



CASE STUDY

Ken Rogers is amazed by the results possible after 50 minutes under the tutelage of the Energy Saving Trust's Smarter Driving Programme.

Getting with the programme...

You might think that three laps of Bracknell's ring road are not really enough to turn your drivers from gas guzzlers to light-footed MPG champions, but thanks to the Energy Saving Trust's Smarter Driving Programme, it is possible.

I know, because even as a seasoned MPG Marathon entrant for many years and so more eco-inclined than some trainees, 50 minutes circling Berkshire's finest saw me improve my economy by almost 15%. Quite some saving.

In fact, to date the programme has produced an average 15.1% reduction in fuel consumption. For a typical car doing 12,000 miles this would equate to a saving of £200-£250 per year.

The aim of the programme is to reduce fuel consumption, CO2 emissions and costs and is available to employees of any company or organisation and – thanks to funding from the Department for Transport and support by BMW – can cost from as little as £15 per employee.

Bob Saynor, Smarter Driving Training Programme Manager for the Energy Saving Trust says: 'It's an Energy Saving Trust programme funded by the Department for Transport and DriveSense is the sub-contractor we're using to supply the instructors.'

Obviously, the programme doesn't have to be run in Bracknell – the beauty of it is that it will come to your door.

Bob says: 'The ethos of the programme is to deliver easy to

organise, cost-effective driver training with minimum disruption. So we plan the routes in advance and then we bring everything – car, instructor, insurance, fuel – to the client and start and finish lessons from wherever is most convenient. This is much less disruptive than traditional driver training where you send people off site and often lose a day's work.'

The programme is available for all employees of an organisation or company – not just fleet or company drivers. The minimum booking is for twenty-four drivers, based on three days training with each instructor training up to eight people per day. There is no maximum number. The target for the current financial year is to put 26,000 drivers through the programme, but be quick – the £15 is only guaranteed until the end of March.

The Smarter Driving programme runs in England only as it is funded by Department for Transport – which only covers England. If required, employees in Wales and Scotland can be trained but the cost price has to be charged, which is £35+VAT per person.

So far the programme has been taken up by more than one hundred organisations including a lot of blue chip organisations – pharmaceuticals, software, logistics and energy companies as well as local authorities, universities, and NHS Trusts.

For more info on the Smarter Driving Programme, visit www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/smarterdriving or 0845 602 1425.

Back to school...

Dave King, my DriveSense Instructor, said I was to drive the BMW 115d around the same circuit of Bracknell three times within the next fifty minutes or so. First time, I was to drive as I do 'normally', second time as I drove he would deliver words of wisdom on techniques to improve fuel economy while on the third circuit he would sit quietly while I put my new-found eco-knowledge to the test.

Dave explained the four main Smarter Driving principles. 'First; change up through the gears early – by around 2,000/2,500rpm, second; remain in high gears as much as possible without labouring the engine, third; improve your powers of observation and anticipation – this allows you to keep the vehicle moving and avoid unnecessary braking and acceleration and fourth; when slowing down or driving down hill, remain in gear but step off the accelerator as early as possible – a modern car will then completely shut off the fuel supply to the engine. It's almost like driving for free! Also, you will develop a safer and more efficient driving style.'

I achieved 43mpg and an average speed of 26mph on my first run, yet the figure rose to 50mpg and 27mph on my final lap. This equated to a 14% improvement in MPG which if I achieved when driving the Audi A5 which I use most days, would mean an annual cost saving of around £292 and a reduction in CO2 emissions of 615kg of CO2 emissions.

For any company, such a potential saving sounds to me like a worthwhile result...



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Efficient, dynamic, smarter driving

BMW and MINI partnered with the Energy Saving Trust to provide a fleet of cars to support its 'Smarter Driving' programme, all with EfficientDynamics technologies, such as Auto Start-Stop, Brake Energy Regeneration and Optimum Shift Indicators as standard.

Steve Chater, BMW Group Corporate Operations Manager, said: 'We are delighted to be part of a scheme which benefits not only the drivers but their employers and the wider environment too.'

