

No-Idling
When you're waiting to pick up your kids from school
(from Sunset Ridge School District 29, Northfield, IL)

There are many reasons to turn off your engine while you wait. Common sense tells us that exhaust is not good for us. It is detrimental to our health, pollutes the environment, is not good for our cars, and wastes fuel. Attached is information from the California Energy Commission and American Lung Association (reprinted with permission), giving some details about why you should turn your car off and minimize idling.

Reasons

- Emissions are linked to an increase in asthma, lung disease, and heart problems.
- Excess idling can damage your engine components.
- Idling more than 10 seconds uses more fuel than restarting your engine.
- Idling can increase your fuel consumption by 4-5 percent.
- Idling for 2 minutes is equivalent to driving one mile.

Recommendations

- The EPA recommends that you turn off your engine if you plan to idle for more than 30 seconds. Some sources say 10 seconds.
- Reduce warm-up idling. Start driving after no more than 30 seconds of idling-- even in freezing temperatures, assuming your windows are clear.
- Talk to your family, friends, and neighbors about the benefits of reduced idling. Encourage them to join you in saving money, protecting the environment, and contributing to a healthier community.

"Turn Off Your Car Engine" signs will soon be posted at both schools. We hope all of you will join us and turn your engines off, not only at school but whenever and wherever you can. Contribute to this community effort to reduce our contribution to global warming, improve the performance of your car, reduce fuel consumption, and safeguard our health.

Sincerely,

Linda J. Vieth, Ed. D.
Superintendent of School District 29, Northfield, IL

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SHOULD I SHUT OFF THE MOTOR WHEN I'M IDLING MY CAR

HERE'S THE RULE OF THUMB: If you're in a drive-through restaurant/business line or waiting for someone and you'll be parked and sitting for 10 seconds or longer... turn off your car's engine.

Why??

For every two minutes a car is idling, it uses about the same amount of fuel it takes to go about one mile. Research indicates that the average person idles their car five to 10 minutes a day. People usually idle their cars more in the winter than in the summer. But even in winter, you don't need to let your car sit and idle for five minutes to "warm it up" when 30 seconds will do just fine.

But you're not going anywhere. Idling gets ZERO miles per gallon.

The recommendation is: If you are going to be parked for more than 30 seconds, turn off the engine. Ten seconds of idling can use more fuel than turning off the engine and restarting it. And when you start your engine, don't step down on the accelerator, just simply turn the key to start.

An alternative to idling is to park your car, walk inside, do your business and then go back to your car.

Here are some other Myths associated with idling.

Myth #1: The engine should be warmed up before driving. Reality: Idling is not an effective way to warm up your vehicle, even in cold weather. The best way to do this is to drive the vehicle. With today's modern engines, you need no more than 30 seconds of idling on winter days before driving away.

Myth #2: Idling is good for your engine. Reality: Excessive idling can actually damage your engine components, including cylinders, spark plugs, and exhaust systems. Fuel is only partially combusted when idling because an engine does not operate at its peak temperature. This leads to the build up of fuel residues on cylinder walls that can damage engine components and increase fuel consumption.

Myth #3: Shutting off and restarting your vehicle is hard on the engine and uses more gas than if you leave it running. Reality: Frequent restarting has little impact on engine components like the battery and the starter motor. Component wear caused by restarting the engine is estimated to add \$10 per year to the cost of driving, money that will likely be recovered several times over in fuel savings from reduced idling. The bottom line is that more than ten seconds of idling uses more fuel than restarting the engine.

"Idle-Free" Massachusetts

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IDLING VEHICLES - WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Motor vehicles have a major impact on our health and environment. Every day, hundreds of thousands of Massachusetts residents are placed "at risk" due to their exposure to high levels of vehicle-generated air pollution. Children, the elderly and people with respiratory ailments such as asthma, emphysema and bronchitis are especially at risk of becoming ill or having their conditions get worse.

Air pollution has been found to:

- aggravate asthma, leading to more frequent and severe asthma attacks;
- increase the number of respiratory infections;
- aggravate and induce allergies;
- increase school day absences;
- Increase emergency room visits, hospital admissions and premature deaths.

Each year, the average vehicle produces 261,250 grams of CO, 35,000 grams of hydrocarbons and 17,375 grams of NOx, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. That's a significant amount of air pollution.

If a person reduces their daily idling by only a few minutes, the reduction in air pollution is substantial: 24,172 grams of CO, 1,253 grams of hydrocarbons and 367 grams of NOx. Multiplied by millions of vehicles, the reduction in air pollution is huge.

THE FACTS

Fact #1: Too many people leave their engines running.

Many drivers routinely leave their engines running for long periods of time when their vehicles are standing still. Unfortunately, drivers do not know the adverse consequences of engine idling or the Massachusetts law forbidding such behavior. Turning off your vehicle whenever possible is not only better for our health and environment; it's better for your vehicle.

Fact #2: Emissions are toxic.

Vehicle emissions contain carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, acetaldehyde, benzene, 1,3-butadiene, formaldehyde, and particulate matter. These chemicals impair our lungs and hearts, irritate our eyes, and reduce our capacity to work and learn. Prolonged exposure can lead to death. Children, the elderly, and individuals with asthma are especially at high risk.

Fact #3 : Idling wastes fuel.

Millions of gallons of fuel are burned and tons of damaging pollution generated as vehicles idle needlessly. The fuel could be saved and pollution eliminated if drivers would simply turn off their engines when their vehicles will be stationary for more than a short period of time.

READY TO DO YOUR PART?

Here are 5 easy ways to reduce vehicle idling:

#1: Reduce warm-up idling. Start driving after no more than 30 seconds of idling even in freezing temperatures, assuming your vehicle's windows are clear.

#2: If you are going to be stopped for more than 10 seconds (except in traffic), turn off your engine. Idling your vehicle for longer than 10 seconds uses more fuel than it would take to restart the vehicle.

#3: Avoid using a remote vehicle starter. This device encourages you to start your vehicle before you are ready to leave, which means wasteful idling.

#4: In temperatures below 32°F, use a block heater to warm the engine before you start your vehicle. This will improve fuel efficiency and reduce exhaust emissions.

#5: Talk to your family, friends and neighbors about the benefits of reduced idling. Encourage them to join you in saving money, protecting the environment, and contributing to a healthier community.