

Anti-Idling Frequently Asked Questions

What is vehicle idling? Idling is the operation of a combustion vehicle's engine when parked or stopped in an active lane longer than two minutes. Traffic congestion is not included.

What kind of pollution is produced during vehicle idling? A combustion vehicle's engine creates carbon dioxide (CO₂), a greenhouse gas that is the primary driver of climate change. Idling a vehicle adds CO₂ into the atmosphere regardless of the idling time allowed. Idling also generates volatile organic compounds (VOC), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and other pollutants that can negatively impact local air quality and produce smog.

How much greenhouse gas emissions are produced after 5 minutes of idling? According to [Clean Air Partnership](#), an average gasoline engine car idling for 5 minutes will emit approximately 0.115 kgCO₂.

For example, if 12 cars idled for 5 minutes waiting to pick up students at a school would collectively generate 1.4 kg of CO₂. Extending the 12-car idling scenario to include all 31 schools in Peterborough, 43.4 kgCO₂ per day and 217 kgCO₂ per week would be emitted. Forecasting an entire school year under this scenario would create 8,463 kgCO₂ or 8.4 tonnes of CO₂. These emissions are equivalent to driving one car 40,500 km per year.

1 L of gasoline = 2.3 kgCO₂ 1 minute = 0.023 kgCO₂ 5 minutes = 0.115 kgCO₂

What are common health impacts caused by idling? Vehicle emissions and idling can increase the health risk of vulnerable individuals like children or the elderly to respiratory illnesses, increased rates of heart conditions, and lower resistance to infections. Limiting idling near schools, daycares, playgrounds, retirement homes, and health facilities can avoid undue harm to our most vulnerable community members.

What does the Anti-idling By-law allow and prohibit? In 2008, City Council passed By-Law 08-077 to Control the Idling of Vehicles in the City of Peterborough. The By-Law prohibits the following:

- Idling a vehicle for longer than 2 minutes
- Idling a municipal vehicle or longer than 1 minute

The by-law is exempted for the following situations:

- Emergency vehicles
- Crossing guard vehicles
- A vehicle being repaired or serviced
- Vehicles in a drive-through
- Transit vehicles

Additionally, a vehicle is not considered to be idling if the vehicle is powering or operating auxiliary equipment essential to the vehicle's function.

Why are some corporate vehicles exempt? Emergency and transit vehicles are not included within the by-law because those vehicles require the use of an engine to power auxiliary equipment or to maintain appropriate internal temperatures for heating or cooling for passengers or vehicle operators' wellbeing.

What can a driver do to avoid idling? Avoiding situations that would encourage idling is an easy first step. By parking in the shade during the summer to limit the need to cool their vehicle or wearing winter clothing to limit the need to heat their vehicle, drivers will be more comfortable turning off their vehicle while they are stopped. If purchasing a vehicle, select one with Stop-Start technology that automatically turns off the engine, buy a hybrid electric, or fully electric car to eliminate idling altogether. Lastly, simply recognizing your idling habits and actively changing your behaviour by turning the key off.