



# Anti-Idling Education & Enforcement

10 Points School District

A motor vehicle is idling when the engine is turned on, but the vehicle is not in motion. A great deal of idling occurs at schools, where buses and cars line up to drop off and pick up children. Stopping unnecessary vehicle idling is a simple way to contribute to improved air quality around schools. New Jersey has had a no-idling regulation for diesel-fueled commercial vehicles since 1985. This law was updated in 2007 to include a provision which states that, with limited exceptions, no motor vehicle (diesel or gasoline fueled) may have its engine running if motionless for more than three consecutive minutes. Despite these restrictions, idling continues to occur during arrival and dismissal times at schools throughout New Jersey. This action provides guidance on how to tackle this important issue on school grounds. Organizing and implementing an anti-idling program at the district or individual school level can help reduce the harmful effects of air pollution on children's developing lungs, making it easier to learn, play, and breathe at school. In order to earn points for this action at the district level, a school district must adopt an Anti-Idling Resolution and complete at least two initiatives aimed at reducing student exposure to vehicle emissions throughout the district. An individual school must identify and document the current idling situation at the school and implement at least three strategies to address the documented concerns.

## Why is it important?

When we "turn the key" on idling, we reduce the risk of asthma and we help to improve air quality. This action is especially important at schools because children are more vulnerable to the impacts of vehicle pollution than other populations. Children are more susceptible to air pollution because their lungs are still developing. They breathe about 50% more air per pound of body weight than adults, and they are lower to the ground, therefore closer to tailpipes.

Idling can lead to the following negative impacts:

### ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE

- Vehicle idling creates unnecessary pollution. In just two minutes, an idling car burns enough gas to travel one mile. By not idling, car exhaust in the air can be reduced by up to three pounds of pollution per month.
- Car exhaust can have a negative impact on plants and animals living in high traffic areas.

### HEALTH EFFECTS

- Asthma is the most common chronic illness in children and is the leading cause of school absences. Diesel emissions exacerbate asthma; prolonged exposure can cause asthma and even set up a propensity for asthma in utero.
- Vehicle exhaust contaminates the air with harmful particulates and chemicals. According to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Mobile Services, fine particulate pollution in New Jersey may cause more premature deaths than homicides and car accidents combined. Diesel exhaust is a primary component of fine particulate pollution and is known to cause or exacerbate a variety of heart and lung ailments.
- Long-term exposure to combustion-related fine particulate air pollution is an important environmental risk factor for cardiopulmonary and lung cancer mortality. Parts of diesel exhaust, such as soot and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), have been shown to cause cancer.

### EXTRA EXPENSES

- Idling wastes gas and money: for every hour of idle time, a gallon of fuel is wasted. It's estimated that the average

person could save fifty dollars a year by reducing their idling by just five minutes a day.

- A popular misconception is that car idling uses less gas than turning it off and restarting. Actually, if a car is going to idle for more than ten seconds, it is more fuel-efficient to turn the engine off.
- Idling additionally causes wear and tear on engine parts.

## Who should lead and be involved with this action?

It is important to have a champion at the district and/or school level that can spearhead this action. This might be a Board of Education member, administrator, teacher, school nurse, or parent. The following are important team members to include in the development and implementation of an anti-idling effort:

- Board of Education
- school administrators – principal, superintendent
- teachers
- school staff (i.e., school nurse)
- parents
- students
- members of the municipal green team
- local police

Be sure to contact your [Safe Routes to School Regional Coordinator](#) from your local Transportation Management Association (TMA) as a free resource to contribute to the collaborative effort.

## Timeframe

Completion of the tasks necessary for a **school district** to adopt a resolution and implement two actions can vary from three months to up to a year, depending upon if the Board of Education has a champion to lead the initiatives. Discussion and passing of the resolution can take one meeting or possibly two or more, depending on the level of support from the School Board. Implementation of the actions can take from three months up to a year, depending on which actions are performed.

Completion of the steps necessary for **schools** to organize and implement an anti-idling education and enforcement program can take between three and six months. The following tasks could be completed simultaneously:

- **Data Collection:** approximately one month
- Estimate and record the idling situation at the each school with grades pre K-12.
- **Awareness: approximately one-three months**
- Propose and adopt a school district-wide Anti-Idling Resolution.
- Educate students and the community through flyers, letters, newsletters, meetings and/or emails.
- **Implementation: approximately two months**
- Post signs at student pick-up and drop-off locations at respective schools.
- Collect no-idling pledge cards from parents and bus drivers.
- Work with the local police to enforce the no-idling law.

## Project Costs and Resource Needs

The cost to implement this action is low and may consist of only printing and sign expenses, in addition to minimal staff time that might be required to foster and promote the program. The Safe Routes to School Regional Coordinator from the local Transportation Management Association (TMA) may have programs and signs that can be provided at no cost. For a map of the TMA service areas visit [TMA's website](#). Or visit the New Jersey Safe Routes to [School Resource Center](#) to identify the Regional Coordinators.

## What to do, and how to do it ("How to")

*This section provides guidance and recommendations for implementing the action. A school/district does not need to*

follow this guidance exactly, as long as it meets the requirements for earning points for this action.

## IF A SCHOOL DISTRICT IS COMPLETING THE ACTION:

1. **Adopt a School District Anti-Idling Resolution.** The school district must adopt an anti-idling resolution. With supportive Board of Education members, the resolution can be adopted in one board meeting. To receive credit for this action, the resolution must

- Reflect intent to reduce all motor vehicle idling, not just buses and school related vehicles.
- Encourage all vehicle operators to turn off their engines after ten seconds.

Please note that the "Idle Free New Jersey" Program by Clean Water Action has developed a model "[No-Idling Resolution](#)".

2. **Complete at least two of the following initiatives:**

**a. Distribute educational materials to the entire school district community.** Notify all parents/guardians of the district's Anti-Idling Resolution and program by including materials in back-to-school parent packets, publishing details on the school's website, and/or including information in newsletters or emails to parents/guardians. Clean Water Action has compiled materials including posters, brochures, and signs from various sources on [their website](#). All are free to download.

**b. Collaborate with local police to develop and implement an enforcement plan.** Enforcement is critical to successful implementation. Collaborate with local police to create a strategy that reinforces the existing DEP regulation that idling for longer than three minutes is illegal and against school policy. Drivers observed illegally idling can be issued mock tickets provided by NJDEP as a friendly reminder. Repeat offenders should be ticketed and fined. Mock tickets can be found on the [NJDEP's website](#).

**c. Incorporate anti-idling education into the district's curriculum.** There are a variety of projects for students that can be linked to curriculum for math, science, technology, health, and language arts such as calculating how much carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere, investigating and researching use of alternative fuels and transportation, and discussing effects of pollution on health. The EPA has some sample curriculum that can be reviewed at the [EPA's website](#).

**d. Install idling reduction technology on school buses.** There are several diesel exhaust control and anti-idling technologies available that can be installed in buses to limit air pollution. While these technologies may require a small investment, costs can be saved as a result. For more information, visit the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission ([DVRPC's website](#)).

**e. Assign oldest school buses to shortest bus routes; use newest buses for longest routes.** Older buses often release the most emissions. Limiting the use of older buses by using them for shorter routes can help reduce air pollution.

**f. Implement training for all district school bus drivers on the importance of reducing bus idling.** Educate all bus drivers about the importance of anti-idling and other best practices to reduce harmful diesel emissions, such as turning off engines when loading and unloading students, keeping windows open while in transit, encouraging children to sit in front seats when bus is not full, avoiding congested roads, and avoiding directly following other diesel vehicles.

## IF AN INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL IS APPLYING FOR THIS ACTION:

1. **Identify and document the idling situation at the school.**

Enlist students, staff, parents, or other members of the school community to monitor idling vehicles at the school to understand the extent of the problem and where to focus efforts. Observations can be made using volunteers or staff; collect data in the morning, when cars may be waiting in line to drop children off, and before dismissal, when parents show up early and wait. Try to be discreet when collecting this data and capture an overview of the problem at the school.

Items that could be noted include: location (like the front parking lot, drop-off loop, etc.), weather conditions, idling time, the number of people in the vehicle, vehicle description, any in-car activities (reading, radio, watching for child, talking to other parent, etc.), and approximate grade level or age of children being dropped off or picked up.

More information conducting observations and a sample form can be found on the [EPA's website](#). There is also a free downloadable "Idle-Free Schools" app available on iTunes for iPhones and iPads. The app analyzes the data collected and calculates how much gas is wasted and pollutants emitted during the observation session.

## 2. Implement three or more of the following strategies.

It is important to track the results associated with implementing each strategy in order to document your efforts. Please note that schools may also implement their own strategies as long as the aim is to reducing idling on school grounds.

**a. Distribute educational materials to the school's community.** Notify students and parents about the school's anti-idling program: include materials in back-to-school parent packets, newsletters, or emails to parents. Clean Water Action has compiled materials including posters, brochures, and signs from various sources on [their website](#). All are free to download.

**b. Post "No Idling" signs at drop-off and pick-up zones of the school.** Install "No Idling" signs in places where parents waiting in their vehicles will easily see them. Students can help develop slogans and make the signs, or download and print out signs from Clean Water Action or the EPA. "No Idling" and "Idle-Free Zone" signs can be ordered from the NJ Department of Environmental Protection at [Stop the Soot](#).

**c. Collect No Idling pledge cards from drivers.** Ask all drivers to sign a "No idle" pledge. Post the cards prominently in the school, or hold a contest to see which class returns the most pledges. NJDEP has a [sample no idling pledge](#) for parents, bus companies, school districts, or citizens.

**d. Present anti-idling programming for the students at school.** Host an assembly or incorporate idling into school lesson plans. The local police, [Safe Routes to School Regional Coordinator from the local Transportation Management Association \(TMA\)](#), or your school nurse could be great resources helping with an assembly. There are a variety of school anti-idling lessons and projects for students that can be linked to math, science, technology, health, and language arts such as calculating how much carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere, investigating and researching use of alternative fuels and transportation, and discussing effects of pollution on health. The EPA has some [sample lessons](#).

**e. Work with local police to develop and implement an enforcement plan.** Enforcement is critical to successful implementation. Work with local police to create a strategy that reinforces the existing DEP regulation that idling for longer than three minutes is illegal and against school policy. Drivers observed illegally idling can be issued mock tickets provided by NJDEP as a friendly reminder. Repeat offenders should be ticketed and fined. Mock tickets can be found on the [NJDEP's website](#). For more on enforcement of New Jersey's idling requirements, [click here](#).

**f. Provide a detailed report on the results/findings of monitoring and evaluation efforts.** Monitor, evaluate and report on efforts by keeping track of outreach efforts and the number of warnings or tickets; observe driver behavior. The observation forms used to collect data prior to the campaign can be reviewed to see if there is a reduction in idling.

## EARN MORE AWARDS FOR YOUR SCHOOL!

Schools can earn additional points by qualifying for The Pediatric/Adult Asthma Coalition of New Jersey (PACNJ) Asthma-Friendly School Award. The award recognizes a school's efforts to enhance the quality of education for students and staff who face the challenges of asthma. There are six requirements for the award, including having the school superintendent sign the NJDEP "No-Idling Pledge." For more information, read the Sustainable Jersey for Schools Asthma-Friendly School Award action or visit [PACNJ's website](#).

## What to submit to earn points for this action

In order to earn points for this action, the following documentation must be submitted as part of the online certification application to verify that the action requirements have been met.

A **school district** must include the following items:

1. **Description of Implementation.** In the text box provided on the submission page for this action provide a short narrative (300 words or less) of what has been accomplished and the impact it has or will have on the district.
2. **A copy of the school district Anti-Idling Resolution.** Include the date it was passed by the Board of Education.

3. Documentation that **two or more** of the following initiatives have been implemented in the past two years:
  - a. Distribute educational materials to the entire school community. The summary should include to whom the materials were distributed, what materials were distributed, and how the materials were distributed. Also, upload samples of the materials.
  - b. Collaborate with local police to develop and implement an enforcement plan. Include minutes/summary from meetings and plan for enforcement.
  - c. Incorporate anti-idling into the district's curriculum. Please include copies of the curriculum or lesson plans and a description of when and how they were implemented.
  - d. Install idling reduction technology on school buses. Submit documentation that this was performed.
  - e. Assign oldest school buses to shortest bus routes; use newest buses for longest routes. Submit documentation that this is being performed.
  - f. Implement training to all school bus drivers within the district on the importance of reducing idling. Submit documentation that training occurred, as well as any training materials used.

An individual **school** must include the following items:

1. **Description of Implementation.** In the text box provided on the submission page for this action provide a short narrative (300 words or less) of what has been accomplished and the impact it has or will have on the district.
2. **A summary of the idling situation at the school** Include when and how the data was collected.
3. **Documentation** related to the implementation of **three or more** of the following strategies, or other strategies developed by the school in the past two years:
  - a. Distribute educational materials to the entire school community. The summary should include to whom the materials were distributed, what materials were distributed, and how the materials were distributed. Also, upload samples of the materials.
  - b. Post "No-Idling" signs at drop-off and pick-up zones at the school.
  - c. Collect "No idling" pledge cards from drivers. Please include a sample pledge card and the number and percent of cards completed.
  - d. Present anti-idling programming for the students at the school. Submit a summary of the assembly or lesson plans, including the number of classrooms/students that implemented the lesson plans.
  - e. Work with local police to develop and implement an enforcement plan. Include the number of mock tickets given and the number of drivers ticketed and fined.
  - f. Provide a detailed report on the results/findings of monitoring and evaluation efforts. Attach a summary of the idling situation post-campaign, which could include an analysis of emissions reduced and gas saved.

Approved actions will be set to expire two years from the date the initiative was completed. To reapply for this action, updated documentation must be provided.

#### **IMPORTANT NOTES:**

There is a limit of six uploaded documents per action and individual files must not exceed 20 MB. Excerpts of relevant information from large documents are recommended.

All action documentation is available for public viewing after an action is approved. Action submissions should not include any information or documents that are not intended for public viewing.

### **Spotlight: What New Jersey schools are doing**

#### **Holland Township Elementary School, Holland Township School District**

Holland Township School's 5th and 6th grade Gifted and Talented students, led by teacher Chris McWilliams, decided to tackle the problem of air pollution at the school. One of the sources of air pollution comes from vehicles idling during pick-up and drop-off. To view how Holland School District met the requirements for this action click [here](#).

#### **Milford Public School, Hunterdon County**

Milford Public School is a walking district in Hunterdon County; a large percentage of parents, however, still drive their kids to school. Due to the high volume of cars, the idling issue became a problem and the school's science teacher decided to address it. The teacher instructed his seventh and eighth-grade students to monitor the idling vehicles at the school for ten days, during both drop-off and pick-up times. He also asked the students to participate in an anti-idling lesson, after which the students designed signs for the school discouraging idling. These signs were installed at the school in September of 2014.

## **Tatem Elementary School Anti-Idling Blitz, Haddonfield**

In an effort to encourage walking and reduce traffic congestion and idling around Tatem Elementary, the Safe Routes to School Team created door-hangs which identify satellite drop-off and pick-up areas, as well as show statistics which offer the health benefits of walking and reasons to turn off motor vehicle engines. The School Champion, along with members from the Haddonfield Green Team, local police, and Haddonfield High School's Environmental Club, collaborated to disseminate the door-hangs and educated parents about the importance of not idling vehicles around the school and the benefits of using satellite "kiss-and-ride" locations. The Anti-Idling Blitz took place on October 2nd, just in time for International Walk to School Day on October 3rd. The event was a success and over 300 door-hangs were given out to parents and guardians.

Due to the ongoing promotion of the "kiss-and-ride" locations by the Safe Routes to School Team, more parents have been utilizing the facilities. The number of idling vehicles has decreased, AND the number of children that walk, at least part way, to school, has risen.

## **Idle Free NJ at Switlik School, Jackson**

NJ Environmental Federation (NJEF)'s Program Organizer helped implement NJEF's Idle Free New Jersey Campaign at Switlik Elementary School in Jackson, NJ. By working with students to educate them on air pollution caused by idling vehicles and the existing no-idling laws, the students created a PowerPoint presentation that was then presented to the Jackson Township Council. The students explained why cars, trucks and buses should not idle their engines for more than ten seconds, described how idling wastes gasoline, and expressed that they wanted their school district to comply with the three-minute idle rule. The students also explained that decreasing idling reduces emissions from gasoline and diesel-powered vehicles that contribute significantly to air pollution. This type of pollution can trigger asthma attacks and other ailments, which is a major public health concern in New Jersey, especially among the elderly and children. The Jackson Council is currently promoting NJEF's Idle Free New Jersey campaign by passing a no-idling resolution that encourages anyone using a gasoline- or diesel-powered motor vehicle to turn off the engine after ten seconds if they plan to remain at that location for more than thirty seconds. The Jackson Council also conducted an educational no-idling campaign. The students and teacher were awarded with certificates in recognition of their outstanding work on anti-idling.

## **Resources**

### **Clean Water Action/Idle Free NJ**

Clean Water Action lists the steps to passing a no-idling pledge at your school, including free downloadable materials and spotlights for schools. <https://www.cleanwateraction.org/states/new-jersey>

### **NJDEP "Stop the Soot" Campaign**

The "Stop the Soot" campaign was started by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP)'s Bureau of Mobile Sources to bring attention to the problem of poor air quality caused by the idling of motor vehicles (i.e., automobiles, trucks, buses, school buses, construction vehicles and equipment, etc.). New Jersey regulation N.J.A.C. 7:27-14 & 15 prohibits engines, including those in cars, vans, and school buses, from idling for more than three minutes in most instances; however, NJDEP is urging school districts and school bus drivers to go beyond the minimum and implement best practices to reduce harmful diesel emissions. These best practices include turning off engines when waiting to load and unload students, replacing old buses in the fleet first as they often release the most emissions, and using new buses for long routes. <http://www.nj.gov/dep/stopthesoot/index.htm>

NJDEP Idling Violation Resource [http://www.nj.gov/dep/enforcement/idling\\_fact\\_sheet\\_1.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/dep/enforcement/idling_fact_sheet_1.pdf)

**New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA)** offers Policy Services which have district sample policies and NJSBA developed samples to support sustainability initiatives that are not required by law and an option for the school district. We have model policy samples for topics required by law or state monitored. Policy services are also available to help board members and administrators develop customized policy language to meet your needs. These resources are available to NJSBA members only (public school district staff and board members). All public and charter schools in New Jersey are dues paying members for these services; please contact your administration or local board members for

access.

<https://www.njsba.org/services/sustainability/>

### **US EPA Region 8 Idle Free Schools Toolkit**

The Idle Free Schools Toolkit includes all of the information needed to run an idling reduction campaign at a school in order to reduce student exposure to toxic vehicle exhaust. The toolkit includes a sample observation form, sample idling policies, sample letters, pledge forms, and signs. It also provides the resources to make this a student-run science or community involvement project, providing students with the opportunity to learn how to run a public service campaign while expanding their science and math skills. <http://www2.epa.gov/region8/idle-free-schools>

### **Earth Day Network with Clean Air Campaign, Inc. "No Idling Campaign Materials and Resources"**

There are separate toolkits for School District administrators to implement a campaign at the district level and another toolkit for teachers or parents to implement a campaign at the school. In addition, data collection sheet and lesson plans for Grade 1-8 are provided. [http://www.saferoutesnj.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Anti-Idling\\_Education\\_\\_Enforcement-Final.pdf](http://www.saferoutesnj.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Anti-Idling_Education__Enforcement-Final.pdf)

### **AirwatchNW Anti-Idling Programs**

This web site offers ideas and tools for conducting an anti-idling program at schools. These documents and materials are provided free of charge courtesy of the Washington State Department of Ecology and the United States Environmental Protection Agency, in collaboration with Washington and Oregon air quality agencies. These materials are being made available in the hope of providing a tested foundation for others to effectively create and implement a successful idling reduction program. <http://www.airwatchnw.org/anti-idling-programs/>

### **Transportation Management Agencies (TMAs)**

Check with your regional TMA for assistance with implementing an anti-idling campaign. <http://www.saferoutesnj.org/about/regional-coordinator-tmas/>