

idle-freezone

Spring 2003 Edition



3 Idling Myths ... and corresponding facts

MYTH: YOUR ENGINE SHOULD BE WARMED UP BEFORE DRIVING. Even in cold weather, the best way to warm up a vehicle's engine is to drive away – assuming your windows are clear. With today's modern engines, you need only 30 seconds of warm-up idling.

MYTH: IDLING IS GOOD FOR YOUR ENGINE. Excessive idling can actually damage your engine components, including cylinders, spark plugs and the exhaust system.

MYTH: SHUTTING OFF AND RESTARTING YOUR ENGINE USES MORE GAS THAN IF YOU LET IT IDLE. Ten seconds of idling uses more fuel than restarting your engine.



Individual Canadians Take "Idle-Free" Message to the Streets

Some Canadians are simply unwilling to sit idle when it comes to unnecessary vehicle idling. Idling is a bad habit that is costing us millions of dollars a year in wasted fuel, producing needless pollution and contributing to problems such as climate change and smog, which affect our health.

Here are just a few stories about individuals who are taking action to reduce unnecessary idling and adding their efforts to those of municipalities, community groups and businesses who are working to make Canadian communities "Idle-Free Zones."

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For more detailed reports and stories, SEE THE ZONE NEWSLETTER at oee.nrcan.gc.ca/idling.

Remember the Rule – No Idling at School

Jennifer West has had her fill of idling vehicles.

Every school day, the Ottawa-based management consultant had to breathe in exhaust from a line of idling cars in front of her house. The school across the street had become a popular spot for parents, waiting in their idling vehicles when dropping off or picking up their children.

One day, West noticed an "Idle-Free Zone" sign at the headquarters of Natural Resources Canada and decided to do what she could to reclaim the air in her quiet Ottawa neighbourhood.

Armed with information about idling that she found on the Idle-Free Zone Web site, she approached school director Pat Gere. "The reaction from the school has been very positive," says West. Together, they drafted a letter to all the parents, listing compelling reasons to avoid idling and urging them to think of their children's health and their future.

According to Gere, the letter has been well received. "Another parent came in just today, after a parent conference, to tell me that she appreciated the letter. She had previously believed that turning the car off and on used more gas than letting it idle."

Jennifer West knows that more will need to be done to make her street an Idle-Free Zone. Come spring, she hopes to encourage the school to distribute "Idle-Free" information cards and cling vinyl windshield decals to parents and to seek a commitment from them to kick the idling habit for good.



Natural Resources Canada

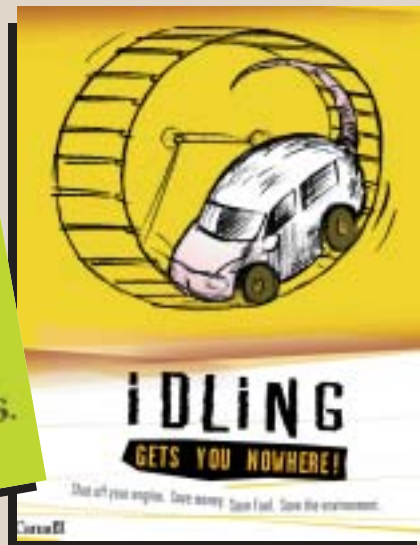
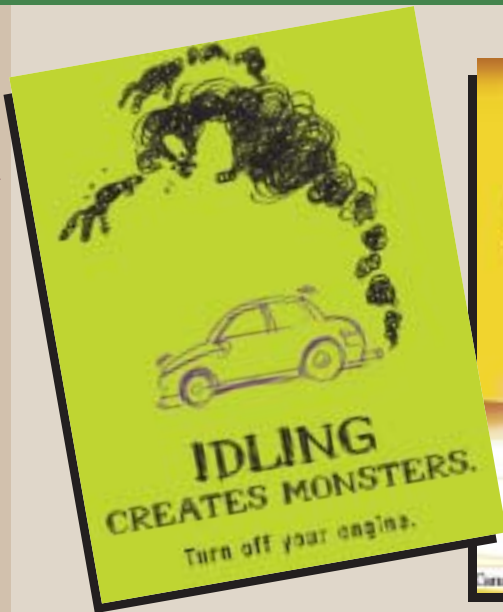
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Momentum CONTINUES TO



ZONE WEB SITE NEWS



See the new creative concepts added to the Anti-Idling Web Tool Kit at oee.nrcan.gc.ca/idling.

NEW!

More Creative Concepts Added to Web Tool Kit

A series of new creative concepts – particularly well suited for anti-idling print, transit shelter and “bus tail” advertising – has been developed and tested by Natural Resources Canada. These concepts can be downloaded free of charge from the tool kit section of the Idle-Free Zone. Add your community’s logo to the bottom left-hand corner of the graphic to personalize the message.

Visit oee.nrcan.gc.ca/idling to view and download the new graphics.

What is Unnecessary Idling?
Allowing your engine to run for over **10 seconds while parked**, except in traffic.

Idle-Free Zone a Big Hit!

It appears that all roads on the information highway lead to the Idle-Free Zone for those seeking the latest anti-idling information and tools.

Since its launch in October 2001, the Zone Web site has had over 12 000 hits from visitors across Canada and beyond.

“We’re thrilled with the response so far,” says Catherine Ray, senior marketing manager with Natural Resources Canada. She adds, “We’re hearing that municipalities and community groups throughout Canada are using the approaches and tools as a starting point for their campaigns. This is exactly what we hoped would happen.”

“Perhaps we’re in the early stages of what has happened with issues like smoking,” Ray suggests.

College Professor Launches One-Person Idling Campaign

Peter Buyze, an engineer by vocation, understands the technical reasons why vehicle idling makes no sense. With decades of experience in designing and installing energy conservation systems in major hotels around the world, he knows first-hand how energy efficiency is maximized. Idling a vehicle’s engine “is completely inefficient and a waste of money,” he says, stressing that “a car’s engine is most efficient while being driven on the road.”

Buyze now teaches photography at Mohawk College in Hamilton, Ontario. Irritated by idling vehicles on campus and in the streets of his hometown of Port Dover, Ontario, he has made it a mission to spread the word about unnecessary idling.

“Whenever I start a new class, the first thing I do after taking attendance is to talk to the students about idling. I hand out anti-idling windshield decals and key chains. I figure if each one of them tells five friends or family members about the idling problem, we’ll make a difference,” he says.



Buyze has also given lectures to community groups in his area and even approached drivers on the street to share his concerns about idling. “The response has been excellent. People say, ‘Wow, that makes a lot of sense,’” says Buyze, vowing to continue his one-person outreach campaign.

Toronto Woman Advocates “Turning it Off”

Ruth Schembri, a housing support worker in downtown Toronto, is troubled by the impacts of idling in her neighbourhood. “I’ve seen rows of delivery trucks, people just sitting in their cars, even police cars side by side, all with their engines running. It drives me crazy,” she says.

Schembri has obtained copies of Idle-Free information cards and cling vinyl windshield decals used to raise awareness about unnecessary vehicle idling in a recent Toronto-area campaign. “I carry them around in my briefcase, so I’m prepared to approach drivers when I’m out and about,” she adds.



Local and regional campaigns to reduce unnecessary idling continue to gather steam – and reduce needless emissions – across Canada.



Greater Toronto Area Set to Launch Region-Wide Campaign

In May 2003, municipalities, community groups and businesses in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) will join together to launch the GTA Idle-Free campaign. This will mark the most comprehensive public education and outreach initiative on vehicle idling undertaken in Canada to date, empowering over 5 million residents and the 18 participating GTA municipalities to join the growing national anti-idling movement.

The Idle-Free campaign will be a key community engagement tool of the fourth annual Smog Summit, which will take place in June 2003. The Smog Summit is an important annual intergovernmental initiative to address air pollution in the GTA through collaborative action and citizen involvement.

Plans include a major region-wide communications campaign – including print, radio and transit advertising – to raise awareness of the idling issue in the weeks leading up to the Smog Summit. At the local level, anti-idling “blitzes” will be rolled out by trained volunteers, who will approach drivers at idling hot spots around the GTA and seek commitments from them to avoid idling in the future.

For more details, visit www.smogsummit.org.

Sierra Club Targets Idling Reduction in Edmonton

The Sierra Club Prairie Chapter believes that through individual actions, Canadians can make a difference. That’s the foundation for Sierra’s “Reduce Vehicle Idling for Clean Air” campaign, which aims to engage as many people as possible and reduce the frequency of idling throughout the city.

The campaign was launched on October 24, 2002, with an Idle-Free Zone Day at Bishop Greschuk Elementary School in Edmonton, Alberta. The event featured the distribution of Idle-Free windshield decals and Clean Air postcards to all parents dropping off their children at school that day. A poster contest also yielded over 100 amazing posters from eager students.

The campaign is now focusing on the broad distribution of the Clean Air postcards throughout Edmonton, using VIPs – Volunteer Idling Patrols – who approach idling drivers to spread the campaign’s messages. “The key is to dispel those myths about idling and provide them with the truth, especially that you don’t have to warm up your engine for 30 minutes before driving,” says Sonja Mihelcic, campaign director.

Visit the campaign Web site at www.sierraclub.ca/prairie/idling for more details. To view a copy of the Clean Air postcard, visit oee.nrcan.gc.ca/idling/newsletter.

Did You Know...?

The Idle-Free Zone Web site, oee.nrcan.gc.ca/idling, contains many different tools that individuals can use to take action on idling, including a downloadable PowerPoint® presentation, sample letters to newspaper editors, posters and other free materials.



Community Coalition Drives Anti-Idling Success in Waterloo Region

The Citizens’ Advisory Committee on Air Quality (CACAQ) is a community coalition in Waterloo Region made up of representatives from about 15 community groups, numerous individual volunteers and staff from the Region of Waterloo and local municipalities.

The CACAQ is the driving force behind a series of initiatives to improve air quality and reduce the impact of air pollution on personal health and the environment in the Waterloo, Ontario, area. The coalition’s Idling Reduction Education Campaign is a major region-wide education and awareness initiative, which targets idling reductions in municipal operations, at schools and workplaces, and in the community at large.

One of the coalition’s most impressive achievements is the development – and widespread adoption – of the Waterloo Region Idling Control Protocol. The centrepiece of the protocol is that municipal vehicles must be turned off after

10 seconds of being parked. “There are a few exemptions in the policy, including some for transit and emergency vehicles,” says campaign coordinator David Steffler. “But getting the protocol passed by all our councils really kick-started the process and gave us the confidence to start asking the public to reduce idling too.”

The public education campaign is now in full swing, using a variety of outreach tools – brochures, idle-free “contracts,” decals, key chains, posters and metal signs for the outdoors. Future plans include transit shelter advertising, public service announcements and street banners.

Find out more about the campaign at www.airqualitywaterlooregion.org. To download copies of campaign materials, visit oee.nrcan.gc.ca/idling/newsletter.



School Bus Idling Banned in Fredericton

School District 18 in Fredericton, New Brunswick, has adopted a strict no-idling program for school buses. The new program, developed in cooperation with the New Brunswick Lung Association, requires bus drivers to shut their engines off when students are boarding.

The initiative is designed to cut down on diesel emissions in the air around schools, in the buses and inside the schools through the air exchange systems.

The district is also requesting that parents who drive their children to school shut their vehicles off when dropping off or picking up children on or near school property.



From Greater Sudbury and Mississauga Campaign Highlights

The cities of Greater Sudbury and Mississauga, Ontario, are now wrapping up a two-year pilot project to test the anti-idling information and tools on the Idle-Free Zone Web site.

Both campaigns took a comprehensive, citywide approach with two main prongs:

- **Public Awareness** – Both launched efforts to inform residents about the idling issue, using a mix of advertising, posters, signs, local media and Web communications.
- **Personal “Interventions” at Community Locations** – Both campaigns recognized the importance of speaking with people where idling is occurring to help change behaviours. Mississauga focused on transit pick-up locations, schools and hot spots such as arenas and community centres, whereas Greater Sudbury zoned in on schools and commercial parking lots.

Read on to sample highlights from the two citywide anti-idling campaigns. For additional campaign results and to download copies of the full campaign report from each city, go to the Idle-Free Zone Web site at oe.nrcan.gc.ca/idling/newsletter.

Public Awareness Sky-High in Mississauga

Mississauga’s campaign reached almost 7 of every 10 city residents, according to a post-campaign survey. A significant 69 percent said they have seen, heard or read about the campaign.

Other post-campaign results from Mississauga:

- 95 percent believe that idling causes unnecessary air pollution (up 5 percent from before the campaign).
- 93 percent agree that “turning my vehicle off when parked is the right thing to do” (up 3 percent).
- 57 percent have heard of the phrase “Idle-Free Zone” (up 23 percent).

Those who were exposed to the campaign

- Say they idle less – about three to four times less (depending on the location) than those who have not been exposed.
- Report idling for a fraction of the time – just over one minute compared with almost four minutes for those who have not been exposed.
- Are much more likely to change their idling behaviour – 57 percent say that the campaign will have a strong or moderate impact on whether they will idle in the future.

Mississauga Transit Adopts New Idling Policy

A very positive outcome of Mississauga’s campaign is Mississauga Transit’s new vehicle idling policy. The new policy states that all transit vehicles will not idle for more than five minutes. This marks a substantial decrease in idling limits. Under the old policy, transit vehicles were permitted to idle up to 15 minutes.



City of Mississauga campaign staff offer the following tips to communities that are developing and implementing anti-idling campaigns:

1. **Attack the myths about engine idling:**
The three major idling myths need to be challenged and debunked. You need to put these front and centre in your campaign along with the facts.
2. **Get your own house in order:**
For municipalities, your message goes a long way with the public if you first “get your own house in order.” The municipality must take the lead on issues like idling, so launch a workplace initiative to reduce idling across municipal operations.
3. **Partnerships are the key to success:**
To effectively implement your campaign, you’ll need to hook up with local community partners, such as school boards and transit authorities.
4. **Finding and managing project staff:**
Using a community-based social marketing approach, as described in the Idle-Free Zone tool kit, requires “people power” to make personal contact with drivers to encourage them to reduce idling at community locations. Determine if there are environmental internship programs at the local university or college for resource help.
5. **Council and senior management support is critical:**
For municipalities, foster strong support from your council and senior management. Your mayor could help launch the campaign, and formal council endorsement should be sought.
6. **Create your own new tools using the Web site images:**
We developed new tools including t-shirts, radio spots, letterhead and a dedicated anti-idling Web site.
7. **Schedule personal contact with drivers during consistently moderate temperatures:**
Two initiatives in the City of Mississauga’s anti-idling campaign were implemented in late fall. As a result of the decreasing temperatures that came with the approaching winter season, idling actually increased slightly after the initiative. Although greater increases in idling were undoubtedly prevented, it was difficult to assess the full impact the initiative had on idling behaviours. So, for best results, schedule the implementation of initiatives when temperatures are expected to be consistently moderate, such as spring and early fall.
8. **Focus on parents, caregivers and children:**
Some audiences are more receptive to the anti-idling message than others. In the City of Mississauga’s experience, the most successful component was drivers (i.e., parents and caregivers) at elementary schools who are concerned about the health of their children.
9. **Web site tool kit provides a great starting point:**
Draw extensively on the images, information and graphic materials available in the Idle-Free Zone Web tool kit. All graphic elements work well – in many cases, you just need to add your logo. You can also tailor the materials for local use by adding local hooks.
10. **Build a campaign Web site:**
A Web site is a great low-cost way to make anti-idling information readily accessible and allows regular updates as the campaign progresses. A contact e-mail address allows visitors to make inquiries, comments or suggestions easily, and response time and printing costs can be minimized by referring to the Web site. The City of Mississauga used a catchy vanity name – www.123turnyourkey.com – that made promotion of the Web site easier and more effective.

For more information on lessons learned from the Mississauga and Greater Sudbury campaigns, visit oe.nrcan.gc.ca/idling/newsletter.



Leading Canadians to Energy Efficiency at Home, at Work and on the Road

The Office of Energy Efficiency of Natural Resources Canada strengthens and expands Canada’s commitment to energy efficiency in order to help address the challenges of climate change.

Some of the documents shown have not been produced by the Government of Canada and are not available in both official languages.