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“STOP IDLING” EDUCATION CAMPAIGN VISITS SCHOOLS IN ALL FIVE BOROUGHES



In Recognition of Asthma & Allergy Awareness Month, Citywide Education Effort Aims to Reduce Vehicle Idling in Neighborhoods with High Rates of Asthma

Photos of Outreach Available on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

In recognition of Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) visited more than 60 schools in neighborhoods across the city to raise awareness of the hazardous effects of idling vehicles. Throughout the month of May, DEP distributed informational letters and “Stop Idling” fliers to more than 1,800 Department of Education sustainability coordinators in an effort to reduce illegal idling in school zones. In addition, DEP staff distributed literature to hundreds of parents, teachers and bus drivers at elementary schools in neighborhoods with high asthma rates as well as to drivers in areas of the city with a high volume of trucks and buses. The City’s Air Code limits idling to one minute in school zones and three minutes elsewhere in the city.

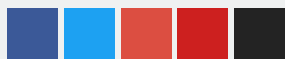
“It’s time to clear the air—illegal vehicle idling is bad for our children and tough on our wallets,” said **DEP Acting Commissioner Vincent Sapienza**. “Our goal is to have the cleanest air of any big city in the country and that is why we have spent the past month reminding New Yorkers that turning off your engine can save fuel, money, and, most importantly, lives.”

Council Member Costa Constantinides, Chair of the Council’s Environmental Protection Committee, said, “Idling vehicles waste money and fuel, emit harmful pollution, and reduces our air quality and public health. As we work to make our city greener and more sustainable, we must encourage drivers to stop idling. This Asthma Awareness Month, DEP’s Stop Idling campaign will

More Information

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educate the public about idling's hazardous environmental and health effects. I am proud that the campaign will focus on our public schools, where children are forced to breathe in noxious fumes and experience higher rates of respiratory issues including asthma. Thank you Acting Commissioner Sapienza for your dedication to this issue."

"Saving the planet and improving our air quality demands large-scale government action, but it also demands little changes in our everyday lives we all need to be responsible for," said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. "If a vehicle is parked, it shouldn't be burning gas. With a turn of the ignition key, New Yorkers can save our kids' health—and our planet's."

"Vehicle idling is one of New York City's most intractable environmental issues. It has very serious public health impacts, and contributes to long-term climate change. Local law prohibits vehicles from idling for more than 3 minutes on most streets and more than 1 minute in a school zone, but the law is rarely enforced. I wholeheartedly salute the Department of Environmental Protection's citywide educational campaign to reduce idling in neighborhoods with high asthma rates. This is exactly the sort of pro-active, grassroots step we need to be taking. I look forward to working with the City to promote and expand its critical efforts to stop vehicle idling and clean our air," said **Council Member Helen Rosenthal (Manhattan, District 6)**.

Idling Facts:

- More than \$28 million in fuel is wasted by New York City idlers annually.
- Children breathe 50 percent more air per pound than adults and asthma symptoms increase because of vehicle exhaust.
- Idling for longer than 10 seconds wastes more fuel than restarting your car.
- Idling fines in New York City can be upwards of \$350.

Illegal idling contributes to overall motor vehicle emissions of harmful air pollutants, including fine particulate matter (PM 2.5, or "soot"). Additionally idling contributes to oxides of nitrogen, and organic compounds that contribute to ozone pollution. Neighborhoods in northern Manhattan, the South Bronx and North-Central Brooklyn have rates of asthma and other chronic health conditions that are higher than in the city as a whole and have the highest estimated rates of hospital admissions and deaths caused by soot pollution.

The City has aggressively worked to reduce emissions around schools from non-vehicle sources, including investing hundreds of millions of dollars to convert school boilers to cleaner fuels. In addition, in 2016 Mayor de Blasio announced that all 5,300 buildings registered as burning No. 6 home heating oil had converted to cleaner-burning fuel. As a result, there has been an annual reduction of 1,200 tons of particulate matter emissions, which has prevented 210 premature deaths and 540 hospitalizations annually. Neighborhoods with the highest density of boiler conversions—such as northern Manhattan, northern Queens, and the South Bronx—saw the greatest improvement in air quality with the greatest proportion of health benefits occurring in vulnerable, high poverty areas.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing approximately 1 billion gallons of high quality drinking water each day to more than 9 million residents, including 8.5 million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned \$20.7 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).