

5/22/08 Hull Times:
Greener Hull Column
Idle Reduction Campaign submitted by Nancy Kramer

In Spring of 2007, the Town DPW Director attended a Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) sponsored Idle Reduction workshop. He ordered and received Idling Reduction signs, bumper stickers decals and instructions about starting an Idling Reduction educational campaign. The Sustainable South Shore group and recently, the Sustainable Transportation Committee and Greener Hull had been planning to launch a public education idling reduction campaign for a few years now and offered our help. This Greener Hull article is a kick-off of that campaign. Idling Reduction literature and bumper stickers have been available at each Sustainable Living Festival, sponsored by Sustainable South Shore, since 2005.

As you know, your vehicle's engine should not be left idling when your vehicle is parked or stopped, even for short periods of time. Many drivers leave their engines running for various, unnecessary reasons. Vehicle idling wastes fuel, causes air pollution which contributes to global warming and the emissions are toxic. Gasoline exhaust contains toxic carbon monoxide and a range of pollutants that contribute to smog and make breathing difficult for everyone. Excessive idling of school buses, municipal and business vehicles and your own vehicle contributes to the increase in asthma attacks and chronic bronchitis in the U.S.

And excess idling is against the law, in Massachusetts since 2004. *Chapter 90: Section 16A. Stopped motor vehicles; operation of engine; time limit; penalty. No person shall cause, suffer, allow or permit the unnecessary operation of the engine of a motor vehicle while said vehicle is stopped for a foreseeable period of time in excess of five minutes.*

This section shall not apply to (a) vehicles being serviced, provided that operation of the engine is essential to the proper repair thereof, or (b) vehicles engaged in the delivery or acceptance of goods, wares, or merchandise for which engine assisted power is necessary and substitute alternate means cannot be made available, or (c) vehicles engaged in an operation for which the engine power is necessary for an associate power need other than movement and substitute alternate power means cannot be made available provided that such operation does not cause or contribute to a condition of air pollution.

Whomever violates any provision of this section shall be punished by a fine of not more than one hundred dollars for the first offense, nor more than five hundred dollars for each succeeding offense.

Idling, either by remote or key start, is not an effective way to warm up your vehicle in cold weather and not an effective way to cool your vehicle in hot weather. You need no more than 30 seconds of idling to get the lubricants flowing then drive the vehicle slowly at first until it warms up or cools down. And excessive idling can actually damage engine components.

In conclusion, turn off your engine when parked for more than 10 seconds. Avoid using remote starters which encourages unnecessary idling. And spread the word that it's against the law to leave your vehicle idling for more than 5 minutes.