



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release
September 2, 2009

2009 IDLE-REDUCTION & ECO-DRIVING CAMPAIGN BEGINS IN PRINCE GEORGE

PRINCE GEORGE – The Prince George Air Improvement Roundtable (PG AIR) recently launched an expanded Idle-reduction and Eco-driving campaign to raise awareness about unnecessary vehicle idling and its impact on climate change, as well as the benefits of fuel-efficient driving practices and their impact on climate change and air quality.

Objectives of the PG AIR Idle Reduction & Eco-driving campaigns include:

- building community partnerships;
- promoting awareness and education of the environmental, health, and economic impacts of idling;
- identifying idling “hotspots” and increasing the number of idle free zones throughout the City;
- encouraging motorists to adopt driving and maintenance practices that optimize fuel efficiency;
- conducting a FREE Vehicle Emissions Testing Clinic, where motorists can find out their vehicle’s emissions and learn how to reduce emissions and improve the fuel efficiency of their vehicle.

“Reducing the time you spend idling is a simple, cost-effective way to decrease your greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions,” says Idle Free Ambassador Katherine Lapadat-Janzen. “Unnecessary idling also wastes fuel and money. We hope that changing people’s behaviour with respect to idling will encourage them to adopt more fuel- efficient driving habits overall, thereby also helping to reduce GHG emissions and improve air quality in the local airshed.”

Remember – Idling gets you nowhere. Together we can make Prince George “idle free” and all breathe a little easier. To learn more about the impacts of unnecessary vehicle idling, and how you can save money and help the environment through easy changes in your driving habits, please visit www.pgairquality.com.

The 2009 Idle-reduction and Eco-driving campaigns are generously sponsored by Natural Resources Canada, the Ministry of Environment, and the City of Prince George.

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For more information, please contact:

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BACKGROUNDER

IDLING: IT GETS YOU NOWHERE

Vehicle idling produces emissions that negatively affect the environment through climate change, and indirectly affect local air quality and human health. Idling also wastes fuel and money.

Transportation is the leading contributor to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in BC, and is responsible for approximately 50% of GHG emissions in the City of Prince George. For every litre of gasoline used, a vehicle produces about 2.3 kilograms of carbon dioxide (CO₂), the principle GHG linked to climate change. Studies have shown that climate change impacts may include everything from more severe weather events, such as intense rainstorms, floods and droughts, to hotter summers, rising sea levels, and more forest fires. Climate change can also indirectly affect air quality by magnifying the effects of air pollution.

Unnecessary idling is an inefficient use of resources, and a waste of money. Idling for just 10 seconds actually uses more fuel (and creates more CO₂) than restarting the engine.

One simple and effective way to save fuel and reduce the production of CO₂ emissions is by choosing to eliminate unnecessary vehicle idling. This is an action that you – as a driver – can take. If every driver in Canada reduced unnecessary idling by just three minutes a day, over the year we would save over 630 million litres of fuel, and prevent 1.4 million tonnes of CO₂ from entering the atmosphere. This would be equivalent to taking 320,000 cars off the road for the entire year!

Idling is harmful for the environment, and it gets you nowhere. Here are some ways that you can help reduce unnecessary vehicle idling:

- Turn off your vehicle if you are waiting any more than a minute or two. Natural Resources Canada recommends that you turn off your vehicle if you will be stopped for more than 60 seconds.
- Use remote starters wisely – it's too easy to forget how long you've let it run.
- Park your car and walk your children into school.
- Walk into coffee shops and restaurants instead of using their drive through service.

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BACKGROUNDER ECO-DRIVING: DRIVE SMART FOR CLEAN AIR

In addition to emitting carbon dioxide (CO₂), the primary climate changing greenhouse gas (GHG), vehicles also emit many toxic pollutants that have a negative impact on local air quality and on health.

The nearly 50,000 personal vehicles in the City of Prince George are responsible for a large portion of our GHG emissions, and have a significant effect on local air quality. Results from a recently completed study suggest that mobile emissions (including diesel vehicles) contribute between 22 to 24% of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) on an average basis. These emissions have an even greater localized impact to people living next to major traffic corridors. Auto exhaust emits pollutants not only into the atmosphere but also into your vehicle. The smallest pollutants – fine particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) – can lodge deeply into the lungs and cause lung damage, aggravate respiratory conditions such as asthma and bronchitis, increase the risk of strokes and heart attacks, lead to cancer and contribute to premature death. Other pollutants are also generated by mobile sources, including nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide and volatile organic carbons, which can have negative health impacts. This is why PG AIR is focusing efforts on encouraging drivers to adopt more efficient driving habits overall.

By making a few simple changes to our driving habits, we can all make a difference when it comes to protecting our environment and your health. Here's what you can do to help – and save money:

- Keep your car well maintained. A poorly maintained vehicle can boost fuel consumption by 15 percent and toxic pollutants by even more.
- For improved fuel efficiency and enhanced safety, make sure your tires are properly inflated. Operating a vehicle with just one tire under-inflated by 8 psi (56 kPa) can reduce the life of the tire by 15,000 kilometres and increase the vehicle's fuel consumption by 4%.
- Minimize your use of air conditioning to improve your fuel efficiency in summer. To stay cool at highway speeds, use your car's flow-through ventilation. When driving in the city, open a window.
- About 50% of the fuel consumed in city driving is used during acceleration. Accelerate gently and steadily and anticipate traffic.
- Don't speed. Since wind resistance increases exponentially with speed, maintaining highway speeds of 100 km/hr rather than 120km/hr reduces fuel consumption by about 20%.
- Drop extra weight. Avoid carrying non-essential heavy items such as tools and sports equipment. Extra weight requires more fuel.
- Reduce wind resistance. Roof racks and open windows at highway speeds will increase drag, decreasing efficiency of today's aerodynamic vehicles

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