

# 20 Things you should know about idling

1. **Idling gets you nowhere** – and it can be costly. Excessive idling wastes over \$100 a year per vehicle, and generates needless greenhouse gas emissions.
2. Idling produces more emissions per minute than driving.
3. Engine exhaust (diesel and gas) contains more than 40 **hazardous air pollutants**.
4. Traffic areas around schools – where vehicles are often left idling – show significantly **higher pollution levels outside (and inside) their buildings**.
5. Contaminants in vehicle emissions have been directly related to significant **respiratory health effects**. A recent report by Health Canada states 5,900 Canadians die every year from air pollution.
6. **Children are more sensitive to air pollution than adults**. In part because they are exposed to more emissions with every breath – children inhale more air per pound of body weight than grown-ups.
7. **Ten seconds of idling uses more fuel than turning off the engine and restarting it**. If you're stopping for more than 10 seconds – except in traffic – turn off your engine.
8. If every driver of a light-duty vehicle in Canada stopped idling for just five minutes, **we would save 1.8 million litres of fuel**. We would also prevent more than 4,500 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> from entering the atmosphere.
9. **Idle-Free Zones are an effective** way to increase awareness about idling and to reduce harmful vehicle emissions.
10. Once a vehicle is running, **the best way to warm it up is to drive it**. With computer-controlled, fuel-injected engines, you need no more than 30 seconds of idling on winter days before driving away. The tires, transmission, wheel bearings and other moving parts also need to be warm for the vehicle to perform well. Most of these parts don't begin to warm up until you drive the vehicle.
11. Natural Resource Canada estimates **Canadian motorists idle 5 – 10 minutes per day**, depending on the season.
12. **Driving a vehicle cuts warm-up time in half**. It reduces fuel consumption too.
13. Every **10 minutes of idling costs you at least one-tenth of a litre** in wasted fuel – and up to two-fifths of a litre if your vehicle has an eight-cylinder engine. Every litre of gasoline burned produces 2.4 kg of CO<sub>2</sub>.
14. Excessive idling can be **hard on your engine**. Because the engine isn't working at peak operating temperature, fuel doesn't undergo complete combustion. This leaves fuel residues that contaminate engine oil and make spark plugs dirty.
15. **Restarting a car many times has little impact on engine components** such as the battery and the starter motor. The wear on parts that restarting the engine causes adds about \$10 a year to the cost of driving – money that you'll likely recover several times over in fuel savings.
16. If your vehicle has a diesel engine, idling actually lowers the coolant temperature faster than shutting off the engine. In other words, **switching off the engine keeps the engine warm longer**.
17. A poorly tuned engine uses up to 15 percent more energy when idling than a well-tuned vehicle.
18. **Using a block heater is a more efficient and effective way to warm the engine than idling**. A block heater warms the engine block and lubricants, which makes the engine start more easily and reach its peak operating temperature faster. You don't need to leave a block heater plugged in overnight to warm the engine – two hours is more than enough.
19. Idling your vehicle with the **air conditioner** on can increase emissions by 13 percent.
20. Many schools have already **reduced harmful vehicle emissions around schools**, through programs such as [“Turn Your Key – This School is Idle-Free”](#) developed by Climate Change Connection and Resource Conservations Manitoba.