

236 words
3/26/07

Get Onboard “Trip Chaining”

You might be surprised what you can save by combining errands into a single car trip. You can guess that you save time, but you also save gasoline, reduce traffic congestion, and cause a lot less air pollution.

A cold car, one that’s been sitting for more than an hour, pollutes about five times more than a car with a warm engine. For example, starting a five-mile trip when the engine is cold generates about 17 percent more nitrogen oxides and 50 percent more volatile organic compounds than the same trip when the car is started warm

Here are some trip-chaining facts to consider:

- Family and personal business—including shopping, going to the gym, picking up and dropping off kids—account for about 45 percent of all automobile trips.
- Combining three separate short trips into one trip every week could eliminate about 200 miles on your vehicle, and save 10 hours and 10 gallons of gas every year.

People are getting the word. Between 1995 and 2001, there was a 21 percent increase in the number of commuters who trip chained in the home-to-work direction and a 12 percent increase in commuters who trip chained in both directions. A little planning will pay off for the environment and give you more time at home and less on the road.

Statistics supplied by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Federal Highway Administration. See www.italladdsup.gov.