



VEHICLE IDLING: SOME FACTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Idling negatively impacts air quality and our health. And CO₂ emissions from vehicle exhaust contribute to climate change.

“Exhaust from idling vehicles is a common asthma trigger at schools. By limiting exposure to tailpipe emissions, schools can help reduce their students’ risk of developing asthma and decrease the severity of symptoms among students who already have the disease.”

David Grass, PhD

Environmental Health Surveillance Chief

Vermont Department of Health

IDLING IN THE SCHOOL PICK UP LINE (especially in weather extremes):

WINTER: Drivers are wearing winter clothing. The car was warmed up before arriving so when the engine is turned off the interior will maintain its warmth for a while. Bluetooth or other devices can be used in Accessory mode. If arriving early or if a child is late, consider parking and going into the school to keep warm.

SUMMER: Avoid idling with windows closed and air conditioning on. Turn off the engine and open windows. Bluetooth or other devices can be used in Accessory mode. If it’s too hot or inclement weather, consider parking and going into the school.

WARMING UP: The U.S. Dept. of Energy states, *“The best way to warm up a vehicle is to drive it. No more than 30 seconds of idling on winter days is needed.”* Driving gently to moderately is the best way to warm up, allowing the transmission, bearings, catalytic converter, steering, and tires to warm up with the engine; they don’t warm up when idling. Clear off snow and ice before starting. Exceptions: if colder than 10 degrees, let it idle for one-three minutes as oil is thicker in extreme cold; defrosting must be adequate before driving; for infants and frail elderly, allow a few minutes of warm up.

ENGINE WEAR: Modern fuel-injected engines do not need long warm up times. Excessive idling causes engine wear, including carbon soot buildup on engine components, and shortens the life of motor oil, spark plugs and exhaust system. Many vehicle owner’s manuals advise limiting idling.

LAW: Vermont law limits idling of all vehicles to 5 minutes in any 60-minute period (with exceptions).

*Turn your key and be idle-free – **for the kids!***

For more information on vehicle idling, visit: idlefreevt.org
Overview of vehicle idling video from Norwich (CT) Clean Cities Coalition:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jyKu4Pa3nQ&feature=youtu.be>