



# Vehicle Idling Policy

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## 01. Introduction

Vehicle engine emissions are increasingly connected to a wide variety of health illnesses, the release of pollutants in the atmosphere, and climate change. Turning off a vehicle is a simple and cost-effective way to reduce noise, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect health, and extend engine life.

Pace University is committed to providing a safe, healthy and productive environment for all persons occupying our university. This policy is intended to improve the health and safety of all individuals in or around the university and reduce risks associated with exposure to exhaust fumes and to help minimize air pollution and maximize fuel efficiency.

## 02. Applicability

This policy applies to the operation of all university-owned vehicles, Pace University employees, students, external contractors, vendors, and others who deliver supplies or convey passengers to and from campus facilities.

## 03. Rationale

Westchester County and New York City idling laws stipulate that no vehicles (with explicit exceptions) may idle more than three (3) minutes. New York State requires heavy duty vehicles including a bus or truck to idle for no more than (5) five minutes. Pace University's idling policy ensures compliance with these laws.

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), exposure to tailpipe emission from vehicle exhaust, even at low levels, is a serious health hazard and can cause respiratory problems such as asthma and bronchitis. Diesel exhaust from idling engines can accumulate in and around the emission source and pose an exposure risk to the students, staff, driver, operator and the community at large.

Carbon dioxide is an environmental pollutant and greenhouse gas that contributes significantly to climate change. Every gallon of gasoline burned—for driving and idling—releases twenty (20) pounds of carbon dioxide, making the transportation sector responsible for about a quarter of overall United States carbon dioxide emissions.

## 04. Facts

- **Wastes Money & Natural Resources**
  - Thirty (30) seconds of idling can use more fuel than turning off the engine and restarting it.

- An idling car is the most inefficient car on the road -- it gets -0 miles per gallon.
- Idling a vehicle ten (10) minutes a day uses more than twenty-five (25) gallons of gasoline a year.
  
- **Damages our Vehicles**
  - Modern engines only need thirty (30) seconds or less of idle at startup. Your vehicle is made up of many moving parts, thus the best way to warm up a vehicle is to drive it. Contrary to popular belief, idling is not an effective way to warm up your vehicle, even in cold weather. The notion that idling is good is passé – in fact it hasn't been the right thing to do since the advent of electronically controlled engines. The truth is that excessive idling can actually damage your engine
  
- **Affects the Environment**
  - Keep in mind that every gallon of gas you use you produces about 19 pounds of carbon dioxide, which contributes to climate change.
  - An idling engine produces twice as many exhaust emissions as an engine in motion.
  
- **Harms our Health**
  - Three major pollutants are emitted by automobiles—hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, and nitrogen oxide, which pose dire risks to human health. When hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxide mix in sunlight and high temperatures, ground-level ozone is created. This leads to coughing, wheezing, and eye irritation, and can result in chronic lung problems. Carbon monoxide decreases levels of oxygen in the bloodstream and affects mental and visual functions.
  - Children are particularly vulnerable to air pollution because they breathe faster than adults and inhale more air per pound of body weight.
  - Many people believe that they are protected from air pollution if they remain inside their vehicles. Not so according to a report by the [International Center for Technology Assessment \(CTA\)](#). CTA found that exposure to most auto pollutants, including volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and carbon monoxide (CO), is much higher inside vehicles than at the road side. VOCs and CO are linked to serious health problems--like respiratory infections and cancer--are known to shorten life. The highest exposure occurs when sitting in traffic congestion on highways or in a line-up of idling vehicles at a school or drive-through.

## 05. Guidance

### A. Policy Implementation

Beginning immediately:

1. No vehicles shall idle on University grounds more than three (3) minutes, except as noted under “Exceptions”
2. All drivers of university owned vehicles shall receive a copy of this policy at the beginning of every fall semester.
3. This policy shall be posted in the Safety and Security Departments “Traffic Guide”.
4. This policy shall be posted on [www.pace.edu](http://www.pace.edu)

Adhering to these limits will improve surrounding air quality, protect the health of drivers, students and others, conserve fuel (save money) and decrease engine wear.

### B. Guidelines to Reduce Exposure to University Bus Exhaust Emissions

1. When bus drivers arrive at loading or unloading areas to drop off or pick up passengers, they should turn off their buses as soon as possible to eliminate idling time and reduce harmful emissions. The bus should not be restarted until it is ready to depart and there is a clear path to exit the pick-up area.
2. Limit the idling time of buses during early morning warm-up to what is recommended by the manufacturer (generally three (3) to (5) five minutes) in all but the coldest of weather.
3. Signs should be prominently posted on university grounds to remind all (car, bus, truck) drivers of the university idling policy.
4. Visitors to campus, including buses and contractor/vendor vehicles, are subject to the same policy as employees and students and will be asked to comply.
5. Vehicles should not be left running while unattended. The operator of the vehicle/equipment should turn off the unit and remove the keys from the ignition.

### C. Conflict Resolution

Employees, students and visitors are expected to honor the anti-idling policy at all university buildings and facilities by shutting off their engines upon arrival. Individual complaints or concerns regarding the university fleet vehicles should be discussed with the University Director for Transportation. Concerns about staff or students who idle their vehicles on university grounds can be directed to the Director for Employee Relations Manager or Dean for Students. Contact the Security Department for complaints



against visitors and outside contractors/vendors.

#### **D. Enforcement of Policy**

All persons share in the responsibility of adhering to and enforcing this policy. Any person violating this policy will be subject to the similar disciplinary actions that accompany other infractions of university policies.

#### **06. Exceptions**

The following instances are the only times a vehicle on Pace University campuses may be allowed to idle. They include:

- It is forced to remain motionless because of traffic conditions or mechanical difficulties.
- It is necessary to operate defrosting, heating, or cooling equipment to ensure the health or safety of its occupants, ten (10) minute maximum idle time limit when ambient temperature is 32 F and below.
- It is necessary to operate auxiliary equipment located in or on the vehicle (i.e. hoist, lift, safety lighting, and internal equipment).
- It is necessary to bring the vehicle to the manufacturer's recommended operating temperature.

#### **07. References**

[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)

[www.nysdec.gov](http://www.nysdec.gov)

<http://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/co2.shtml>

#### **08. Responsible Department**

**Safety & Security – EH&S?**

#### **09. Date Adopted**

March 2011