

# Lampton/Engle & Associates

## Insurance & Financial Services

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## Staying in touch Keeping you informed on *Personal Insurance* issues



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### Protecting Your Home Against Mold

Whenever water enters a home, fungus, commonly referred to as mold, can form on a wide range of materials, including drywall, wood, and carpeting. Because mold survives by breaking down and feeding upon organic material, it can cause serious damage within a short period of time. Given the risk mold poses to your home and your health, it is important to take steps to fix any water or moisture problems in your home in a timely manner. Preventing mold growth is one of the best ways to avoid costly damage.

- **Minimize Humidity.** Air conditioners and dehumidifiers can help keep the humidity level between 30% and 50%, as recommended by the Environmental

Protection Agency (EPA). Make sure you keep drip pans and drain lines clean. Avoid carpeting in damp areas and install exhaust fans in the kitchen and bathroom. To increase ventilation, open windows, when possible.

- **Use Mold Inhibitors.** Regularly clean moisture-prone areas, such as basements and bathrooms. Consider painting these areas with paint that has a mold inhibitor.
- **Maintain Your Home.** Replace or repair a leaky roof, keep gutters clear, and make sure the ground slopes away from your house to avoid puddles around the foundation. In addition, regularly inspect your plumbing and appliances; consider replacing water hoses every five years.

In the event of water damage or excessive moisture in your home, it is important to act quickly. You may be able to prevent mold growth if you dry affected areas within 24–48 hours. For extensive problems, consider hiring an experienced contractor, especially if there is risk of contamination from sewage or another toxin. Your homeowners insurance policy may provide limited protection for mold damage, covering contamination resulting from a covered peril. For more information, give us a call.



### Replacement Parts

Every year, the insurance industry spends huge sums of money for parts and labor to repair vehicles damaged in auto accidents. The high costs are due, in large part, to the price of manufacturers' replacement parts, which often carry expensive price tags. Unfortunately, these costs are ultimately reflected in your auto insurance premiums.

The good news is that there are alternatives to expensive manufacturers' parts. They are called **quality replacement parts**, also known as **like-kind quality (LKQ) parts**, and they typically cost less than manufacturers' replacement parts. Bear in mind that insurers are obligated by their policies to provide policyholders with replacement auto parts that are *equal to or better than* those of the original manufacturer. Hence, neither quality nor safety is compromised, and the cost savings often ranges from 25% to 40%.

Insurers are concerned about safety as much as you are, because safer vehicles mean fewer and less expensive accidents. Generally, LKQ parts meet the same rigid specifications as the original parts.

If your vehicle is damaged, LKQ parts may be a safe and affordable option.

# Getting More Miles from a Tank of Gas

With an economy that has been up and down over recent years and concerns about global warming, conserving gas has become a national priority. While trading in your car or truck for a more fuel-efficient compact or hybrid may not be an immediate option, there are strategies that can help you minimize gas consumption while continuing to drive your current vehicle.

A number of factors can affect fuel economy, including driver behavior, driving conditions, vehicle maintenance, fuel characteristics, and weather. While some of these are out of your control, the following steps may help you get more miles to the gallon:

**Monitor tire pressure.** Under-inflated tires create rolling resistance and lower fuel efficiency. By keeping tires inflated at the recommended pressure, you can improve your gas mileage.

**Get regular tune-ups.** Because malfunctions cause the engine to work harder, cars that aren't regularly maintained tend to burn more gas. Problems such as clogged air and fuel filters, faulty oxygen sensors, or worn and dirty spark plugs can lead to a dramatic drop in fuel efficiency.

**Monitor brakes and wheel alignment.** Improper wheel alignment and the drag of poorly adjusted brakes can lower gas mileage. A simple inspection can reveal whether an adjustment or realignment is needed.

**Park in the shade.** Because gas evaporates in the heat, parking your car in the shade during the summer can conserve fuel.

**Avoid idling for more than a minute.** Turn off your car if you plan to stop for more than a minute, as idling for longer periods uses more fuel than turning off and restarting the engine. Avoid warming up your car, as it is unnecessary with today's engines.

**Eliminate excess weight.** Take the junk out of your trunk. It's easy to

store extra items in the car, but excess weight has a negative effect on fuel efficiency.

**Slow down.** In most cars, fuel efficiency falls sharply when driven at speeds above 60 mph. Be sure to observe the posted speed limit and drive safely.

**Curb aggressive driving.** Acceleration, rather than sustained cruising, accounts for the greater amount of fuel burned in city driving. Accelerating smoothly from a standstill consumes much less gas than a sudden start.

**Find ways to drive less.** To avoid long waits in traffic, telecommute for at least part of the week or schedule your commute for off-peak hours, if possible. Look for opportunities to carpool with neighbors and co-workers, or check out rideshare programs in your community. Take advantage of public transit, if it is available in your area.

**Combine trips.** Making several trips from a cold start generally uses more gas than making a longer trip during which the engine remains warm. By planning your route in advance and finding ways to combine errands, you may also be able to reduce the amount of time you spend driving.

**Monitor your gas consumption.** Track your car's gas mileage by maintaining a log of the odometer reading and the number of gallons pumped each time you fill up. Besides alerting you to possible engine trouble when mileage changes drastically, a fuel economy log can help make you more aware of your gas consumption.

With proper vehicle maintenance and good driving habits, you can get better fuel economy and spend less at the pump. For more tips and further information, visit the website of the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy at [www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov).

## Did You Know?

### Physicians Lack Time and Tools

According to a recent survey commissioned by Quest Diagnostics, physicians lack the time and tools to discover hidden risks in patients. In fact, 66% of primary care physicians say they don't have time to address social and behavioral issues that could affect health and 85% say they are too pressed for time to address complex issues. Furthermore, 84% of physicians say Chronic Care Management services could be an extension of their practice, but only 23% have implemented it citing administrative complexity as a barrier.

### Home Storage Dilemma

LiftMaster recently found that more than half of homeowners surveyed are frustrated as they seek more ways to create more storage space. When asked which room they would like to have more space for storage, homeowners ranked the garage ahead of the basement. The survey also found that the garage is a "value add" but also the "forgotten" space with nearly 79% of homeowners desiring more garage space. Furthermore, 58% of millennials prefer to live in a small suburban home with a garage over a larger city home without one.

### Health Over Wealth

TD Bank surveyed consumers and found that Americans tend to focus on health or finances as a priority. According to the survey, diet and fitness goals supersede monetary goals. They are also more likely to seek outside guidance with their money than their nutrition. Fifty-six percent of millennials say eating healthy and 48% say getting in shape is more important than saving more and spending less (47%). Also, 73% of respondents admit to making a recent money mistake.