

Vehicle Idling

Reviewed Date		Number	OP0109
Revised Date	November 9, 2022	Approved Date	August 12, 2009

Introduction

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit recognizes its obligation to take a leadership role by reducing its contribution to air pollutants and greenhouse gasses. Contaminants from vehicle exhaust are major contributors to deteriorating air quality and smog. Idling vehicles and equipment have a significant impact on fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Turning off an engine is a clear and simple means of engaging people in air quality improvement behaviours.

Idling vehicles release harmful emissions that cause eye, nose and throat irritation, coughing and wheezing, breathing difficulty, reduced lung capacity, and decreased resistance to infections. Exposure to air pollution can also cause serious symptoms for individuals with asthma and cardio-respiratory diseases. Idling is also a waste of fuel and money, idling for more than 10 seconds burns more fuel than restarting. Reducing fuel consumption also directly reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to inform Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit Board of Health members, employees, students, volunteers, contractors and suppliers of their obligations regarding the idling of vehicles and equipment on health unit properties and while conducting health unit business.

Policy Definitions and Interpretation

This policy applies to the idling of health unit vehicles and/or vehicles operated by health unit staff while conducting agency business.

Employee: includes all full time, part-time, contract, temporary, students or casual staff.

Manager as used within this policy is a term inclusive of all management personnel with direct reports – Medical Officer of Health, Vice President, Manager and Supervisor.

Idling is defined as: The operation of the engine of a vehicle while the vehicle is not in motion and not being used to operate auxiliary equipment such as, but not limited to, medical or mechanical lifts and refrigeration units.

Vehicle is defined as: Cars, trucks, vans, SUV's, tractors, snowplows, and other equipment operated by a driver, as defined in the *Highway Traffic Act*, and which utilize fuels such as diesel, gasoline, propane or compressed natural gas.

Policy

In order to protect the health of employees, reduce emissions and demonstrate leadership, all board members, employees, students, volunteers, contractors and suppliers should limit vehicle

idling to one (1) minute or less on all properties owned or leased by the health unit or at any location while conducting agency business in personal or agency fleet vehicles.

Exclusions and accommodations to this policy can include first responder vehicles and other vehicles where vehicle idling is required to maintain safe operation.

Exemptions

The one (1) minute limit does not apply to:

- Weather conditions where idling may be necessary for the safe operation of the vehicle (e.g., defogging, winter de-icing) or the health and safety of the operator and/or passenger is a factor (high heat).
- When transporting items for agency business that require temperature-controlled states per other guidance and legislation. This would include but is not limited to: vaccines transported under the Ministry of Health's Vaccine Storage and Handling Protocol; infectious substances transported under the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act, 1992 (S.C. 1992, c.34) and its regulations; medications for Sexually Transmitted/Blood-Borne Infections (STBBIs) transported per the Ministry of Health's STBBI Prevention and Control Protocol.

Procedures

1. Staff members are encouraged to promote and reinforce the idle free grounds policy during their interactions with the public and to address identified non-compliance with the policy directly with the individual(s). Alternatively, they may seek the assistance of management to assist.
2. Observed non-compliance with the policy by staff, students or volunteers should be communicated to your own Direct Supervisor for follow up.

Related Policies

Final Approval Signature: _____

Review/Revision History:

September 2010 Policy re-numbered, previous policy B2.150

November 9, 2022, Director to VP and reclarification of intent