent

The cost of tires ranks second highest among the factors that rose from 2011 to 2012, increasing by 4.2 percent to one cent per mile on average for sedan owners. The rise in cost can be attributed to higher costs for natural rubber, and the increased cost of oil used in tire production and transportation from factory to distributors across the country. A collateral factor is a trend for manufactures to equip new cars with premium-grade tires rather than mid-grade tires.

Depreciation Drops 4.9 Percent

Depreciation costs were up slightly in 2011, but for 2012 the trend has reversed with depreciation falling across the board by nearly five percent. This change may be a consequence of reduced new car sales over the past few years, which has resulted in a relative shortage of good used cars on the market, driving up their value. This is good news for those in the resale market as their vehicles will retain a greater portion of their purchase cost.

Maintenance Costs Up 0.7 Percent

Maintenance costs are slightly higher in the 2012 'Your Driving Costs' study with an increase of 0.7 percent to 4.47 cents per mile on average for sedans. Factors contributing to the increase include higher prices for oil and more manufacturers now requiring synthetic or synthetic-blend motor oils. Although the use of these oils often comes with extended service intervals, the higher cost of the oil combined with increased maintenance operations at each service (which adds to the time required) can combine to increase overall vehicle maintenance costs.

Insurance Costs Up 3.4 Percent

Average insurance costs for sedans rose 3.4 percent (or \$33) to \$1001 yearly. Insurance rates vary widely by driver and driving record, issuing company and geographical region. AAA insurance cost estimates are based on a low-risk driver with a clean driving record. For 2012, this group saw a small increase that offset a decrease experienced in 2011. Quotes from five AAA clubs and insurance companies representing seven states showed across the board increases for all sedan sizes, with large cars having the biggest increase.

62nd Year of 'Your Driving Costs' Study

AAA has published 'Your Driving Costs' since 1950. That year, driving a car 10,000 miles per year cost 9 cents per mile, and gasoline sold for 27 cents per gallon.

Driving Costs are also affected by how well your vehicle runs. Performing regular maintenance not only ensures fuel-efficient operation but can help prevent costly vehicle repairs that can add to your total ownership cost. For more information on ways to keep your vehicle in top condition read the owner's manual and visit AAA.com for vehicle care information, automated maintenance reminders and repair facility locator tools.

The 'Your Driving Costs' study analyzes the cost to own and operate a vehicle in the U.S. Variable operating costs considered in the study include fuel, maintenance and tires. Fuel costs are based on \$3.357 per gallon (average price of gas for October 2011-December 2011/AAA Fuel Gauge Report) and Environmental Protection Agency fuel-economy ratings weighted 60 percent city, 40 percent highway driving. Fixed ownership costs factored into the results include insurance, license and registration fees, taxes, depreciation and finance charges. These ownership costs are assumed to be on a purchase of a new vehicle, depreciated over five years. Finance charges are based on five year loan at six percent interest with a 10 percent down payment. Your actual operating costs may vary. Refer to page three of AAA's 2012 'Your Driving Costs' brochure for a list of vehicles and assumptions used in the study.

To conduct its study, AAA's auto buying and repair experts compiled detailed driving costs for small, medium, and large sedans. Driving costs in each category are based on the average costs for five top-selling models selected by AAA. By size category, they are:

- Small Sedan – Chevrolet Cruze, Ford Focus, Honda Civic, Nissan Sentra and Toyota Corolla.
- Medium Sedan – Chevrolet Impala, Ford Fusion, Honda Accord, Nissan Altima and Toyota Camry.
- Large Sedan – Buick Lucerne, Chrysler 300, Ford Taurus, Nissan Maxima and Toyota Avalon.

Though not part of the AAA composite average, SUV and minivan information is also included in 'Your Driving Costs' to help buyers estimate operating costs for these types of vehicles. Selected models include:

- SUVs – Chevrolet Traverse, Ford Explorer, Jeep Grand Cherokee, Nissan Pathfinder and Toyota 4Runner.
- Minivans – Dodge Grand Caravan, Kia Sedona, Honda Odyssey, Nissan Quest and Toyota Sienna.

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