



Natural Resources
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Idling is Harming our Health and Environment



Canada 

When your engine runs for no reason, it needlessly harms the environment.

After all, idling gets you nowhere.

Consider This

Smog and excessive greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions threaten the health of Canadians and our environment, polluting the air we breathe, risking our access to clean water and harming certain plant and wildlife species.

Poor air quality and smog cause difficulties for children, who breathe more quickly than adults, and for the elderly and those with respiratory problems such as asthma and bronchitis. In fact, air pollution is causing thousands of Canadians to die prematurely each year. Warmer temperatures are melting ice caps and having grave impacts on Arctic wildlife.

These are some of the more urgent health and environmental problems facing us today. And they have one thing in common: they are partially caused by carbon dioxide emissions from the burning of fossil fuels.

You and Your Vehicle: Making the Link

Vehicles are a big part of the problem. For every litre of gasoline used, the average car produces about 2.4 kilograms of carbon dioxide, the principal GHG. This may not seem like much, since it refers to one car, but more than 17 million vehicles are registered in Canada



today, and the average motorist can use up to 2,000 litres of fuel a year. In total, these vehicles produce over 92 million tonnes of GHG emissions each year.

So it's easy to see that changing the way we drive, even slightly, can have a big impact on our health, our wallet and the environment. In fact, if every driver of a light-duty vehicle in Canada avoided idling for just five minutes a day, collectively we would save over 680 million litres of fuel and \$646 million every year (assuming fuel costs are \$0.95/litre). This would reduce our GHG emissions by 1.6 million tonnes. That's the equivalent of taking over 490,000 cars off the road!

Do the World a Favour – Don't Idle

To reduce air pollution, smog days and GHG emissions, we all need to use energy more wisely. That's why we need to think about our driving habits, particularly about how much we idle our engines. After all, when an engine runs for no reason, it causes air pollution, wastes fuel and money and needlessly harms the environment. In other words, **idling gets us nowhere.**

And the solution is literally in our hands – **it's as easy as the turn of a key.**

Ready to do your part?

Here are five simple steps to reduce idling:

- 1** Reduce your warm-up idling. Even on the coldest of winter days, you can drive away after only 30 seconds of idling (provided your windows are defrosted). Contrary to popular belief, the best way to warm up your car is to drive it at a moderate speed.
- 2** If you're stopped for more than 10 seconds, turn off your engine. It has a minimal impact on the starter switch, and idling for over 10 seconds uses more fuel than it would take to re-start your engine.
- 3** Avoid using remote car starters. These devices encourage you to start your vehicle before you're ready to leave, resulting in needless idling and wasted fuel.
- 4** In temperatures below 0°C, consider using a block heater to warm up the engine before starting your vehicle. This will reduce engine wear, improve fuel efficiency and reduce your vehicle emissions.
- 5** Avoid "quick errand" idling by turning off your engine when running into a corner store or fast food restaurant. Leaving your engine running is hard on your pocketbook, produces GHG emissions, and is an invitation to car thieves.



For More Information

Visit the **Idle-Free Zone** at idling.gc.ca, a Web site of Natural Resources Canada's Office of Energy Efficiency. The Idle-Free Zone encourages communities to reduce vehicle idling at the local level. To order more publications on fuel efficiency, call 1-800-387-2000 toll-free. (Limit of 50 copies per publication.)

Natural Resources Canada's Office of Energy Efficiency
*Leading Canadians to Energy Efficiency at Home,
at Work and on the Road*

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