

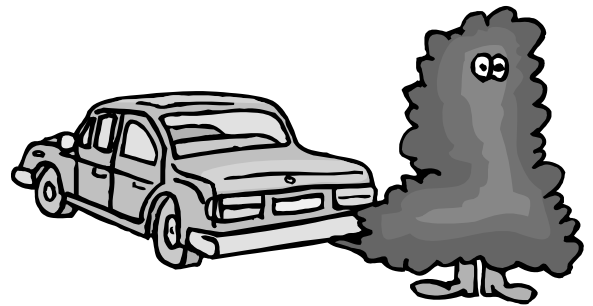
# Idling Gets You Nowhere

*Canadian drivers idle their engines for an average of 5-10 minutes a day. Add these minutes together and that's enough time to keep one car running for 144 years! This needless idling means millions of litres of fuel and therefore millions of dollars, are simply burned away. Most significantly and contrary to popular belief, idling your car will actually damage your engine! And in areas where excessive idling is common, around school zones for example, serious health effects have been exposed.*

In the summer of 2002, Peterborough city and county experienced 18 smog days placing our community amongst the highest in Ontario. According to the Canadian Automobile Association, Canada's 18 million cars, each idling for 5 minutes a day wastes 1.9 million litres of fuel and generates huge amounts of unnecessary smog-inducing vehicle emissions .

Without a doubt, vehicle exhaust contributes to an increase in air pollution and smog. Each year approximately 2,000 premature deaths in Ontario can be attributed to air pollution (*Ontario Medical Association*). Idling cars produce 2X as much pollution than moving cars!

These changes to our air and climate have great consequences for our wallets, our health, our environment, and most notably, our children (see our *Air Quality and Children's Health* Fact Sheet).



## Damaging Your Car...

You may think you need to warm up your car by letting the motor run, especially in the winter, but this is not the case. Idling will damage your car. Not only will you pay excess in gas costs, but also in maintenance from wear and tear on your vehicle's engine.

When you idle your car, the engine is not operating at its peak temperature. This means that the fuel is not being burned efficiently because the fuel combustion process is incomplete. Incomplete combustion means you need more gas than would ordinarily be needed and this costs you more money.

Incomplete combustion leaves fuel residues inside your engine that can condense on cylinder walls. Once condensed on these walls this residue can contaminate your car's oil and damage other parts of the engine, such as the spark plugs, where

residue tends to deposit. Dirty spark plugs can increase your fuel consumption by 4-5%. Idling can also lead to water condensation in your vehicles exhaust system, leading to corrosion.

It is a common myth that turning your engine off and on will do more damage than idling will. In fact it is quite the opposite. Damage to the starting components adds only an estimated \$10 a year to your driving costs. This will be made up many times over in fuel and maintenance savings from not idling!



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***If you are going to be idling for 10 seconds or more turn your engine off!***

**A Cold Start...**

With today's modern technology, you need no more than 30 seconds of idling to warm up your vehicle's engine. And yes, even on winter days!! It is important to remember that idling your engine to warm it up, does ONLY that. The wheels, wheel bearings, steering, suspension, transmission, and tires also need warming up, just as much as the engine does. Idling the engine

does not warm up any of these important components! In fact, during the winter, idling emissions from "cold start" will more than double the normal level (*Natural Resources Canada*). The best way to warm up your ENTIRE car in the colder winter months is to drive it after starting the engine for **no more than 30 seconds**.

**AN IDLING ENGINE GIVES YOU ZERO KILOMETRES PER LITRE!**

**How Can You Minimize Your Idling?**

- **Minimize your warm-up idling:** Drive away after no more than 30 seconds of idling. Be sure to clear off all of your windows before you leave.
- **Use a block heater:** Using a block heater in the winter will warm up your engine efficiently. It will save you money, improve your fuel efficiency and reduce your emissions by up to 20% in cold conditions.
- **Stopped for more than 10 seconds? Turn it off!** Idling for more than 10 seconds uses more fuel than it would take to restart your car. This is especially important in areas frequented by a lot of people and children. During pick-up and drop-off times at schools children are exposed to levels 5-10 times higher than normal.
- **Avoid the use of drive-thrus:** Cars in drive-thrus add thousands of kilograms of pollutants into the air. Often times it is much faster to park your car and go into the establishment. Avoid that morning vehicle line-up and give your body a little stretch too!
- **Avoid the use of remote car starters:** They encourage the use of your engine before you are ready to drive. Once you've remotely started your vehicle, it's easy to spend a few extra minutes talking or getting ready to leave. This ultimately means needless idling.
- **Are you in the business of managing a fleet?** Fleet vehicles idle for anywhere from 20-60% of their operating time. This means that your profits are being burned away! Molson Canada initiated a 5 minute maximum idling policy that has resulted in an added \$250,000 a year profit with the average vehicle now idling for only 4% of its operating time. Contact Green-Up about starting a policy at your workplace.

**Resources:**

*Natural Resources Canada: Idle-Free!*  
<http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/idling/home.cmf>

*The Canadian Automobile Association*  
[www.caa.ca](http://www.caa.ca)

For more information on local transportation programs and resources contact Peterborough Green-Up at 745-3238 or visit:

**[www.peterboroughmoves.com](http://www.peterboroughmoves.com)**

**Take the One-Tonne Challenge!**

Peterborough Green-Up joins the Government of Canada in encouraging Peterborough citizens to reduce their personal greenhouse gas contribution! This sounds bigger than it is! Remember, the average Canadian produces 5 tonnes of greenhouse gases per year - 50% of this is from transportation! Let's walk, bike and bus our way to a healthier climate! Learn more at:

[www.climatechange.gc.ca](http://www.climatechange.gc.ca) 



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