

#### **Smart Driving Tips To Cut Down Car Ownership Expenses**

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For many in Singapore, owning a car is a long-term financial commitment. Between the Certificate of Entitlement (COE), road tax, fuel, and regular maintenance, car-related expenses can quickly add up. On top of that, unexpected events such as accidents can introduce hefty, unplanned costs that stretch your budget further.

By adopting smart driving habits and making informed choices about maintenance and motor insurance cover, you can significantly save on the cost of car ownership over time.

#### Understanding the hidden costs of car ownership

Many drivers only factor in fuel and road tax, but other hidden costs can quietly add up.

- Wear and tear misconceptions: Hard braking, fast acceleration, and rough driving wear down tyres, brakes, and suspension faster, adding hundreds to yearly maintenance.
- **Depreciation from minor accidents:** Potential buyers tend to shy away from cars with accident records. Insurance premiums may also increase following a claim, creating longer-term financial consequences.
- Legal & liability risks: In Singapore, even minor fender benders can trigger third-party claims that exceed S\$20,000, making cautious and defensive driving essential.

#### Smart driving techniques that lower long-term costs

You do not need to overhaul your lifestyle to save money on car ownership. Small but consistent tweaks to your driving habits can make tangible differences.

- Drive smoothly to save fuel & reduce maintenance: Gentle acceleration and braking save fuel and reduce wear. Use cruise control for steadier expressway driving.
- Monitor tyre pressure regularly: Under-inflated tyres increase road friction and burn more fuel. Regular checks improve fuel efficiency and extend tyre lifespan.
- Use the right octane fuel for your car: Most cars in Singapore run fine on 95-octane. Using premium fuel unnecessarily adds cost without benefits.

• Avoid short, frequent trips: Combine errands when possible. Frequent cold starts will strain the engine and waste fuel.

# Smarter car maintenance habits that save money

Your car, like your health, benefits from regular check-ups. Preventive maintenance reduces the risk of breakdowns and ensures that issues are addressed before they become expensive problems.

## 1. Stick to a preventive maintenance schedule

Routine checks on your battery, belts, and fluid levels can help avoid major repairs down the road. Monthly visual checks and quarterly inspections by a professional workshop can help catch wear and tear early and, most importantly, prevent accidents.

## 2. Choose your workshop wisely

Not all workshops are created equally. Some prioritise speed, others quality, and some offer better transparency or pricing. The choice between insurer approved authorised workshops and independent garages often comes down to personal preference and the level of assurance you are comfortable with. China Taiping Singapore offers two motor insurance plans designed to give you the flexibility and peace of mind:

- AutoExcel: Ideal for drivers who want the freedom to choose their own repair shop. Whether you already have a trusted workshop or prefer to explore your options, this plan ensures you are not restricted to a set of authorised workshops.
- AutoSafe: A great choice if you are looking to keep costs down while enjoying reliable service. It offers a 15% discount on your premium and grants access to a carefully curated network of authorised workshops. Named drivers on the policy also enjoy an excess waiver when using these authorised workshops.

## 3. Understand your car warranty

Car warranties are usually unaffected by repairs to metal parts like panels or paint. However, using non-genuine parts or unauthorised workshops for mechanical or electronic repairs may void your warranty. For repair warranties, don't get the car fixed elsewhere before checking with the original workshop, as doing so can void the coverage. Always review the terms to avoid unexpected costs.

## Maximise the value of your motor insurance

Beyond a legal requirement, motor insurance is a financial safety net. Knowing how to optimise your plan can lead to substantial savings.

## Compare plans beyond premiums

Price is important, but so are benefits. Look for features such as excess waiver, loss of use compensation or replacement car availability, and the insurer's authorised workshop network. These extras can make a significant difference during a crisis.

## • Use NCD (No Claim Discount) strategically

Your NCD is valuable. Sometimes, it is wiser to cover minor repair costs out-of-pocket rather than file a claim that reduces your NCD. China Taiping Singapore's motor insurance plan offers free NCD protection that helps preserve your NCD after a claim, providing long-term savings for cautious drivers.

## Know your policy excess

Excess refers to the amount you must pay out-of-pocket when making a claim. Understanding this can help you decide when it is financially viable to file a claim. With China Taiping Singapore's Waiver of Excess for accident claims, policyholders enjoy added peace of mind and greater financial protection.

## • 24/7 Assistance

Accidents can happen at any time, and when they do, FLASH Services are here to support you round the clock. Simply call the FLASH hotline at +65 6100 1620, and a FLASH Field Response Officer will be dispatched to the scene to assist you on-site within 30 minutes.

Whether it's guiding you through accident procedures or helping to file the accident report on-site, the FLASH team is trained to help you manage the situation calmly and efficiently. Having expert help on the ground ensures smoother claims processing, minimises miscommunication, and may even help you avoid "accident touters" providing you wrong advice that could compromise your insurance claim.

To further support smoother claims processing, the FLASH team also assists in negotiating with third parties, whether through private settlements or direct settlements, helping to resolve disputes without incurring unnecessary legal costs. This approach helps protect your claims history while avoiding inflated payouts. It is a small feature that delivers big value during emergencies.

Owning a car in Singapore does not have to drain your wallet if you drive smarter, maintain better, and insure wisely. While you cannot eliminate all risks, you can control how prepared you are. Remember, do not wait for accidents to happen.

## Conclusion

To make the most of your car ownership journey, explore how China Taiping Singapore's motor insurance can help you stay protected, reduce unexpected costs, and enjoy greater peace of mind on the road.