

Kansas Green Teams

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6 Facts About Warming Up Your Car in Winter

Old habits die hard, and one of the oldest – still rigorously enforced by many drivers – is that "warming up" the car for a few minutes is necessary to avoid some kind of unspecified damage. But idling is totally unnecessary, which is why many communities have enacted ordinances against the practice. Here are some quick facts and tips that should put the idling question to rest:

1. **Driving Warms the Car Faster than Idling**

If your concern is not the health of the car, but simply your own creature comforts, idling is not actually an effective way to warm up a car — it warms up faster if you just drive it. The coming electric cars, such as the Nissan Leaf, will incorporate a wonderful feature that allows the owner to use a cell phone to tell the car (which is plugged into the grid) to pre-warm or pre-cool the interior. No idling necessary.

2. **Ten Seconds Is All You Need**

Turn off your ignition if you are sitting stopped for more than 10 seconds. After about ten seconds, you waste more money running the engine than restarting it. Switch the car off at the curb and you'll be leaving money in your wallet and protecting the air in your community.

3. **Idling Hurts the Car**

Idling forces an engine to operate in a very inefficient and gasoline-rich mode that, over time, can degrade the engine's performance and reduce mileage.

4. **Idling Costs Money**

Over a year of five minutes of daily idling (which causes incomplete combustion of fuel), the operator of a V-8-engined car will waste 20 gallons of gasoline, which not only produces undesirable air pollutants but costs close to \$60.

5. **Block Heaters Beat Remote Starters**

Remote starters can too easily cause people to warm up their cars for five to 15 minutes, which is generally unnecessary. A block heater, which is designed to heat the engine and can cost under \$30, on a timer set to start one to two hours before driving does the trick in very cold climates.

6. **Quick Errands Aren't Quick Enough**

Quick errand idling is another way to waste gas and pollute both your town and the planet. Leaving your engine running is hard on your pocketbook, pollutes the air and is an invitation to car thieves.



Get Caught !



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