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INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

Acton Board of Health - Telephone 978-264-9634 - Fax 978-264-9630

May 2, 2008

TO: Steve Ledoux, Town Manager

FROM: Doug Halley, Health Director

SUBJECT: Idling Reduction Policy

Acton received a grant from DEP that supports an Idling Reduction Program. As part of that grant the Town received bumper stickers, windshield decals, pamphlets, idling reduction pledges and signs that can be used to advance public awareness.

The grant also provided a generic Idling Reduction Policy. The Board of Health has reviewed that policy at their regularly scheduled meeting of April 28, 2008 and voted unanimously to recommend that the Board of Selectmen adopt the policy. The recommended policy is attached.

The Board of Health also requests that the Board of Selectmen allow the bumper stickers and windshield decals to be placed on all Town Vehicles. In addition they request permission to work with the DPW in identifying strategic areas to place the signs (commuter parking lot, NARA). It is also their intention to work with the School Committee to implement the program on school grounds. Copies of the materials are also attached.

Acton Idling Reduction Policy

This policy applies to all vehicles operated by or within the town of Acton.

Objectives:

- (1) To eliminate unnecessary idling of vehicles in order to reduce the community's exposure to exhaust from gasoline and diesel engines.
- (2) To educate and inform municipal employees and residents about the health and environmental effects of gasoline and diesel exhaust.

Purpose:

Idling vehicles pollute the air and present several health and environmental hazards. Gasoline and diesel vehicles produce carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and oxides of nitrogen (NO_x). Carbon monoxide causes respiratory distress and in high concentrations can be lethal; carbon dioxide is a primary contributor to global warming; and VOCs and NO_x form ozone, ground-level smog and impair lung function. In addition, diesel exhaust contains fine particulate matter, which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has designated as a likely carcinogen. The elderly, chronically ill and children are all particularly vulnerable to these health effects because their lung function is respectively decreased, impaired or still in development. In addition, Massachusetts General Law (MGL Chapter 90, Section 1 6A) and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) idling reduction regulation (310 CMR 7.1 1(1)(b)) both prohibit unnecessary vehicle idling by stating that the engine must be shut down if the vehicle will be stopped for more than five minutes.

Exemptions include:

- 1) the vehicle is being serviced and the idling is required to repair the vehicle; or
- 2) the vehicle is making deliveries and needs to keep its engine running (to power refrigerators, for example); and,
- 3) the vehicle's accessory equipment needs to be powered, such as a fork lift or a truck's rear dump bed, or a wheelchair lift in a bus or van. In order to reduce the health and environmental effects of vehicle exhaust, comply with the state's idling reduction regulation and law, and decrease our use of fuel by reducing unnecessary idling, the following actions shall be implemented to the maximum extent practicable:

- Provide Idling Reduction signs at public parking lots and driveways that are accessed by school or municipal vehicles.
- Provide Idle-Free Zone signs at the commuter parking lot and recreation parking lots.
- Distribute "Do your share for Clean Air" palm cards at Town Meeting and other public settings.
- Distribute "Do you share for Clean Air" windshield static sticker at Hazardous Waste Day.

- Distribute “I care about Clean Air” bumper sticker to all municipal vehicles.
- Provide Idling Reduction Pledge Card to school system for distribution.

This policy is hereby approved by the Acton Board of Selectmen and the Acton Board of Health, this [date], to eliminate unnecessary idling.

Board of Selectmen, Chairperson

Board of Health Chairperson



THE GREEN TEAM Idling Reduction Pledge

In our classroom we are learning about the benefits of clean air and actions that we can take to improve air quality. One way you can ensure cleaner air in our community and around our school is to turn off your vehicle's engine when waiting to pick up your child or running errands.

Please sign and return the pledge below to let your child know that you are joining with other parents in our school's GREEN TEAM effort to improve air quality and help everyone breath easier. By reducing idling you will:

- Protect students, school staff and drivers from harmful exhaust fumes
- Reduce air pollutants that contribute to smog and global warming
- Reduce fuel consumption
- Reduce engine wear and tear
- Save money on fuel and engine repairs



Brought to you by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

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IDLING REDUCTION PLEDGE

I, _____ hereby pledge to my child, _____,
Parent/Guardian's Name *Student's Name*

that I will IMPROVE AND PROTECT AIR QUALITY in our community by turning off my vehicle's engine when I am parked or waiting.

Signed by _____ Date _____
Parent/Guardian's Signature

Witnessed by _____ Date _____
Student's Signature



Do your share for clean air



Turn off your engine when waiting

- Exhaust fumes from cars, trucks and buses contain fine particles that can trigger asthma attacks. These exhaust fumes are produced unnecessarily when vehicles idle. Children are particularly vulnerable because their lungs are still developing and they breathe 50 percent more, by volume, than adults.
- Idling vehicles also produce nitrogen oxides, which contribute to smog, and carbon dioxide, which contributes to global warming.
- Excessive idling is not good for your car. It is better to shut off your engine if you stop for more than 10 seconds, unless you are in traffic. Limit warm-up idling in winter to 30 seconds – the best way to warm up your vehicle is to drive it.
- It is against the law in Massachusetts to idle unnecessarily for more than 5 minutes.

The Department of Environmental Protection is working with communities across Massachusetts to reduce our exposure to air pollution from idling vehicles. For more information on air quality, please visit MassDEP's Web site at:

www.mass.gov/dep/air

Do your share for clean air



Turn your engine off when waiting