

DEBUNKING IDLING MYTHS



Myth 1: idling pollution is worse outside your car.

Fact: if you're running your engine, your car is sitting in its own fumes. Inside the car the pollution levels will be higher than outside because they get trapped without the benefit of wind to disperse them. Findings from Southampton University suggest that pollution levels can be 9-12 times higher inside the car than outside.

Myth 2: idling doesn't waste much fuel or money and is not illegal.

Fact: idling for an hour can waste half a gallon of fuel or more and if you add up a year's worth of idling in your car when parked you could save a significant amount of money. As well as hitting your pocket by wasting fuel, idling unnecessarily while stationary is actually an offence under the Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (England) Regulations 2002, and may be subject to a fine.

Myth 3: idling doesn't harm your engine.

Fact: too much idling can damage your vehicle. Engines don't operate at peak temperature when the engine is switched on and the car is stationary as fuel is only partially burned. This leads to fuel residue build-up which damages engine parts and reduces gas mileage.

Myth 4: starting and stopping my engine frequently will cause more pollution than just letting it run.

Fact: turning off an engine then restarting after a minute will usually cause much less pollution than leaving it idling.

Myth 5: letting a car idle on a cold day is a good way to warm it up.

Fact: the best way to warm up a vehicle is to drive it. Even modern diesel engines don't need more than a few minutes to warm up in cold weather. In icy weather, clear the windscreen with a scraper.

Myth 6: if it's cold outside I need to keep my engine running for it to stay warm.

Fact: your engine will stay warm for 30-60 minutes after switching the engine off.

Myth 7: Pollution from idling isn't that bad.

Fact: idling an engine for just one minute produces as much carbon monoxide (a toxic gas associated with severe health risks) as smoking three packs of cigarettes. In 2019, the estimated number of deaths linked to air pollution in 2015 was 64,000, including 17,000 cases of heart and artery disease and 29,000 cases of lung disease, cancer and diabetes (European Heart Journal May 2019). This is twice the number of deaths attributed to tobacco smoking and several times the number of deaths from car collisions.



STOP MAKING US COUGH, TURN YOUR ENGINE OFF!

Idling an engine for just one minute produces as much carbon monoxide as smoking **3 packs of cigarettes** and enough toxic air to fill **150 balloons!**



This pollution is especially damaging to young lungs and can impact organ development, as well as aggravating respiratory & cardiovascular conditions!

Idling is illegal & now subject to fines. Switch your engine off when stationary!