



State of Connecticut  
Department of Correction

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For Immediate Release  
**Department of Correction  
Encourages Everyone to Reduce  
Idling of Automobiles**

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**Reducing Idling Saves Money, and the Environment**



Idling is something we don't often think about – it's a habit that we do unconsciously. Reducing our idling not only saves us money, but reduces significantly greenhouse gas emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>) and health-harming pollution. To most, idling a car may seem fairly innocuous, but it is actually detrimental to the modern automotive engine, wastes gasoline, and is often done simply out of habit or based on mistaken assumptions and outdated logic.

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Each day, Americans waste approximately 3.8 million gallons of gasoline by voluntarily idling their cars. Reducing idling immediately addresses both environmental and human health issues.

You may not be able to avoid keeping your engine running when you're stopped at a traffic signal or stuck in slow-moving traffic. But other times idling is unnecessary.

When not actively driving, people tend to idle their cars largely for one of two reasons: either to warm up the engine before driving or to avoid wear and tear on the engine in situations that require frequent restarting, such as drive-through service lines, rail crossings, car wash lines, carpool lines, and departure from concerts and sporting events, or while talking to friends or using the cell phone. By understanding the effects of idling and reducing the practice, you can improve your car's performance, save money, and reduce needless carbon dioxide emissions.

Idling pollutes the air and harms health. Idling tailpipes spew out the same pollutants that form unhealthy smog and soot as those from moving cars. Nitrogen oxide, particulate matter, carbon monoxide and volatile organic compounds are the main health-harming pollutants in vehicle emissions. Diesel engines emit more than 40 hazardous air pollutants. These pollutants have been linked to serious human illnesses, including: asthma, heart disease, chronic bronchitis and cancer. Children, the elderly and those with asthma and other chronic health problems are especially vulnerable to the health dangers of exhaust.

#### **Four Ways to be Idle-Free**

- Turn off your ignition if you're waiting more than 10 seconds. Contrary to popular belief, restarting your car does not burn more fuel than leaving it idling. In fact, idling for just 10 seconds wastes more gas than restarting the engine.
- Warm up your engine by driving it, not by idling. Today's electronic engines do not need to warm up, even in winter. The best way to warm the engine is by easing into your drive and avoiding excessive engine revving. After just a few seconds, your vehicle is safe to drive! The vehicle's engine warms twice as quickly when driven.
- Warm up the cabin interior by driving, not idling. Easing into your drive is also the best way to get your vehicle's heating system delivering warmer air faster. Sitting in an idling car means you are breathing in more of the dirty exhaust that leaks into the car cabin. Any warmth you may get from a car heater is not worth the damage to your health. If parked and waiting, it is healthier to get out of your car and go inside a store or building.
- Protect your car engine by idling less. Frequent restarts are no longer hard on a vehicle's engine and battery. The added wear is much less costly than the cost of fuel. Idling actually increases overall engine wear by causing the car to operate for longer than necessary.