# Myth vs. Fact

## Busting 10 Misconceptions about Vehicle Idling

### #1 Myth: There's nothing I can do about vehicle idling
Fact: Yes you can! Simply turn off your vehicle!

### #2 Myth: The best way to warm up a car is by letting it idle for several minutes
Fact: Idling is NOT an efficient way to warm your vehicle, even in cold weather. A slow drive-off during the first mile is the best way to warm a vehicle’s transmission, tires, suspension, steering, & wheel bearing.

### #3 Myth: Eliminating unnecessary idling won’t save money
Fact: 1 hour of idling can burn up to 1 gallon of fuel, and avoiding 5 minutes of idling each day can save $35 every year. When you idle, you go 0 miles per gallon—talk about money going up in smoke!

### #4 Myth: Traffic signal timing is not optimized to minimize vehicle idling
Fact: The City of Fort Collins re-timed all major arterial traffic signals in 2009, saving over 1 million gallons of fuel and almost $18 million in community-wide time and fuel costs each year.

### #5 Myth: Idling is not much of a problem in Fort Collins
Fact: Local surveys suggest there are more than 15,000 hours of unnecessary idling in Fort Collins every year, from activities like warming up vehicles on cold mornings to idling while dropping off/picking up kids from school.

### #6 Myth: Frequent re-starting of car engines damages my car
Fact: Re-starting has little impact on engine components like the battery and starter. You can actually reduce wear and tear when you turn off your vehicle rather than idling. Excessive idling can damage your engine components like cylinders, spark plugs, and the exhaust system.

### #7 Myth: Shutting off and restarting my vehicle uses more gas than if I left it running
Fact: 30 seconds of idling uses more fuel than restarting the engine. If you are going to stop for 30 seconds or more (except in traffic), turn off the engine. Some experts estimate even 10 seconds is the break-even point.

### #8 Myth: Pollution emitted from idling cars is insignificant to my health & environment
Fact: It’s quite significant because toxins emitted from idling can impair our lungs & heart. Idling fumes have been linked to asthma, decreased lung function, cardiac disease, cancer & other serious health problems. Those most at risk are children, the elderly, and those with respiratory ailments. Prolonged exposure can possibly lead to death.

### #9 Myth: Sitting in an idling car prevents exposure to car exhaust fumes
Fact: Not so. According to the International Center for Technology Assessment (CTA), exposure to most car pollutants, like volatile organic compounds (VOCs) & carbon monoxide (CO) is much higher inside vehicles than on the road side. Higher exposure occurs when sitting in traffic congestion, highways or in a line-up of idling vehicles at a school or drive-thru. In these situations, CO levels can be 7 times the outside air level.

### #10 Myth: It’s illegal to turn off the engine while in traffic in Fort Collins
Fact: If you are in the car, it’s not illegal to turn off the engine.

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