

# idle-freezone

SUMMER 2006 EDITION



## On Track! All Aboard for an Idle-Free Canada

This issue of the *Idle-Free Zone* takes you on a whistle-stop tour of four key destinations that can help get your community's idle-free program on track for success.

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### First Stop – New Research Shows the Way

A municipal by-law, a public education campaign or both? Learn more about the most effective approaches to reducing vehicle idling in your community.

2

### Second Stop – Communities in Action

Sample some of the exciting, colourful and innovative approaches that Canadian communities are using to spread the idle-free message.

3

### Third Stop – The Idle-Free Zone Web Site

Catch a sneak preview of the new tools and materials available on the Idle-Free Zone Web site – [idling.gc.ca](http://idling.gc.ca) – to help you roll out your own local idle-free campaign.

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### Final Stop – All Aboard!

Boarding call to *all Canadian* municipalities . . . the idle-free express is on track and picking up more passengers as it sweeps across the nation. If your community is interested in going idle free, check out this issue of the *Idle-Free Zone*. Then visit [idling.gc.ca](http://idling.gc.ca) to get the information and tools you need to join the many Canadian communities that are already riding the rails to an idle-free future.



## Zoning In – The Idling Control Continuum

You already know that vehicle idling is a problem in your community, but you are wondering what to do next. Launch a public education campaign? Ask city council to pass a by-law? Or pursue some combination of the two?

Here's some good news: The "Idling Control Continuum" addresses these questions head on and outlines a practical four-step approach to reduce vehicle idling in your community using public education, a by-law and both approaches together. The Continuum is the centrepiece of a new report called *The Carrot, the Stick and the Combo: A Recipe for Reducing Vehicle Idling in Canadian Communities*, prepared by Lura Consulting for the Clean Air Partnership, with the assistance of Natural Resources Canada's Office of Energy Efficiency.

"The 'Continuum' provides a new resource for municipalities and community groups who want to curb needless idling at the local level but need to know how to get started," says David Dilks, President of Lura Consulting. "It shows people how to develop a public education campaign, when to consider a by-law and, perhaps most importantly, how these two approaches should be used together. We believe the 'Continuum' will be very useful for those who have yet to take action on idling because it is based on the lessons learned by Canadian communities who have."

(Continued on page 2)



Some of the documents, program names and graphics shown have not been produced by the Government of Canada and are not available in both official languages.

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# 1

## The Idling Control Continuum

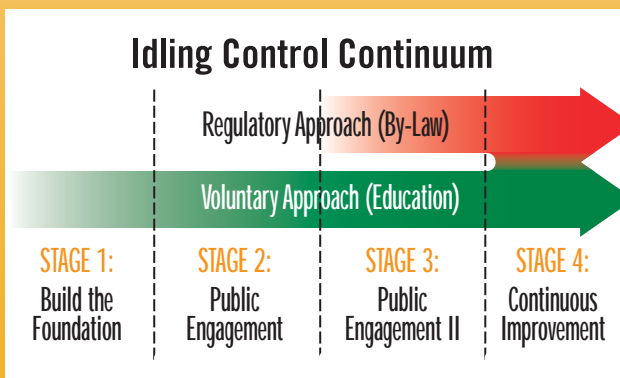
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### Four Steps to an Idle-Free Community

- 1. Build the Foundation** – Every idle-free program needs a solid foundation. “Idling program managers told us that a strong foundation involves three P’s – purpose, positioning and partnerships,” explains Dilks. At this stage, communities define the purpose of the campaign, determine how to position their idle-free initiative within existing local action frameworks and form partnerships to ensure that the campaign is broadly supported.
- 2. Public Engagement** – Once a solid foundation is laid, the rest of the campaign can begin to take shape. At this step, partners come together to generate public awareness about idling through voluntary initiatives. Typically, this involves implementing an in-house idling-control policy for the partners themselves. “Idle-free campaigns gain a lot more credibility and momentum when citizens have a model to follow,” emphasizes Dilks. “Partners that dedicate energy to getting their own house in order early on have a much stronger voice to encourage others to follow suit.” Next, public education strategies are implemented to inform the public about the impacts of idling and encourage idle-free awareness and behavioural change.
- 3. Public Engagement II** – There is growing community awareness about idling and its impacts and acceptance of the benefits of an idle-free community. Thus you can consider a regulatory approach, in the form of a by-law, to complement and reinforce the educational efforts. “Communities that have enacted by-laws are finding that the stick – the prospect of a fine for idling over a certain time limit – adds weight to education and outreach efforts,” suggests Dilks.
- 4. Continuous Improvement** – In this final step, the campaign partners continue to reinforce campaign messages, promote outreach initiatives, publicize the by-law (if one has been adopted) and consider innovative approaches to enhance and sustain the campaign.

Visit the Idle-Free Zone Web site at [idling.gc.ca](http://idling.gc.ca) and click on *The Carrot, the Stick and the Combo: A Recipe for Reducing Vehicle Idling in Canadian Communities* to view the report.

For more information, contact  
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## Cracking Down . . . Canadian Experience With Idling By-Laws

Is your municipality thinking about passing an idling control by-law? Chances are your residents are. A recent survey in three large Greater Toronto Area municipalities found that almost 80 percent of residents would support a municipal by-law to control unnecessary vehicle idling.

Victoria Orsborne, Senior Program Analyst with Natural Resources Canada, attributes this growing sentiment to increasing public awareness of the negative impacts of vehicle idling, such as effects on air quality, human health and climate change. “Many of the communities that have conducted education and outreach efforts are now seeing increasing public and political support for by-law development and enforcement,” says Orsborne. “The thinking is that public education can only take a community so far and that a by-law can help sustain and reinforce education efforts. That’s why we’re very excited about the idling by-law research recently completed by the Clean Air Partnership.”

### Primer Offers Guidance to Municipalities

A new report called *Cracking Down on Idling: A Primer for Canadian Municipalities on Developing and Enforcing Idle-Free By-laws* offers tools and guidance for municipalities, drawing on recent Canadian experience with idle-free by-laws.

The report, prepared by the Clean Air Partnership (CAP) for the Greater Toronto Area Clean Air Council, includes the following:

- an analysis of existing municipal idling control by-laws in Canada
- a sample idling control by-law, complete with suggested wording and key issues to be considered
- a step-by-step plan for by-law enforcement

### Experience to Date

In *Cracking Down*, we learn that idling control by-laws in Canada generally take one of two forms: either a stand-alone by-law that specifically addresses idling or anti-idling provisions within other by-laws (such as noise or nuisance regulations). CAP reports that 15 Canadian municipalities – all in Ontario – now have stand-alone idling control by-laws and at least 12 others have included idling provisions in other by-laws. Most of the stand-alone versions are modelled after the City of Toronto’s idling by-law, Canada’s first in 1996.

What has worked best when it comes to cracking down on idling? “The stand-alone by-law is best suited because it is a more specific and direct instrument and is able to address idling in a wider range of situations and community locations,” says CAP’s Jennifer Penney, author of *Cracking Down*. Penney also found that the most successful by-laws share two important characteristics:

- The by-law is part of an overall municipally led clean air plan or strategy.
- It is one component of a broader approach for idling reduction, which includes public education and supporting policies.

Idling control by-laws can also present challenges for municipalities. There are two main issues, according to Penney. The first is having too many exemptions in the by-law, which can create uncertainty as to when the by-law applies. “Some of the by-laws exempt highly visible vehicles, such as transit buses, while others don’t apply when the temperature is too hot or too cold. This limits the impact of the by-law in reducing emissions,” says Penney.

The second key challenge is enforcement. “By-law officers are responsible for a wide range of by-laws and usually respond to telephone complaints,” explains Penney. “It takes time to respond to a complaint about idling, and by the time the officer arrives, the offender may be gone.” A related concern is resources – having enough officers to enforce the by-law effectively.

If your municipality is considering an idling by-law, *Cracking Down* is a must read. To download your copy, visit [idling.gc.ca](http://idling.gc.ca).



#### Municipalities with Stand-Alone By-Laws

Markham, ON (2005*)	Stratford, ON (2001)
Burlington, ON (2004)	Windsor, ON (2001)
Pickering, ON (2004)	London, ON (1999)
Vaughan, ON (2004)	Guelph, ON (1998)
Huntsville, ON (2003)	Niagara Falls, ON (1998)
Whitchurch-Stouffville, ON (2003)	Toronto, ON (1996)

\*Year enacted

#### Municipalities with Provisions in Other By-Laws

Kingston, ON (2004)	Vancouver, BC (1998)
Newmarket, ON (2004)	District of North Vancouver, BC (1996)
Ottawa, ON (2004)	Nanaimo, BC (1994)
Markham, ON (2003)	Caledon, ON (1986)
Victoria, BC (2003)	Montréal, QC (1986)
Brampton, ON (2001)	

# SHOWS THE WAY

## The Carrot, the Stick or Both: Pilot Project Compares Approaches

The Clean Air Partnership (CAP), with support from Natural Resources Canada, is rolling out a pilot project in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) to compare, contrast and test public education ("the carrot") and by-law ("the stick") approaches to reducing idling at the municipal level. Two GTA municipalities are participating in the pilot. The City of Brampton has launched an idle-free education campaign, while the Town of Markham has developed and adopted an idling control by-law with a supporting education and enforcement strategy.

The pilot project has been underway since mid-2005 and is expected to wrap up in late 2006. Stay tuned for pilot results in future issues of the *Idle-Free Zone* and at [idling.gc.ca](http://idling.gc.ca).

For more information, contact

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or Jennifer Penney: Clean Air Partnership, (416) 392-0376, [jpenney@cleanairpartnership.org](mailto:jpenney@cleanairpartnership.org).



## Focus Group Test Pilot Approaches

Focus groups in Brampton and Markham proved to be an effective way to test the education and by-law approaches for their respective campaigns.

"Public feedback on the direction and development of initiatives is very important to determine if they will be effective and to explore what works and what doesn't," says Victoria Orsborne of Natural Resources Canada. "The focus group findings will be helpful to all Canadian communities considering idle-free education initiatives and by-laws in the future."

Mavis Urquhart, Manager of Environmental Leadership for the Town of Markham, says, "The residents expressed a diversity of views and provided some excellent suggestions on approaches to stop idling in our community."

The focus group results show that nearly all participants idle their engines from time to time, usually to warm up their vehicle in cold weather or when making a drop-off or pickup. Also, most of the participants felt that vehicle idling is an important issue in their community.

Participants were generally in favour of taking a public education approach to curb idling, while their response to adopting a by-law was mixed. Some felt a regulation was an effective way to get motorists to stop idling, while others felt that enforcement would be difficult.

The focus groups also provided useful feedback on Markham's and Brampton's campaign materials. "We had some excellent feedback from Town of Markham residents that we incorporated into our campaign," says Urquhart. "Residents told us what they thought we did well, what we could refine and what we could do differently next time."

Marta Marychuk, Senior Communications Associate for the City of Brampton, also noted that it was interesting to learn more about residents' driving habits. She adds, "The information gathered from the focus groups was very helpful in refining our campaign communications."

**For more information on the focus group results, contact:**  
Catherine Ray: Natural Resources Canada, (613) 995-5264, [cray@nrca.gc.ca](mailto:cray@nrca.gc.ca).

A full report on the focus group results is available at [idling.gc.ca](http://idling.gc.ca). This report will interest any municipality or community group that is considering launching an idle-free education campaign or adopting an idling control by-law in its community.

## Brampton Aims to "Clear the Air"

Brampton's campaign materials – with a distinctive air freshener motif – articulate the goal of the City's Idling Control Public Education Campaign: "Let's clear the air."

Launched in fall 2005 with council approval, Brampton's campaign features a wide range of education and outreach activities to encourage residents to idle less:

- distribution of campaign information to all households with municipal tax bills and in City publications, such as the *Parks and Recreation Guide*
- awareness raising through media events, newspaper advertisements, speaking engagements, posters, metal signs at municipal facilities and the municipal Web site
- personal contact with drivers at City schools, GO Transit stations and other idling "hot spots" to seek their commitment to be idle free

"Our experience with these kinds of issues is that positive messages and proactive education works best in Brampton," says Marta Marychuk, the City's Senior Communications Associate. "Our campaign will focus on educating residents to get the idling issue top of mind in 2006. At some point in the future, Council may consider a by-law, but our first priority is education."

**For more information on Brampton's campaign, contact**  
Marta Marychuk: City of Brampton, (905) 874-2003, [marta.marychuk@city.brampton.on.ca](mailto:marta.marychuk@city.brampton.on.ca).



## Markham Complements Education Campaign with Idling Control By-Law

Building on an extensive idle-free education program, the Town of Markham adopted an idling control by-law in June 2005. According to Mavis Urquhart, who spearheaded the by-law's development, "I firmly believe that our public education program laid the groundwork for the new by-law. We conducted extensive outreach in the community to get the word out, consulted with local stakeholders and benefited from the by-law research done by the Clean Air Partnership."

Now that Markham's by-law is in effect, the focus of outreach efforts has shifted from raising awareness about idling to communicating that the Town now has a by-law in place. Advertisements were placed on electronic messaging boards and published in Town publications, bookmarks were distributed to Markham households, and metal Idle-free by-law signs have been posted. Enforcement officers are also distributing information cards to drivers to warn them about the by-law.

**For more information, contact Mavis Urquhart:** Town of Markham, (905) 415-7502, [murquhart@markham.ca](mailto:murquhart@markham.ca).



# COMMUNITIES IN ACTION

## Swinging Into Action

Anyone who lives and works in the Peterborough area knows about the swing bridge – it is one of a few engineering landmarks that dot the Trent waterway. Each day in the summer, the swing bridge opens and closes countless times, leaving drivers waiting in their vehicles to cross the Otonabee River.

Peterborough Green-Up saw this as a great opportunity to target idling habits. "There's a lot of traffic at the bridge in the summer, and many motorists have to stop and wait; most idle their engines while they are waiting," explains Lisa Scott. "We erected signs and conducted interventions, handing out information and decals right at the bridge."

To date, over 40 "Turn Your Engine Off" signs have been placed around the city, at the swing bridge and in other locations where idling is occurring, such as schoolyards, neighbourhoods, business areas and the local hospital.

## By-Law to Exempt Emissions-Free Vehicles

Like many municipalities, Peterborough has proposed an idle-free by-law, requiring that drivers turn off their engines after a certain period – in this case, one minute – when stopped. But there's something unique about one of the by-law provisions proposed by the City. In an effort to encourage sustainable forms of transportation, the proposed by-law specifically defines the term vehicle "as any vehicle or vessel that is propelled or driven by an engine that emits nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide and/or volatile organic compounds," explains Susan Sauvé, Transportation Demand Management Planner for the City. This means that a vehicle that does not pollute while idling is exempted from the by-law.

Lisa Scott suggests, "This is really an opportunity to encourage some creative problem solving on the idling issue. There are a number of low-emission or super-low-emission vehicles, or alternative solutions for powering auxiliary equipment that doesn't pollute. The City is taking these forward-thinking steps in the by-law in hopes that more drivers will consider the alternatives."

The City is proposing another concession for the by-law, stipulating that it not come into effect for taxis until 2011. Sauvé explains, "The idea is that, by 2011, taxis would have had the opportunity to replace their fleet with full hybrids if they so chose, or any other technology that would allow them to idle and not pollute." She adds that the intended result is an ongoing shift toward the use of alternative technology vehicles with lower emissions, particularly for taxi fleets.

The by-law is in draft form and will be submitted to council in 2006.



## The Power of Partnerships in Peterborough

Idling drivers don't stand much of a chance in Peterborough, Ontario, as Peterborough Green-Up, the City of Peterborough and the Peterborough County-City Health Unit have joined forces to tackle the issue through several related initiatives. "The collaboration between our organizations has been very powerful," explains Lisa Scott, Manager of Air Quality and Transportation at Peterborough Green-Up. "We are working towards a common goal – to improve air quality through idling reduction – but we have different approaches allowing us to reach different audiences on different levels."



## Idle-Free Goes to the Movies

It's Friday the thirteenth, the unluckiest date on the calendar, but that doesn't scare the Peterborough idle-free partners. In fact, they are so confident that this date is lucky that they chose it to launch a new idle-free initiative in a local Galaxy Cinemas theatre.

"We chose to promote the artistic idle-free messages of Peterborough Collegiate and Vocational School (PCVS) students at a local cinema because when moviegoers see the PCVS name on the big screen, the message really resonates and says that the idling issue is important to local youth," explains Jackie Donaldson of the Peterborough County-City Health Unit.

At PCVS, the Grade 10 Communications Technology course requires students to produce digital creations as part of the curriculum. This year, students were asked to create community posters to address the idling issue. The posters were part of a launch event at the Galaxy Cinemas in Peterborough, with the theatre featuring the winning poster during the pre-show for the month of January and the remaining posters exhibited in the lobby alongside a large pledge display. "By working with local groups on a real issue, students feel their work is both useful and meaningful in improving the greater community," says Donaldson.

Air quality in Peterborough has become an increasingly common concern, and the Health Unit has also been using an idle-free pledge display to show people how idling contributes to poor air quality. Donaldson explains, "The display features a red car and a bright blue sky. Each pledge is shaped like a puff of exhaust, which when combined with others, covers the entire sky. As more and more people make a pledge and pull it off the display, they reveal more and more of the bright blue sky."

So how has the community responded to the cinema messaging? In short – very well, according to Donaldson. "The local cinema staff were very receptive to allowing the group to set up the display for the weekend. They are quite interested in community events and involvement, and even provided the students with pizza and pop during the launch!" The response from the community has also been positive. "The student whose poster was chosen was very excited about having it featured and having his friends see it," she adds.

For more information about the PCVS project to reduce idling in Peterborough, visit [idling.gc.ca](http://idling.gc.ca).

Dakin Wilson produced the winning poster for the PCVS contest, where students were challenged to create community posters to raise awareness of idling.



# COMMUNITIES IN ACTION (CONT'D.)

## Markham Edges Newmarket in Idle-Free Challenge

The last municipality standing in the great Idle-free Challenge was the Town of Markham, with a narrow victory of 1628 to 1395 pledges. The contest challenged the towns of Newmarket and Markham to have as many residents as possible pledge to reduce their idling. The head-to-head contest generated over 3190 pledges, including 167 from other communities! "This is truly a contest in which everyone is a winner," says Sari Merson of the York Region Environmental Alliance, who coordinated the initiative and kept score.



## Idle-Free Week in the Greater Toronto Area

Municipalities across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) repeated the call for action to motorists last summer, asking them to go idle free and reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, as part of the 2005 Idle-Free Week in the GTA campaign. This campaign builds on the GTA-wide idle-free campaign in 2003, which was coordinated by the Toronto-based Clean Air Partnership.

Twelve GTA municipalities and regions participated in the campaign, including Burlington, Caledon, Halton Region, Markham, Mississauga, Newmarket, Oakville, Peel Region, Richmond Hill, Toronto, Vaughan and York Region. "Promotion and enforcement of idling control by-laws was a major focus of this year's campaign," says Michael Peppard, Project Manager at CAP.

Campaign participants customized their activities, according to whether their municipality has an idling control by-law. Two by-law municipalities, Toronto and Burlington, focused on by-law enforcement and compliance promotion, using enforcement officers to provide warnings and information to drivers found idling their vehicles. In some cases, tickets were issued to idling drivers.

Municipalities without an idling control by-law used a wide range of public education approaches to raise awareness about idling and its impacts. A virtual gold mine of communication tools were used to get the idle-free message out across the GTA, including information cards, decals, T-shirts, a Web site, notices to municipal employees, news releases, municipal champions, personal contact with drivers, public service announcements, media events, free event listings and calendars, banners, posters and electronic highway billboards.

According to Peppard, the 2005 Idle-Free Week in the GTA provided "an important opportunity for GTA communities to come together, renew their commitment to clean air and bring the GTA closer to being idle free."

"Campaigns like this have far-reaching effects and really demonstrate the importance of partnerships," echoes Catherine Ray, Senior Program Manager with the Transportation Division of the Office of Energy Efficiency, Natural Resources Canada. "Our role is to provide the research and help to develop the communication tools, while municipalities are using their networks to get the message out to a wide audience at the local level."

To view the campaign report and communications materials, go to [idling.gc.ca](http://idling.gc.ca).

### Idle-Free Week in the GTA: Facts and Figures

- 84 tickets, 345 warnings and 4 summonses were issued in Toronto.
- Enforcement officers informed 731 idling drivers in Burlington of the City's idling control by-law, asked them to turn off their engines and gave them information about the by-law.
- Average idling frequency dropped by about 7 percent in areas that received by-law enforcement in Toronto and Burlington.
- Idle-free Ambassadors made over 1000 contacts with drivers across the GTA.
- There were more than 119 news reports on idling during the campaign, including coverage in 26 newspapers, and on 11 radio stations and 8 television stations.



## Store Owners Exhausted by Idling in Northwest Territories

Storeowners in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, have taken idling problems into their own hands with the help of the Arctic Energy Alliance (AEA), posting idle-free zone signs in storefront windows to cut the noxious intake through their doors. This is one of a variety of activities endorsed by the AEA to encourage residents and businesses in Yellowknife to kick the idling habit, help the environment and address climate change at the same time.

The Northwest Territories is one spot where the impacts of climate change can be seen first hand. According to the AEA, in the past 40 years, average temperatures in the Mackenzie River basin have risen by 1.5°C, and by the end of this century, scientists predict that temperatures in the Northwest Territories will be at least 5°C warmer than they are now. "Many people take climate change seriously here because it impacts their livelihoods," explains Pauline DeHaan, AEA Communications Coordinator. "Reducing vehicle idling is an easy first step to addressing the problem."

A related initiative endorsed by the AEA is the Park N' Walk campaign that runs in the spring and fall. The campaign encourages people to leave their cars at a parking lot or at home and walk to work or school. Last spring, those who did not park and walk were approached by students at downtown traffic lights and given materials explaining simple actions people can take to reduce idling. "We promoted health and environmental messages to encourage people to participate," explains DeHaan.

With a series of activities including storefront signs, brochures, window decals, radio advertisements and booths at a variety of Yellowknife trade shows and during Environment Week, the idle-free message is reaching residents and becoming part of the culture of northern Canada.

For more information about the Arctic Energy Alliance, visit [www.aea.nt.ca](http://www.aea.nt.ca).



## "Canadian Idle" Hits the Right Note in Banff and Canmore

There were no recording contracts, no screaming fans and no celebrities to judge their performances, but residents in Banff and Canmore, Alberta, still lined up for their chance to participate in the Canadian Idle contest.

Melanie Watt, Executive Director of The Biosphere Institute of the Bow Valley, explains, "Our Canadian Idle quiz is a great first step to educating people about the idling issue. It's amazing how interested people are once they understand that idling is bad for their vehicle."

The Biosphere Institute has been working in collaboration with the towns of Banff and Canmore to get the idle-free message out to residents and tourists alike at high-profile events like the World Cup ski races. "We had people from around the world stop by our booth, take the Canadian Idle quiz and learn about idling in general," Watt adds. "In tourist areas such as ours, local events turn into international opportunities, providing a great opportunity to spread the idle-free message."

It's hard to miss idle-free messages in the two towns. Canmore's welcome sign says "Welcome to Canmore", and large banners hang along the streets in the Town of Banff to encourage idling reduction. The Town of Banff also placed banners at the railway crossing in the town, encouraging drivers to turn off their engines while waiting for the train to cross. Coupled with stickers on bus shelters, decal handouts, posters at recycling stations and on garbage trucks, and inserts in utility bills, the towns are well on their way to creating an idle-free ethic in the area.

"One of the greatest benefits of the proximity of the two towns and the informal partnership between us is the ability to share resources, messaging and materials," explains Watt.

The Biosphere Institute is continuing its efforts this year and is working to start a poster campaign with students to encourage their school-based participation in 2006.

For more information about the Biosphere Institute, visit [www.biosphereinstitute.org](http://www.biosphereinstitute.org).

THIRD STOP

3

# THE IDLE-FREE ZONE WEB SITE

## Did You Know?

Idling for longer than 10 seconds can use more fuel than turning off your engine and restarting it. Contrary to popular belief, restarting your vehicle many times over has little impact on engine components, such as the battery and starter motor. In fact, the wear on parts adds only about \$10 a year to the cost of driving – money you can recover several times over in fuel savings simply by turning off your engine.



## Help Yourself to Our Free On-line Campaign Resources!

These resources were either developed by Natural Resources Canada or provided by Canadian communities from their own campaigns. All materials have been proven effective by municipalities across Canada – and we've assembled them on our Web site, for your use, free of charge. To start your own idle-free campaign, go to [idling.gc.ca](http://idling.gc.ca) and download your ready-to-use graphic materials!



Natural Resources Canada's Office of Energy Efficiency  
*Leading Canadians to Energy Efficiency at Home, at Work and on the Road*

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