

City of Chicago
Vehicle Idling Management Policy
4-16-10

The City of Chicago (“City”) utilizes a fleet of over 2,400 medium- and heavy-duty (diesel-powered) vehicles and more than 5,000 automobiles and light-duty vehicles (gasoline- or alternative fuel-powered) to carry out its municipal operations. Exhaust from these vehicles contains a variety of pollutants, such as nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, and other chemicals that form ground-level ozone (smog) and contribute to climate change. These pollutants may aggravate respiratory ailments (like asthma), cause lung damage, and may lead to cancer.

Unnecessary idling of the City’s fleet wastes approximately 1 gallon of fuel per hour for diesel vehicles and roughly 0.75 gallons of fuel per hour for automobiles or light-duty vehicles. If the City’s fleet of vehicles were to idle for 30 minutes per day, annual emissions are estimated to exceed 10,000 metric tons of harmful pollutants and 7,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide. From a cost perspective, the same amount of idling would result in approximately \$2,200,000 in unnecessary fuel expenditures.

Vehicle idling can also produce avoidable wear and tear on engines. Because an idling engine operates below its optimum temperature, residue deposits can form within the engine to reduce fuel economy by 5% and diminish engine life. Lower operating temperatures can cause premature corrosion damage to exhaust piping and mufflers.

The Chicago Vehicle Idling Management Policy is designed to improve air quality while realizing significant savings in fuel and operating costs.

Policy

1. No driver of a municipal vehicle shall cause or allow the vehicle to idle for a period of more than 3 minutes in a 60-minute period.
2. The policy shall not apply to:
 - a. Emergency service vehicles, such as fire apparatus, police vehicles, or ambulances;
 - b. Vehicles standing in traffic;
 - c. Airport support equipment;
 - d. Vehicles being serviced or repaired;
 - e. Idling when necessary to operate auxiliary equipment that is required to accomplish the intended use of the vehicle;
 - f. Idling to provide heat within the cab of the vehicle if the outside temperature is less than 32° F and there is no accessible temperature-controlled area within a reasonable distance; or
 - g. Idling to provide cooling within the cab of the vehicle if the outside temperature is more than 80° F, there is no accessible temperature-controlled area within a reasonable distance, and the vehicle is equipped with air conditioning.