

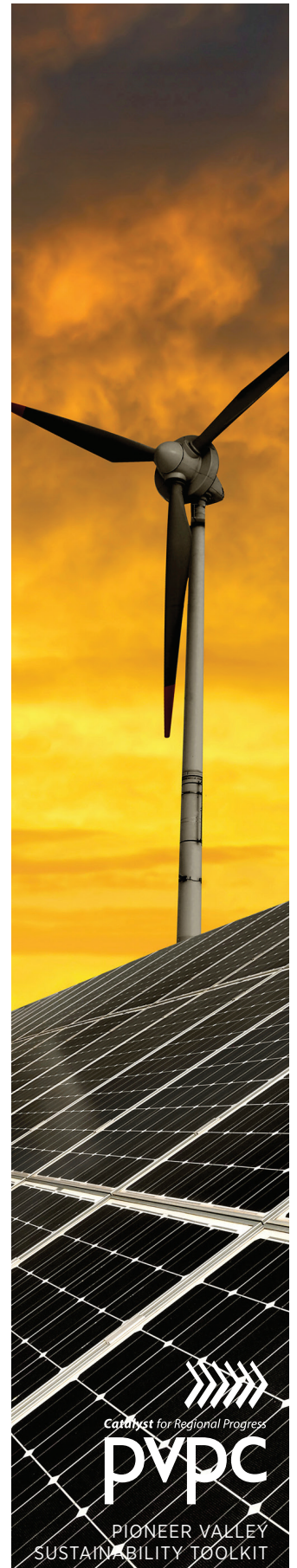
Idling Reduction Campaign & Program

PURPOSE

To educate citizens about air pollution resulting from vehicle idling and to reduce idling behavior.

Exhaust from motor vehicles can cause serious health effects on top of being a key factor of ground-level ozone or smog and a contributor to global warming. Fine particles emitted from diesel and gas engines are lung irritants and can trigger asthma attacks and more serious health conditions. All of these contaminants are produced when motor vehicles idle.

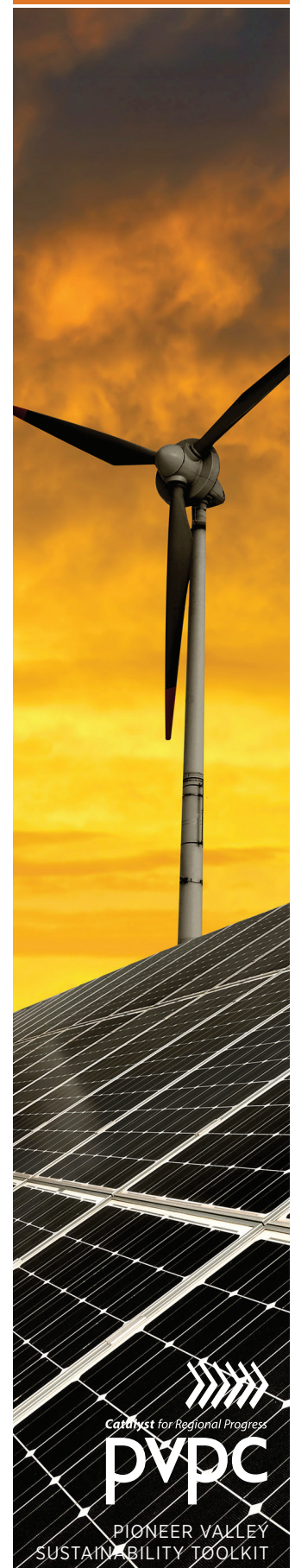
Massachusetts state law (M.G.L. Chapter 90, Section 16A) actually limits vehicle idling to five minutes, but many residents are unaware of this law, as are many local boards of health and local police who are charged with enforcing the state anti-idling law. Federal guidelines recommend that people turn their engines off after 10 seconds of waiting, except in traffic.



HOW IT WORKS

Local governments can take the following steps to implement an anti-idling educational campaign and program using parents of school-age children as a target population. Municipal and school district officials should re-launch the idling reduction campaign every three to five years to account for new populations cycling through the community.

1. The Board of Selectmen or City Council adopts a pledge to reduce unnecessary vehicle idling and/or adopts a municipal anti-idling policy. The Board of Selectmen or City Council then works with town/city staff to publicize local government adoption of pledge or policy through written notices such as emails and flyers to municipal staff and through newspaper articles, community access television, and temporary signs for the general public.
2. The Board of Selectmen or City Council contacts the school superintendent about idling reduction campaign and works with the superintendent to establish an anti-idling implementation committee made up parents, school staff, and municipal officials.
3. The implementation committee develops the program and gathers materials for an anti-idling education campaign and works with municipal or school communications staff to create a contact list for distribution of materials.
 - » **Sample materials are provided through the links below.**
 - » **Consider making this public anti-idling campaign as part of a complete “green team” or “green community” program.**
4. The implementation committee contacts local media to ensure widespread local coverage of this important initiative and asks the media to be a partner in the effort.
5. The implementation committee launches an anti-idling education campaign and distributes educational materials to its target audience.
6. Use town/city resources such as inserts in tax bills, and displays at municipal buildings, libraries, and schools to raise awareness of climate change and energy-saving opportunities available to local residents.
7. The implementation committee organizes training sessions for school bus drivers who have not yet received MassDEP’s training.
8. The implementation committee works with school or municipal staff as well as elected officials to evaluate the results of the campaign. A final report is created after year one of campaign.



EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY ADOPTION

The City of Northampton, City of Easthampton, and Town of Amherst banded together to create a model multi-community Idling Reduction campaign. This pilot project focused on changing the idling behavior of parents, municipal staff and bus drivers. The primary focus of this campaign was the school-aged children in the three participating elementary schools. The goal was to educate elementary school children and the children’s parents/ care-givers, about the negative effects that idling has on air quality and to encourage the children to try to change their parent’s idling behavior. Secondary goals included educating municipal officials and their staff about the ill effects of idling and recruiting them as role models for appropriate idling behavior.

The projects in all three communities were resounding successes. They showed that targeted education and outreach efforts delivered to school-aged children and their families via their elementary schools can result in actual behavioral change to reduce unnecessary vehicle idling. The project organizers also believe the emphasis on children combined with the joint environmental and health-related message made the campaign more prominent as it captured both local and statewide media attention.

LINKS TO MORE INFORMATION

The Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) created an “Idling Reduction Toolkit” to help municipalities develop and implement idling reduction campaigns. Below are links to some of the toolkit items. If you have questions, need assistance with your idling reduction program, or would like a CD with the toolkit materials, contact MassDEP at 617-292-5648. <http://www.mass.gov/dep/air/>

- Model Municipal Fleet Idling Reduction Policy
- Model Municipal Resolution for Vehicle Idling Reduction Committee
- “Do Your Share For Clean Air” Idling Reduction Fact Sheet
- Massachusetts Fact Sheet on Idling Reduction
- “Organizing Your Idling Reduction Campaign” Suggested Steps
- Sample Pledge Form for Idling Reduction
- Sample Letter to Parents (from school) about idling and health effects

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

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