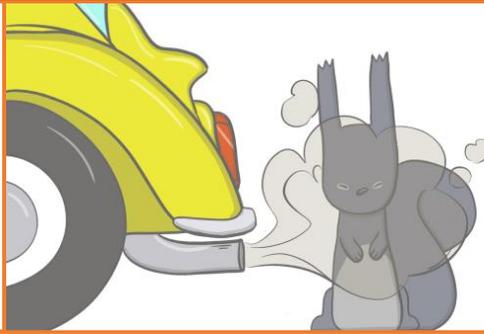


## Frequently Asked Questions



**TURN IT OFF.**  
Reduce idling to save money and keep FLG healthy.

### What is idling?

Idling is when a driver leaves their vehicle running unnecessarily while parked.

### Why are we talking about idling?

- Idling usually provides little benefit to drivers, especially when it's not winter.
- *Turning it off* is a free and easy step you can take to save money and protect our air quality.
- Everyday thousands of vehicles idle needlessly, sometimes for hours. An idling car can release as much pollution as a moving car.
- In Flagstaff, we idle at trains, in parking lots, and in drive-thrus. You may not be able to avoid keeping your engine running when you're stopped at a traffic signal or stuck in slow-moving traffic. But other times it's easy to just *turn it off*.
- The Sustainability Section wants to help you save money and make Flagstaff a healthier place to live.
- We received a grant from the Urban Sustainability Director's Network to fund marketing materials for this anti-idling campaign.

### Do you want me to stop idling everywhere?

- No! There are plenty of places where idling is hard to avoid, or necessary for safety, like waiting in traffic, or at stoplights, or if you need to defrost your windows. This campaign is asking you to pick one place where it'd be easy and safe for you to turn off your engine.

### Is shutting off the engine bad for my car?

- In the past, frequent restarts could be bad for a car's engine and battery. With modern engines, this isn't the case! The added wear from turning off your car amounts to no more than \$10 a year. This is much less costly than the cost of wasted fuel, which can add up to \$70-650 a year, depending on fuel prices, idling habits and vehicle type. Idling actually increases overall engine wear by causing the car to operate for longer than necessary.

### What can you do?

- **Turn off your ignition if you're waiting more than 10 seconds.** Contrary to popular belief, restarting your car does not burn more fuel than leaving it idling. In fact, idling for just 10 seconds wastes more gas than restarting the engine.
- **Warm up your engine by driving, not by idling.** Today's engines do not need to warm up, even in winter. Check your owner's manual, but in most cars the best way to warm an engine is by easing into your drive and avoiding excessive revving.<sup>1</sup>
- **Warm up the cabin interior by driving, not idling.** Easing into your drive is also the best way to warm up the inside of your car. Sitting in an idling car means you are breathing in more of the dirty exhaust that leaks into the car cabin. Any



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.carfax.com/blog/do-you-need-to-warm-your-car-up>

warmth you may get from a car heater is not worth the potential damage to your health. If parked and waiting, it is healthier to get out of your car and go inside a store or building.

### Doesn't it use more gas to start the car than leave it running?

No! Idling for just 10 seconds wastes more fuel than restarting your engine, so don't hesitate to *turn it off* when stopped for minutes at a train stop, waiting in a parking lot or a drive-through line.

### Does it really save money?

Yes! The cost of wasted fuel can range anywhere from \$70-650 a year depending on fuel prices and how much you idle.

### Worried about the cold?

- The fastest way to get an engine up to its ideal operating temperature is to ease into driving rather than idling. Take it from the folks at [Firestone Complete Auto Care](#):

*"While you've probably heard advice to idle from Mom, Dad, and all your neighbors, it's actually a myth that dates back to the old days of carburetors. Carburetors required some time idling to get to a temperature where they'd run smoothly. However, fuel-injected engines have been the norm since the 80s and 90s and they have sensors that adjust for cold weather. Idling your car before you start doesn't just waste fuel and increase emissions, it strips oil from the cylinder and piston —critical components that help your engine run."*

- Have more questions on idling and vehicle health? The U.S. Department of Energy [has answers](#).

### Where does excessive idling occur in Flagstaff?

We surveyed Flagstaff residents in summer 2018 and the three most common places are:

- Train stops
- Drive-thru lines
- Parking lots

### What are the benefits of reducing idling?

- **Turning it off saves money.** restarting your car does not burn more fuel than leaving it idling. Americans waste \$13 million every day on unnecessary idling.
- **Turning it off makes our air healthier** by cutting down on hazardous pollution in Flagstaff. Idling tailpipes spew out the same pollutants as moving cars. These pollutants have been linked to serious human illnesses including asthma, heart disease, chronic bronchitis, and cancer.
- **Turning it off can keep your engine healthier.** Idling can actually damage engine components. According to the California Energy Commission, "Fuel is only partially combusted when idling because an engine does not operate at its peak temperature. This leads to build up of fuel residues on cylinder walls that can damage engine components and increase fuel consumption."

### Is this mandatory?

No! The *Turn it Off* campaign is focusing on voluntary action. Reducing idling in one location is a choice residents can make to save money.

### How is the campaign funded?

We received a grant from the Urban Sustainability Director's Network to communicate the benefits of reduced idling to residents.

#### Want more information?

See the following links:

[Answering the Question: To Idle or Not to Idle?](#) by Jiffy Lube.

[To Idle or Not To Idle: That Is the Question](#) by Argonne National Laboratory.

[What You Should Know About Truck Engine Idling](#) by the US EPA.

[Idling Reduction for Personal Vehicles](#) by the US Department of Energy.

[Is Idling In Winter Bad For Your Car?](#) by Firestone Complete Auto Care.