



## Anti-Idling Campaign

**Action:** Reducing air pollution from vehicle emissions in the school parking lot.

### Materials:

- Pylons for marking the anti-Idling zone
- Anti-Idling zone signs, with information about the campaign
- Clothing that will distinguish the students participating in the campaign
- A clipboard and pencil for recording the amount of vehicles and time spent idling in the parking lot before and after school.

### Best time of year to conduct project:

- This project is intended to be semester or year long. Comparing the results of the campaign during the different seasons can be a great learning experience for students.

### Time commitment:

- Planning and creation of media campaign: Two to three meetings
- Baseline data collection: Three to four sessions
- Monitoring: Two to three sessions per week
- Maintenance: Periodic

### Background:

- This project is designed to help students understand the impact of greenhouse gases and pollution on the environment.
- Air pollution and climate change contribute to health problems for Canadians.
- Idling wastes gas and money as well.

### Gives students the opportunity to:

- Explore the concept of energy
- Examine ways in which energy consumption can cause pollution
- Participate and lead others in energy-saving actions
- Educate other students, parents and teachers about air pollution

### Fast facts:

- Turning the car off and on does not cause damage. Any added wear is outweighed by the cost of fuel savings.
- Many cities in Ontario now have by-laws against idling.
- Fines for idling vary from \$100 to \$400.
- Transportation accounts for over 30 per cent of greenhouse gases emitted annually. This is even higher in northern regions.
- Idling your car can cause damage and corrosion to the exhaust system.
- An idling car that sits for 10 seconds takes more fuel than restarting it.
- If everyone who owned a car avoided idling for five minutes, it would prevent more than 4,500 tons of carbon dioxide from being put into the air.



### **Getting started**

- Start small and keep it simple. You will not be able to convert all drivers – so aim to reduce idling habits by 40 per cent
- Update parents about the “No Idling at School” project through your school newsletter and send home an information card with students.
- Notify them of dates that you will be requesting their commitment and that volunteers (or students) will be approaching them.
- Over one week, using volunteer parents or a class of senior students with teacher supervision, hand out the information card along with the “For Our Air” sticker to parents who are waiting at the school in their vehicles.
- Ask that they display the sticker in their car window as a reminder to themselves to turn off their engine and as a message to others that they don't idle.
- You can keep track of the number of vehicles that have the stickers by either counting the stickers or by having the volunteers complete a commitment sheet.
- Students can create large banners and signs to hang around the school.

### **Step-by-step instructions:**

After your class/school has conducted their environmental audit:

1. Decide if an anti-idling campaign is appropriate at your school. Find out when, where and for how long cars are idling at your school.
2. Gain approval. This may involve talking to the principal, parents, local municipality, school board and/or other local groups.
3. Set goals for the project (i.e. reduce the number of idling cars and/or reduce the amount of time each car idles).
4. Gather research on idling.
5. Develop communication strategies:
  - Send home information or brochures detailing how students and their families can help.
  - Host a no idling day or find out when the no car or anti-idling day is in your region and promote it.
  - Create a no idling zone where cars are most likely to idle.
  - Create anti-idling posters with catchy slogans: Idling gets you nowhere! Turn off the Key! Turn off car at train tracks!
  - Establish an awareness program locally, particularly in winter.
  - Develop an efficient parking lot and drop off system.
  - Issue mock traffic tickets to idling offenders reminding them to turn the engine off.
6. Sustain the campaign. Set your campaign up so that students can continue the message each year (i.e. establish a “anti-idling zone” at your school that will permanently remind people to turn off their engines.)
7. Have your school pick one day or week a year to promote the message.



**Maintaining interest in the project:**

- Have patrol members provide updates on the anti-idling campaign in school publications.
- Announce anti-idling updates and successes during school announcements.
- Create clean air labels and signs to place in doorways, and at the entrance to the school parking lot.
- Reward students who participate in monitoring the progress of the campaign.
- Provide rewards for vehicles that always comply with the campaign.

**Helpful hints:**

- Ensure the entire school is aware of the purpose of the campaign and how they can participate.
- Try to schedule your campaigns around significant dates, i.e. Earth Day or other holidays. Try to compare the difference in idling throughout the seasons.
- Ensure the students understand why they are doing the campaign, e.g. provide a short hand-out (be sure to reuse or use recycled paper!) that patrol members can give to other teachers, students or parents when asked.