

Air Quality



How to carry out a vehicle idling survey

Often drivers leave their engines running while they have stopped in traffic or are waiting to collect or drop off students at school. If the vehicle is left running for over one minute after it has stopped or parked it is called '**idling**'. Idling engines continue to release pollution and harmful fumes from their exhausts.

Materials required:

- High visibility tabards,
- clip board,
- survey form (see following page),
- pencils,
- watch and stop watch.

Instructions:

Groups of students should be escorted to a safe location close to the school entrance where buses and cars wait. Teachers should risk assess the location before the event. The best time of day to do this will be at the start and at the end of the school day. High visibility tabards should be worn by the students to keep them safe.

In a group of three, the students should be allocated one of the three following roles:

- **The Observer** who will spot the cars waiting outside school
- **The Timer** who will time how long parents' cars are left idling
- **The Recorder** who will record the number of cars idling and not idling

How to record how many drivers have and haven't switched off their engines while waiting outside the school:

1. The **Recorder** should write down the time in the column 'Start Time'.
2. The **Timer** should make sure that vehicles are only counted for 15 minutes.
3. The **Observer** looks for cars and buses that are idling and not idling and tells the **Timer**.
4. The **Timer** uses a stop watch to time if vehicles have been idling for at least **one minute**.
5. The **Recorder** records the numbers of vehicles idling and switched off using a tally chart.
6. At the end of 15 minutes, the **Timer** tells the **Observer** to stop counting and the **Recorder** writes the finish time in the column 'End Time'
7. The number of vehicles idling and switched off should be added up and recorded in the 'total' column.

After a 1-minute break, the students can swap jobs, repeat the steps 1-7 and record their findings. After counting vehicles for the second time, they should add up all the vehicles idling and put this number in the 'total, column on the bottom row. Then they should add up all the vehicles switched off and put this number in the 'total' column on the bottom row. Repeat steps 1-7 again in the afternoon.

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The results may be used to determine if idling is a problem at the school and drivers are likely to be impacting the air quality air around the school and to initiate a 'no idling' campaign.

The survey can be used to gather baseline data and if repeated after running a 'no idling' campaign to measure the team's success in changing drivers' behaviour.

The data collected could be shared with parents in the school newsletter, on the school website or via Parentmail to raise awareness about the issue.

Vehicle Idling Survey Form						
Name of School		Date		Location		
Name of Observer		Name of Timer		Name of Recorder		
Morning survey						
Session	Start Time	End Time	Number of vehicles idling	Total	Number of vehicles switched off	Total
Morning Session 1						
Morning Session 2						
Total number of			Vehicles idling		Vehicles switched off	
Afternoon Survey						
	Start Time	End Time	Number of vehicles idling	Total	Number of vehicles switched off	Total
Afternoon Survey 1						
Afternoon Survey 2						
Total number of			Vehicles idling		Vehicles switched off	