

## IDLE-FREE ELEMENTARY

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Teachers and students at Alberni Elementary have been concerned about their exposure to vehicle exhaust for some time. One of the easiest ways to reduce that exposure is to stop unnecessary idling around the school.

To that end, the children's Climate Change Club made their own anti-idling signs last year and marched them up and down the sidewalk during peak idling times. This year the city and the Air Quality Council joined their effort by installing a protective ring of idle-free signs around the school.

Health Canada estimates that more than 5000 Canadians die prematurely each year because of air pollution. Children are particularly vulnerable to air pollution because they breathe faster than adults and inhale more air per pound of body weight. Vehicle exhaust is a key contributor to deadly smog and our greenhouse gas crisis. It is also full of toxic and carcinogenic compounds.

Even so, Canadians idle their vehicles for an average of five to ten minutes a day. In the peak of winter the combined total is more than 75 million minutes a day – equivalent to one vehicle idling for 144 years.

How could one person's decision to stop unnecessary idling have any effect? If every Canadian motorist avoided idling for just five minutes a day, 365 days of the year, more than 1.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide and other toxic substances would be spared from entering the atmosphere.

Idling for more than 10 seconds costs more than turning off your engine. More than \$1.8 million of fuel is idled away by Canadians every day. Running an engine at low speed also generates costs due to the doubling of wear on internal parts. This wear can reduce engine life by up to 20%.

Most idling is simply habit based on myth. There's no other way to explain why truck drivers would leave their rigs idling next to Alberni Elementary while they chow down in Tim Horton's...I kid you not.

Contrary to popular opinion, idling is not an effective way to warm up your vehicle, even in cold weather. The best way to do this is to drive the vehicle. With today's modern engines, you need no more than 30 seconds of idling on cold winter days before driving. Contrary to popular opinion, idling is not good for your engine. It can actually damage engine components, including cylinders, spark plugs and exhaust systems. Contrary to popular opinion, frequent restarting has little impact on engine components like the battery and the starter motor and does not use more gas than leaving the engine running. .

Idling gets you nowhere. It wastes fuel, money, and engine life while reducing air quality and contributing to climate change. The solution is literally in your hands – it's as easy as turning a key.