

Mobile Sources

and Rhode Island

Fact Sheet #7—Idling

August 2014

What is Idling?

Idling occurs when a vehicle (car, boat, etc) with a diesel or gasoline engine is running but the vehicle is not in motion. Excessive idling causes an unnecessary release of air contaminants into the air, including fine particulates and air toxics. Every year, people die prematurely from exposure to diesel exhaust and fine particle pollution.

Rhode Island law prohibits the idling of diesel vehicles for more than 5 minutes in a sixty minute period, with exceptions (exemptions listed in section [45.5](#) of Air Pollution Control Regulation No. 45 – Rhode Island Diesel Engine Anti-Idling Program).



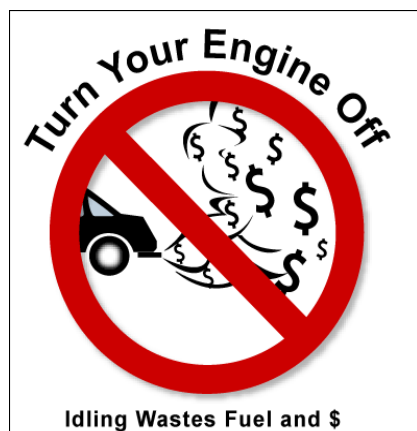
**NO-IDLE
ZONE**

Turn your engine off when parked!

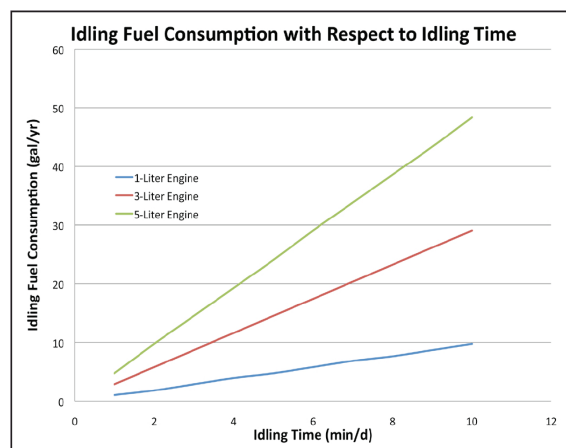
Stopping unnecessary vehicle idling is one relatively easy way to contribute to improved air quality and respiratory health in our state.

- It's the law! (for diesel vehicles)
- Save money on fuel costs.
- Make the air healthier.
- Help the environment.
- **Although the law regulates diesel vehicles, idling of passenger vehicles emit harmful pollutants too! You should turn off your engine whenever you can.

How Much Fuel Are You Consuming?



The U.S. Department of Energy Argonne National Laboratory chart calculates annual fuel consumption in gallons, per minute of idling—based on engine liter size.





Myths vs. Facts

Many people think that you should idle to warm your engine. Others will tell you that starting the engine uses more fuel than idling it. The truth is there are a lot of myths about idling. While some of these myths used to be true, advances in engine technology have made idling unnecessary.

Myth: Idling is good for your engine.

Fact: Excessive idling can actually damage your engine components, including cylinders, spark plugs and exhaust systems. Fuel is only partially combusted when idling because the engine does not operate at peak temperature. This leads to the buildup of fuel residues on cylinder walls that can damage engine components and lower mileage.

Myth: Each time you start a vehicle you waste more fuel than if you let it idle.

Fact: Engines don't operate efficiently when they idle. Experts say that the break-even point is 10 seconds. Idling longer than 10 seconds, wastes more fuel than turning off the engine and restarting it.

Myth: The engine should be warmed up before driving, especially on cold days.

Fact: Modern gasoline engines don't need more than a few seconds to "warm-up" before they can be driven safely. In fact, the best way to warm up a vehicle is to drive it, since that warms up the catalytic converter and other mechanical parts, in addition to the engine. Modern diesel engines require no more than 3 minutes of warming.

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