

# You Hold the Key to be Idle Free

## What is Idling?

Operation of an engine when the engine is not in gear and the engine operates at a speed specified by the engine or vehicle manufacturer where the accelerator is fully released and there is no load on the engine.

## Is Idling Prohibited?

The City of Austin has a Motor Vehicle Idling Code (Chapter 6-1, Article 3) that prohibits heavy-duty vehicle idling. Specifically it states “no person shall cause, suffer, allow, or permit the primary propulsion engine of a motor vehicle to idle for more than five consecutive minutes when the motor vehicle is not in motion.” This prohibition applies to heavy-duty vehicles weighing over 14,000 pounds. See the back of this brochure for exemptions to this requirement.

## What is the Penalty?

An offense of the Motor Vehicle Idling Code is a Class C misdemeanor. The penalty is \$500 per offense, excluding court costs, and is enforced year round.

## When is Idling Wasteful?

- Waiting in queue – Delivery trucks, transit buses, motor coaches, shuttle buses
- Engine warming – today’s vehicle warm up faster by being driven than idling
- Sitting in vehicle – during lunch breaks, to complete paperwork, to make phone calls

## Why Care About Idling?

- Idling Pollutes - Emissions from motor vehicles combine in sunlight to form ground-level ozone
- Idling Threatens Health – Ground-level ozone can inflame and damage airways and aggravate lung diseases such as asthma, emphysema, and chronic bronchitis
- Idling is Expensive – Engine idling wastes fuel, increases vehicle maintenance costs, and can shorten vehicle life



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**Exemptions to the Motor Vehicle Idling Code  
(Chapter 6-1, Article 3):**

1. a motor vehicle that has a gross vehicle weight rating of 14,000 pounds or less;
2. a motor vehicle that has a gross vehicle weight rating of 14,000 pounds and that is equipped with 2008 or subsequent model year heavy-duty diesel engine or liquefied or compressed natural gas engine that has been certified by the United States Environmental Protection Agency or a state environmental agency to emit no more than 30 grams of nitrogen oxides emissions per hour when idling;
3. the primary propulsion engine of a motor vehicle being used to provide air conditioning or heating necessary for employee health or safety in an armored vehicle while the employee remains inside the vehicle to guard the contents or while the vehicle is being loaded or unloaded;
4. a motor vehicle forced to remain motionless because of traffic conditions over which the operator has no control;
5. a motor vehicle being used by the United States military, national guard, or reserve forces, or as an emergency or law enforcement motor vehicle;
6. the primary propulsion engine of a motor vehicle providing a power source necessary for mechanical operation, other than propulsion, and/or passenger compartment heating, or air conditioning;
7. the primary propulsion engine of a motor vehicle being operated for maintenance or diagnostic purposes;
8. the primary propulsion engine of a motor vehicle being operated solely to defrost a windshield;
9. the primary propulsion engine of a motor vehicle that is being used to supply heat or air conditioning necessary for passenger comfort and safety in vehicles intended for commercial or public passenger transportation or passenger transit operations, in which case idling up to a maximum of 30 minutes is allowed;
10. the primary propulsion engine of a motor vehicle being used to provide air conditioning or heating necessary for employee health or safety while the employee is using the vehicle to perform an essential job function related to roadway construction or maintenance;
11. the primary propulsion engine of a motor vehicle being used as airport ground support equipment;
12. the owner of a motor vehicle rented or leased to a person who operates the vehicle and is not employed by the owner; or
13. a motor vehicle when idling is necessary to power a heater or air conditioner while a driver is using the vehicle's sleeper berth for a government-mandated rest period and is not within two miles of a facility offering external heating and air conditioning connections at a time when those connections are available.

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