

01. Anti-idling facts



Knowing the hard facts and dispelling the myths regarding idling gives you the power to act. These facts are not only useful for you, they're useful for all levels of your organisation from drivers to board members. Change is better digested when people understand the reasons behind it.

Use this sheet to arm yourself with the facts to educate your drivers and to help implement a successful anti-idling campaign. If you are asking people to change their habits, you need to have the knowledge to back it up.

You can use these facts however you feel they'll be best received. You may wish to:

- Email a different anti-idling fact regularly to your colleagues
- Print out and pin up some key facts around your premises
- Use them in company presentations
- Refer to the 'myth-busters' to counter the reasons your drivers may give for idling

Anti-idling – the facts

- **Engine idling is the running of an engine which is not required for the examination or operation of machinery**
- **Excessive idling is a waste of fuel and money**, resulting in unnecessary negative environmental impact
- **Stopping unnecessary vehicle idling is one relatively easy way to help improve air quality** and the respiratory and cardiovascular health of people in our communities
- **London's air pollution contributes to thousands of premature deaths each year**
- **For every 1 litre of fuel used by a diesel engine, 2.64 kg of CO₂ is released into the atmosphere. How can that be?** During combustion, the carbon in the fuel reacts with oxygen in the air to produce carbon dioxide CO₂
- **Fuel can represent 35% of your running costs, maybe even more**
- **Depending on the nature of the operation and vehicle types, fleet operators can expect average fuel savings in the region of 1% to 5% when implementing truck anti-idling measures**





- **An idling engine will leave fuel residues that can cause oil contamination.** This can damage engine components, including cylinders and piston rings. This is true for both petrol and diesel engines
- **With modern vehicles, the cost of switching off** the engine and starting up again after a minute or more will be less than the cost of leaving the engine idling
- **The Highway Code states** that ‘you must not leave a parked vehicle unattended with the engine running or leave a vehicle engine running unnecessarily while the vehicle is stationary on a public road’
- **Depending on the London borough, unnecessary engine idling may be subject to a fine**
- **Idling causes spark plugs to become dirtier more quickly.** This can cause an increase in fuel consumption by 4 to 5 percent
- **Excessive idling lets water condense in the vehicle’s exhaust system, which can lead to corrosion**
- **There are 9.9 million drivers in London** using cars, HGVs, buses, coaches, LGVs, taxis, motorcycles. All of these contribute harmful emissions into the atmosphere
- **If all drivers in central London switched off their engines**, rather than idling unnecessarily, for 1 minute each day this could reduce PM₁₀ (particulate matter) emissions by at least 286g per day (at least 90kg per year)



MYTH...

Starting an engine causes more pollution than idling

...BUSTER

No. Turning off an engine and restarting it after a minute or longer causes less pollution than keeping the engine idling and uses less fuel

MYTH...

The engine needs to stay on to keep the battery fully charged

...BUSTER

No. Modern batteries need less engine running time

MYTH...

It is better to idle the vehicle as turning the engine off and on wears it out

...BUSTER

No. Ignitions in modern cars have eliminated this problem. Idling dirties your engine with incomplete combustion increasing wear and tear. Maintaining your vehicle is important for preventing breakdowns and reducing air pollution

MYTH...

Catalytic converters need to be hot to work properly

...BUSTER

Yes, but an idling engine does not keep a catalytic converter warm. They retain their heat for about 25 minutes after an engine is switched off

MYTH...

When it’s cold I need to keep my vehicle and passengers warm or warm up my engine

...BUSTER

It can take up to an hour for an engine to cool down. Turning off your engine, but keeping the ignition on and the fan blowing, will provide warm air for some time