



a High Meadows Fund-supported Idle-Free VT Inc. project

FACT SHEET: VERMONT NO-IDLING LAW vs GUIDELINE



In 2014 Vermont enacted a new state law: Prohibited idling of motor vehicles¹. This is certainly good news and one might therefore ask, “*Why do we need to adopt a school no-idling procedure or policy now that we have this law?*”



The law limits idling of all vehicles to five minutes in any 60 minute period (with exceptions). An administrative procedure² or policy can prohibit idling altogether on the school premises, subject to exceptions stipulated by a principal or superintendent. The goal on school grounds is for no idling, especially when parents are parked in the afternoon pick up areas outside of school buildings. Five minutes of a caravan of idling vehicles is unacceptable when kids are coming out of school and approaching them. The EPA³ tells us that:

“Monitoring at schools has shown elevated levels of benzene, formaldehyde, acetaldehyde and other air toxics during the afternoon hour coinciding with parents picking up their children. Children’s lungs are still developing, and when they are exposed to elevated levels of these pollutants, children have an increased risk of developing asthma, respiratory problems and other adverse health effects. Limiting a vehicle’s idling time can dramatically reduce these pollutants and children’s exposure to them.”

Only a school no-idling guideline can address this, as it lists specific information about the adverse health and environmental effects of vehicle idling and steps to restrict idling in the school community. For more details, read the Fact Sheet: Making School No-Idling Guidelines Work⁴.

Not adopting a guideline means schools probably will not promote the benefits of avoiding idling. Parents, delivery drivers, faculty, etc. will not learn the harm and waste of idling. Students — our future drivers — are less likely to learn about this issue. Instead there will be a stagnant law that offers virtually no enforcement and no educational value.

The new law is welcomed! It will make guidelines more effective and allow administrators more enforcement leverage. But it can’t effectively replace a guideline. *Let’s do the best we can, for the kids.*

1 Prohibited idling of motor vehicles <http://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/23/013/01110>

2 No-idling administrative procedure or policy templates <http://idlefreevt.org/no-idling-guidelines.html>

3 EPA Region 8 Idle Free Schools <http://www2.epa.gov/region8/idle-free-schools>

4 http://idlefreevt.org/misc_pdf/Making_Guidelines_Work.pdf