EPA

OnCampus ecoAmbassadors

OnCampus ecoAmbassadors are college students who implement projects from EPA's partnership programs to help carry out the Agency's mission to protect human health and the environment. The program is open to ANY college student, regardless of program, age, or background. All interested students are encouraged to participate.

Did You Know?

- Unnecessary idling on your campus not only wastes gas, it also pollutes the air and is noisy.
- Exhaust from idling can also enter school buildings through air intakes, doors, and open windows.
- When idling, a typical school bus engine burns approximately half a gallon of fuel per hour.
- School districts that eliminate unnecessary idling can save significant dollars in fuel costs each year.
- Extended idling causes engine damage, and engine manufacturers generally recommend no more than three to five minutes of idling.

Learn More

To learn more, visit:
www.epa.gov/otaq/stateresources/rellinks/ium_idlingcontrols.htm

For more information about research being done to support idling projects, visit:
www.epa.gov/smartway/documents/publications/420s06004.pdf

Idle Free Zone Project

We all know that it is common for vehicles on campuses to run their engines while they are stopped or waiting for passengers. Yet, idling is costly — to the driver, the vehicle owner, and to the environment. Along with generating unnecessary emissions, idling can increase engine maintenance costs, adversely affect health, and create elevated noise levels.

Conducting an Idle Free Zone Project on your campus can help address these environmental concerns while making your campus experience more pleasant. The idea is simple. Get your campus to establish "Idle Fee Zones" for all vehicles on campus and encourage them to enact policies that limit idling for university-owned vehicles. By educating your peers and school administrators, you can create a sustainable program that minimizes idling on campus.

Goals of the Idle Free Zone Project

- Improve air quality and reduce noise levels on campus
- Reduce the fuel consumption of university vehicles
- Save money by conserving fuel and reducing wear and tear on engines
- Promote EPA's fundamental mission to protect human health and the environment

If You're Interested In:

- Advancing policies and solutions to improve local air quality
- Gaining hands-on experience with project management
- Empowering and motivating students to change their behavior

... then the Idle Free Zone Project is for you!

See page 2 for a step-by-step checklist for the Idle Free Zone Project.

Be Among the First Students To Take Action

This is the first time that EPA has encouraged idle free zones on college campuses. Supporting idle free zones helps the air we breathe stay cleaner, protects human health, and reduces the emission of greenhouse gases. In addition, vehicles will last longer, use less fuel, and require fewer repairs if idling is avoided.

The Idle Free Zone Project is ideal for students pursuing degrees in public policy, environmental science, chemistry, biology, and physics.

Checklist for Idle Free Zone Project

Follow the steps below to conduct and Idle Free Zone project on your campus.

☐ 1. Assess idling on your campus.

Observe your campus and identify if there are specific areas where idling is common. Take special note of campus shuttle stops and student parking lots. After identifying areas where idling is common, track and record how many vehicles you observe and how long vehicles tend to idle. Prepare a report outlining your findings, which you can use to effectively present a case for implementing idle free zones on your campus. Be ready to explain how idle free zones will be beneficial to human health and the environment.

☐ 2. Research what is being done on your campus.

Contact your school administrators, student government, and environmental clubs on campus to talk about what action, if any, has already been taken on this issue. Figure out ways in which you can collaborate with them and how your efforts might complement their existing activities.

☐ 3. Designate the idle free zones.

Coordinate with school administrators and the student government to designate idle free zones on your campus. Determine whether there will be an official policy to enforce the idle free zones and, if so, make sure to follow school guidelines for creating new rules.

☐ 4. Host an event to announce the designation of idle free zones.

Once designated, design a strategy to announce the idle free zones to other students and organizations. Utilize multiple media outlets to publicize the locations and purpose of the idle free zones. Create a Facebook event and invite your friends. Promote the event in campus publications and send out information on class list serves. Make classroom announcements, if approved by professors. Develop creative posters, fliers, and other ways to promote the message.

☐ 5. Measure your results.

Take photos during your publicity event and keep track of how many people you talk to throughout the day. Record your results, and after your program has been implemented, continue observing vehicle idling habits. Compare your observations to your initial research. Document the results in a completion report.

☐ 6. Build a sustainable program.

Continue to talk with fellow students and gain campus support. Follow up with the campus groups that you initially contacted and request their help in continuing and maintaining the program.

☐ 7. Fill out your completion form.

Record the information that you are required to report to EPA on the event completion form, including your name, date of the event, name of your college, a description of the event or events, the number of interactions (include any interesting comments), and additional comments.

Resources

Idling Myths

Myth: Bus engines require a long idle period to warm up, especially in cold weather.

Fact: Engine manufacturers suggest a warm up time of less than five minutes.

Myth: Running engines at low speed (idling) is better than driving at regular speed.

Fact: Running an engine at low speed causes twice the wear on internal parts compared to driving at regular speeds.

Myth: The engine must be running in order to operate the school bus safety equipment.

Fact: Through re-wired circuitry, safety equipment can be operated without the engine running for up to an hour with no adverse effects.

Verified Idling Reduction Technologies

EPA has determined that a variety of idle reduction technologies save fuel and reduce emissions when compared to idling the main engine. For more information, visit:

www.epa.gov/smartway/technology/idling.htm

Tips for Successful Events

1. Find a suitable space.
2. Put up posters to advertise the event.
3. Create a Facebook event.
4. Ask friends to spread the word.
5. Plan to have snacks available – find out if you can get donations.
6. Arrange for music at the event.
7. Arrive early to set up the space, including snacks and music.
8. Use sign-up sheets to record attendance.
9. Create a written summary of the event.

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EPA OnCampus Websites

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