

Please Turn Off Your Engines

Cynthia Peters

In a Massachusetts town, a soccer coach noticed parents waiting in their cars at pick-up time. Many parents left their cars running right next to the soccer field. The benzene that is in car exhaust is bad for children's health. It is a proven cause of cancer in children.

The coach wanted parents to cut back on idling. He felt some people would be open to the idea and some would not. He wanted to write a note to the parents that would convince them to turn off their engines.

What would be helpful for parents to know about idling? Write your own letter to the parents. Find a graphic to go with your letter. Or create your own!

If you drive, think about what your own idling habits. Fill out the chart below. Discuss your answers with others.



Cynthia Peters is editor of The Change Agent.



FAQs about Idling

Doesn't my car engine need time to warm up during the winter?

No! Today's engines are electronic and do not need idling to warm up.

Doesn't restarting an engine burn more fuel than just leaving a vehicle idling?

No! In fact, idling for just ten seconds wastes more fuel than restarting the engine.

Aren't frequent restarts hard on the vehicle's engine and battery?

Not any more! Engines and batteries are now more durable.

But if I turn off the car, I will get cold.

It is better for your health to turn off the car. Fumes leak into the car.

For more info go to <www.edf.org/stopidling>.

What Can I Do about Idling?

	I already do this	I could try to do this	I will definitely do this	I will get support from others to do this
Stop idling to warm up the car				
Turn off the car while waiting for someone				
Share with others what I know about idling				
Contact schools or places where idling happens, and work with others to find ways to reduce idling.				
Find out what the anti-idling laws are in my community; spread the word about these laws; check that they are enforced.				

Illustration above courtesy of the East Toronto Climate Action Group