

US cars and trucks hit record gas mileage in 2012

December 12 2013, by Tom Krisher

New cars and trucks sold in the U.S. last year got an average of 23.6 miles per gallon (10 liters per 100 kilometers) in combined city and highway driving, a record that came mainly through improvements to engines and transmissions, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Mazda led all automakers with an average of 27.1 mpg (8.7 liters per 100 kilometers), followed closely by Honda with 26.6 and Volkswagen at 25.8 mpg. Chrysler-Fiat, which relies more on trucks and larger cars for its sales, had the worst mileage at 20.1 mpg (11.7 liters per 100 kilometers), followed by Daimler, maker of Mercedes-Benz luxury vehicles, at 21.1. General Motors, which also sells a lot of trucks and SUVs, was third from the bottom at 21.7 mpg, according to the report.

The EPA is estimating that the average mileage of 2013 cars will rise another 0.4 mpg to 24 [mpg](#) (9.8 liters per 100 kilometers). Final figures for 2013 won't be available until next year.

Last year was the first year that automakers fell under more stringent government fuel economy regulations that require them to sell cars and trucks that get a combined 54.5 [miles per gallon](#) (4.3 liters per 100 kms) by 2025. Carbon dioxide emissions also are at a record low, 376 grams per mile.

Christopher Grundler, director of the EPA's office of Transportation and Air Quality, said many automakers already are meeting gas mileage

standards for 2016 because of innovations. Automakers are offering more efficient engines, multiple-speed transmissions that keep engines at peak efficiency, and turbocharging that gives smaller engines more power when needed. They've also reduced weight by using lighter materials, powered more pumps off a battery rather than the engine to eliminate drag, and they've improved aerodynamics of new cars so they slice through the wind with less resistance.

The government [gas mileage](#) requirements get tougher to meet as the years progress toward 2025, but Grundler said he's confident the auto industry has shown it has the kind of innovation needed to meet the challenge.

The cost of cars will rise gradually as [automakers](#) spend on new technology to get better mileage, but that will be more than offset by savings in gasoline spending, Grundler said.

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