

## Idling Count

Often drivers leave their engines running while they have stopped in traffic or are waiting to collect or drop off children at school. If the vehicle is left running for more than 30 seconds after it has stopped or parked it is called 'idling'. Idling engines release 150 balloons of pollution and harmful fumes from their exhausts every minute.

An idling count will help to determine the extent of the problem outside the school and raise the awareness of the pupils. It can also be done before and after your project to measure its success at reducing the number of cars idling.

### Equipment:

- High vis vests
- Clip board
- Sheet to record results
- Pencils
- Watch and stop-watch

### Remember:

- To get permission for everyone to arrive early or stay late after school
- Make sure you have a risk assessment in place
- Children must stay with adults at all times

### Instructions:

Decide when you will carry out your count. The best time is before the start and end of school for 15 minutes. It should be repeated on at least two days, ideally in the morning and afternoon. This count is most effective if you can get eight students (working in four groups of two) involved and have two groups on either side of the road. If this number of students is too tricky, you can do a simpler and less scientifically accurate count using four students. In this case or if you have younger students, you can miss out timing the cars for 30 seconds and just decide if they are idling, by just recording idling vehicles as ones with their engine running when parked.

Put on high vis vests so that you are easily seen. In your group go to the place where cars drop off and pick up the children.

In groups of two, one student should be allocated one of the following roles:

### Spotter Job:

- Look for cars waiting outside school.
- Times for 30 seconds to check if a car is idling.

### Recorder Job:

- Records start and end times and after 15 minutes tells the spotter that the time is up.
- Fills in the tally column to record how many cars are idling and are not idling.
- Writes down the last three letters of the number plates of idling cars/buses to make sure there isn't any double counting.

It's hard to know if a car is idling unless you are next to it so do the count by walking slowly along the side of the road, staying on the inside of the pavement at all times.

To make it fair when repeating the activity ensure that the areas surveyed is the same and for the same length of time.

## Method:

1. The Recorder should write down the time in the column 'Start Time'.
2. The Spotter points out cars and buses that are stopped. If the engine is off, the Recorder puts a line in the tally column for cars not idling.
3. If the engine is on, the Spotter starts the stop-watch to time if the vehicle idles for at least 30 seconds. If they have, the recorder puts a line in the tally column for cars idling and writes down the last three letters of the vehicle's number plate.
4. Repeat 2-3 times until 15 minutes is up.
5. The Recorder writes the finish time in the column 'End Time'.
6. The number of vehicles idling and not idling should be added up and recorded in the 'total' columns.
7. The groups need to look at all the results and identify if they counted any vehicles twice. If so, reduce the totals accordingly.

# Idling Count Results:

Date:

|                                     | Start Time | End Time | Tally of idling vehicles | Number of idling vehicles | Tally of non idling vehicles | Number of non idling vehicles |
|-------------------------------------|------------|----------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| AM                                  |            |          |                          |                           |                              |                               |
| PM                                  |            |          |                          |                           |                              |                               |
| Total number of idling vehicles     |            |          |                          |                           |                              |                               |
| Total number of non-idling vehicles |            |          |                          |                           |                              |                               |

| Last three letters of number plate of any vehicles idling |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|   |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## Note:

- By 'cars' we mean all motorised vehicles.
- Recording the last three letters of number plates is to ensure vehicles are only counted once. This data alone cannot identify a vehicle.