



Where Do MPG Estimates Come From?

The MPG estimates printed on window labels in new cars are based on the results of tests required by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These tests are used to certify that vehicles meet federal emissions and fuel economy standards. Vehicles are tested under controlled laboratory conditions on an instrument similar to a treadmill.

Two different MPG estimates are generated for each vehicle, city and highway, using separate tests to represent typical driving in a city and in a rural setting. The city test simulates an 11-mile, stop-and-go trip with an average speed of 20 mph and 23 stops. About 18% of the time is spent idling, as in waiting at traffic lights or in rush hour traffic. The maximum speed is 56 mph.

The highway test simulates a mixture of "non-city" driving, with segments corresponding to different types of rural roads (including interstate highways). The test simulates a 10-mile trip and averages 48 mph, with a maximum speed of 60 mph. The highway test has little idling time and no stops (except at the end of the test).

To make the MPG estimates more useful for consumers, EPA lowers the laboratory test results to account for the difference between controlled laboratory conditions and actual driving. EPA lowers the city results by 10% and the highway results by 22% to produce the estimates.

For more information, please visit www.fueleconomy.gov.