

# IDLE REDUCTION AND YOU



**IDLING WASTES MONEY, IMPACTS HEALTH AND AFFECTS THE ENVIRONMENT. IT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND REDUCE IDLING SO EVERYONE CAN HELP KEEP MARYLAND COMMUNITIES THRIVING.**

## **WHAT IS IDLING?**

Idling is when a vehicle is left running unnecessarily while stopped. It occurs when an engine is on, but the vehicle is not otherwise in use or operation.

## **HOW LONG IS IT OK TO IDLE?**

In Maryland, you're not legally allowed to idle longer than five minutes. However, engines can benefit from being turned off after just 10 seconds. And since idling emits pollutants that are harmful to lungs, the less you idle, the better.

## **IS IDLING SAFE IF NO ONE IS NEAR THE VEHICLE?**

Idling puts everyone inside of the vehicle at risk by exposing them to a much higher concentration of pollutants than a car in motion. It also impacts air quality and the environment.

## **WILL CHANGING MY BEHAVIOR REALLY MAKE THAT MUCH OF A DIFFERENCE?**

When it comes to idling, even five minutes matter. Many drivers aren't aware of how much they idle or how even small changes can make a big difference.

## **HOW CAN I GET STARTED ON AN IDLE REDUCTION PLAN?**

Start by simply being aware. Pay attention to your own idling patterns and make lifestyle changes to avoid idling.

## **WHAT IF I AM LOADING OR UNLOADING CARGO OR PASSENGERS?**

There's no benefit to leaving your vehicle running during these activities. Turn your engine off to avoid exposing lungs to ground-level exhaust fumes.

## **SHOULD I WARM UP MY ENGINE BEFORE I START DRIVING?**

Today's electronic engines don't need to warm up—even in the winter. Avoid revving the engine and begin driving right after you start your car.

## **WHAT IF I WANT TO HEAT UP THE CABIN FIRST?**

A vehicle in motion will deliver warm air to the cabin faster than one that's idling.

## **HOW ELSE CAN I AVOID IDLING?**

Avoid drive-thru windows and go inside instead. Waiting for passengers, stopping for trains, and pulling over to eat or use a mobile device are other activities that don't have to include idling.

## **HOW CAN I GET OTHERS TO START THINKING ABOUT IDLE REDUCTION?**

Talk to the people in your life about why idling is important. Make recognizing the opportunities for idle reduction a team effort when you ride with others. Visit [mde.maryland.gov/idlefreeMD](http://mde.maryland.gov/idlefreeMD) for resources to help you start the conversation.



**Maryland**  
Department of  
the Environment

[mde.maryland.gov/idlefreeMD](http://mde.maryland.gov/idlefreeMD)

**PLEDGE TO BE IDLE FREE.**

For more information, contact [mde.idlefreemd@maryland.gov](mailto:mde.idlefreemd@maryland.gov)