

REDUCING VEHICLE EMISSIONS

Reducing fuel costs is a big concern with Ontarians in today's economy, with fuel prices expected to rise even more in the future. Limiting vehicle idling is an easy way for us to save money and reduce our CO₂ emissions. Unnecessary idling reduces the life of your vehicle and increases air pollution resulting in health effects such as breathing difficulties and eye, nose and throat irritation. It's not only a good idea to reduce idling, it's the law.

Stratford By-law 133-2001 was introduced to improve air quality and respiratory health. The by-law limits idling to no more than five consecutive minutes with exemptions for transit vehicles and outdoor temperatures. Stratford has proven to be an environmental leader by introducing this by-law at such an early date.

Many improvements made to vehicles have decreased the necessity to warm up your engine. With a fuel injections system, the average vehicle's fluids reach operating temperature within ten seconds. Taking wear and tear into consideration, it is better to turn your vehicle off and restart it than to idle for more than one minute.

Reducing idling is only the one step to keeping your fuel costs down. There are several other ways to lessen the sting at the pumps. Proper maintenance of your vehicle will keep fuel efficiency at its peak and increase the longevity of your vehicle. Checking tire pressure and fluids should be done once a month. Use suggested driving methods such as following posted speed limits and avoiding rapid acceleration or deceleration. Combine several errands into one trip. Consider using or setting up a car pool for commutes to and from work. Use a block heater or air conditioning only when really necessary.

Stratford has an excellent mass transit system, both within the city and inter-city. Set a personal goal to walk or bike at least one day a week; you'll save money and be healthier for it.