

# IDLE REDUCTION AND PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS



IDLING WASTES MONEY, IMPACTS HEALTH AND AFFECTS THE ENVIRONMENT. IT'S IMPORTANT FOR DRIVERS TO RECOGNIZE IDLING'S IMPACT ON MARYLAND COMMUNITIES.



## WHAT IS IDLING?

Idling is when a vehicle is left running unnecessarily while stopped. It occurs when an engine is on, but the vehicle is not otherwise in use or operation.

## HOW LONG IS IT OK TO IDLE?

In Maryland, drivers are not legally allowed to idle longer than five minutes. However, engines can benefit from being turned off as soon as possible. And since idling emits pollutants that are harmful to lungs, the less drivers idle, the better.

## IS IDLING SAFE IF NO ONE IS NEAR THE VEHICLE?

Idling puts drivers at risk by exposing their cabin to a much higher concentration of pollutants than when their vehicle is in motion. It also impacts air quality and the environment.

## WILL CHANGING MY BEHAVIOR REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Yes! When it comes to idling, five minutes matter. Many drivers aren't even aware of how much they idle. Small changes through the course of their day can make a big difference. Idle reduction can also save money on fuel and maintenance while extending the life span of the vehicle.

## WHAT IF I WANT TO HEAT THE CABIN FIRST?

A vehicle in motion will deliver warm air to the cabin faster than one that's idling.

## HOW CAN I START AN IDLE REDUCTION PLAN?

Start by simply being aware. Pay attention to your own idling patterns and make lifestyle changes to avoid idling.

## WHAT ABOUT WHILE LOADING OR UNLOADING CARGO OR PASSENGERS?

There's no benefit to leaving an engine running during any activity that doesn't require it to be on. Drivers should turn engines off to avoid exposing lungs to ground-level exhaust fumes during these activities.

## HOW ELSE CAN I AVOID IDLING?

Never leave an unattended vehicle running. Preparing for your day, waiting to load and unload, dining behind the wheel, and taking breaks are other activities that don't have to include idling. Take the Pledge to be Idle Free and show Maryland communities that you are committed to idle reduction.



**Maryland**  
Department of  
the Environment

[mde.maryland.gov/idlefreeMD](http://mde.maryland.gov/idlefreeMD)

**PLEDGE TO BE IDLE FREE.**

For more information, contact [mde.idlefreemd@maryland.gov](mailto:mde.idlefreemd@maryland.gov)