

Fuel efficiency tops wish list of new-car buyers

May 28 2012

Fuel efficiency was the most important car-purchase factor for 37 percent of those surveyed in the new Consumer Reports National Research Center car-owner survey.

Although only a little more than one-third of car owners cited [fuel efficiency](#) as the most important factor, the answer was well ahead of the second-most-popular choice, quality. Of the consumers surveyed, only 17 percent considered a vehicle's quality as the most important car-purchase factor.

Safety came in just behind quality with 16 percent. Other car-purchase factors included value (14 percent), performance (6 percent), design/style (6 percent) and technology/innovation (3 percent).

Consistently high gas prices are affecting car purchases. About two-thirds of the survey respondents said they expect their next vehicle will have the same fuel efficiency as their current vehicle, or better..

A vehicle's fuel efficiency is so important to 60 percent of car owners that they would be willing to sacrifice on the size or the capacity of the vehicle in order to purchase a [vehicle](#) that has a better fuel efficiency rating.

The survey also examined what motivated car owners when they were researching or buying a new car. Motivations cited by survey respondents include:

- Lower [fuel costs](#) (90 percent)
- Latest fuel-saving technology (69 percent)
- Environmentally friendly/green (62 percent)
- Dependence on foreign oil (56 percent)
- Change in lifestyle/family (34 percent)

Car buyers aren't interested only in fuel-efficient traditional gasoline engines; they are also interested in [alternative fuel](#) options. [Hybrid vehicles](#) and flex-fuel vehicles draw the most interest with 40 percent of survey respondents citing interest in those technologies. Interest in natural gas-powered vehicles and all-electric vehicles is also rising.

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Citation: Fuel efficiency tops wish list of new-car buyers (2012, May 28) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-05-fuel-efficiency-tops-new-car-buyers.html>

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