

Wheels: A reader asks, “If you are going down the highway at 50 to 60 mph, with the windows down, what would the mileage be with the wind resistance, versus running the car with the windows up and the air conditioning on? Does the air-conditioning compressor use more gas?”

Halderman: If I recall, research done several years ago indicated that driving at highway speeds, it was slightly more economical to drive with the windows up using the air conditioning. In city-type driving, it is always more economical to drive with the windows down due to the reduced effect of wind resistance. Most of the air-conditioning systems today use a cycling or a variable compressor. Many years ago, air-conditioning compressors consumed more engine power than they do today and also operated all of the time.

