

## Idle facts



- **Idling creates unnecessary pollution**

A vehicle idling for five minutes produces more than a quarter kilogram (271.4 grams) of the greenhouse gases that are destabilizing our planet's climate patterns. According to Natural Resources Canada, if every driver in Canada avoided idling for five minutes a day, we would prevent 1.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (the principle greenhouse gas) from entering the atmosphere.

- **Idling wastes fuel**

Idling for more than 10 seconds uses more fuel than turning off the engine and restarting it, according to Natural Resources Canada. One vehicle idling for five minutes burns just over one-tenth of a litre, or about eight cents worth of gasoline. Idling is an enormous waste of money because it burns fuel but doesn't get you anywhere.

- **Restarting a car many times has little impact on engine components**

Studies have shown that restarting the engine numerous times have little impact on components like the battery and starter motor. The wear on parts that restarting the engine causes adds only about \$10 a year to the cost of driving – money likely recovered several times over in fuel savings enjoyed by motorists who don't idle, Natural Resources Canada reports.

- **Idling is a poor way to “warm up the car” in winter**

You don't need to idle for more than 30 seconds to warm up your car. The best way to warm up your car in the winter is to drive it. Many components of the vehicle including the wheel bearings, tires and suspension system will only warm up when the vehicle is moving. No more than 30 seconds of idling is needed to get the oil circulating through the engine.

- **Idling can damage your car's engine.**

Since an idling engine is not operating at its peak operating temperature, the fuel is not completely burned. This leaves fuel residue that can damage engine parts, including cylinders, spark plugs and exhaust systems. It can also contaminate engine oil.

- **Diesel engines stay warmer when turned off instead of idling**

Idling a diesel-powered vehicle actually lowers the coolant temperature faster than shutting off the engine. So turning off the engine keeps it warmer longer than idling does.

- **The daily environmental and economic costs of idling**

If every driver of a light-duty vehicle in Toronto avoided idling for 5 minutes a day, the city could prevent 78.59 tonnes of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere each day. That's 28,684.62 tonne(s) per year! By avoiding idling for five minutes a day, motorists in Toronto could collectively avoid wasting 33,300.0 litres of fuel each day, worth \$25,874.10. On an annual basis, this translates into savings of 12,154,500.0 litres worth \$9,444,046.50 (based on \$0.77 per litre).

- **Profile of an idler**

Research shows that the amount of idling a driver does tends to increase with the number of people in their household. A driver living with children is more likely to idle. The frequency of idling decreases as a person ages, with retirees least likely to idle. People in rural areas are more likely to idle than urban drivers. Regionally, our B.C. cousins are least likely to idle, according to Natural Resources Canada.

- **Idling has seasonal peaks and valleys**

Idling is a problem year-round. A recent study revealed that in the peak of winter, Canadians idle their vehicles for a combined total of more than 75 million minutes a day – equal to one vehicle idling for 144 years. In summer, Canadians idle about 46 million minutes a day – the same as one vehicle idling for 89 years, according to Natural Resources Canada. The problem is worse in the winter, but there's never a good time to waste fuel and generate unnecessary pollution.