



Motor Vehicle No Idling Policy

Motor Vehicle No Idling Policy:
Information for Staff, Visitors and
Contractors

April 2020

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Policy Summary

The Motor Vehicle No Idling Policy applies to all staff, contractors and visitors while on Council premises and to all staff that use their own car or a fleet vehicle for conducting Council business. This policy has been introduced to reduce the impact of Council operations and services on the local environment and air quality. Air pollution has been described by Public Health England as “the largest environmental risk to the public’s health in the UK” ¹. Health effects of air pollution include asthma, respiratory disease, coronary heart disease, stroke and lung cancer. Vulnerable groups which are especially susceptible to the effects of air pollution include elderly adults, children, people with underlying heart and lung conditions or diseases.

Idling is when a vehicles engine has been left running when stationary. This causes unnecessary air pollution.

Engines should be switched off and not left idling when on council premises. For example, when parked, loading or unloading, or taking a rest break in a vehicle. This applies to Council staff, visitors and contractors.

Council premises include, Rowan House, Shrub End Depot, Leisure World, Town Hall, Car Parks, Parks and Gardens, Green Spaces and Sports Grounds.

Council Staff, when using a vehicle for Council business should switch off their engine when stationary. There is exception to some services, vehicles, operations and in exceptional circumstances.

Contractors are strongly encouraged to adhere to this policy and switch off their engines to avoid unnecessary idling when conducting business through contracts with the Council and to adopt this policy for their own staff.

¹ Public Health England, 2019. Review of interventions to improve outdoor air quality and public health
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/795185/Review_of_interventions_to_improve_air_quality.pdf

No Motor Vehicle Idling Policy

Introduction

As part of Colchester Borough Councils (CBC) commitment to reducing the impact of its operations and services on the local environment and air quality this policy has been introduced. In July 2019 the council declared a Climate Emergency and has committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030. This policy forms part of the work being undertaken as part of the Climate Emergency declaration and as part of the Council's Clean Air for Colchester project which aims to improve air quality. The Council has a statutory requirement to develop an Action Plan to improve air quality where Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) have been identified.

Colchester has an ongoing issue with air quality and has declared three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) for exceeding European Union air quality objectives. Air quality has a range of short term and long-term effects on health. Air pollution has been described by Public Health England as “the largest environmental risk to the public's health in the UK”². In addition, the air pollutant Particulate Matter (PM) is estimated to be a contributory factor in 5.5% of deaths in Colchester in 2018³. This is above the England average of 5.2%. There is an estimated effect of 28,000 – 36,000 deaths a year attributable to human induced air pollution in the UK². For more information about air quality, AQMAs and the air quality Action Plan in Colchester please see the [Air Quality Annual Status Reports](#).

It is of importance that Council operations and services, where possible, mitigate to reduce the Council's impact on ambient air quality. Road transport is the main source of air pollution within Colchester, namely Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂). Reductions in vehicle idling time within Colchester will improve air quality, this can be achieved, in part, by switching off engines when stationary.

CBC Staff

This policy section applies to all CBC staff when operating a fleet or private (their own) vehicle both on and off CBC premises for Council services or operations.

CBC Staff should switch off their vehicle's engine when:

- Parked
- Loading or unloading
- Taking a rest break in a vehicle
- At level crossings when the crossing is down
- At traffic lights when the driver estimates that the vehicle will be stationary for one minute or over. For example, the traffic light junction at Brook Street/Magdalen Street, the stop light is over two minutes in duration.

There are exemptions to services and vehicles due to operational requirements and safety. These include:

² Public Health England, 2019. Review of interventions to improve outdoor air quality and public health

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/795185/Review_of_interventions_to_improve_air_quality.pdf

³ Public Health England, 2020. Public Health Outcomes Framework, D01 – Fraction of Mortality attributable to Particulate Air Pollution.

- Waste and recycling collection vehicles when collecting refuse, recycling and food waste as part of their operations.
- Street cleaning vehicles when operational.
- Where the driver perceives a health and safety risk of switching off their engine or in other exceptional circumstances.

Staff are asked to consider alternative methods to car use where possible such as walking, cycling and using public transport. Please search 'flexible travel' on the CBC intranet for information about incentives offered for sustainable travel. Pool bikes/scooters are also available for staff use.

Visitors on CBC Premises

Engines should be switched off and not left idling when on Council premises. For example, when parked, loading or unloading or taking a rest break in a vehicle. This applies to visitors when on CBC premises. Visitors are also encouraged to consider not idling wherever possible throughout Colchester. See section 'CBC Premises' for what constitutes a CBC premises.

Contractors

Engines should be switched off and not left idling when on Council premises. For example, when parked, loading or unloading or taking a rest break in a vehicle. Contractors should adhere to the policy when on CBC premises.

Contractors should make their staff who attend CBC premises aware that idling is not permitted when on CBC sites. See section 'CBC Premises' for what constitutes a CBC premises.

Contractors are encouraged to assist the Council in improving air quality for everyone in our community. Therefore, it is also strongly recommended that contractors consider adopting the policy of no idling in a wider context when:

- Conducting operations and services under contract with the Council.
- Bidding for contracts with the Council.
- Considering/developing their own internal environmental policies.

Why Switch Off

"Every minute, an idling car produces enough exhaust emissions to fill 150 balloons with harmful chemicals, including cyanide, NO_x and PM_{2.5}"⁴.

Vehicle idling is a significant contributor to air pollution. By 'switching off' when stationary and restarting the engine when you are ready to move off you will reduce the amount of air pollution entering the surrounding environment. This therefore reduces the impact of pollution on yours and others health. Please see the next section on 'Air Quality and Health' for more information.

By switching off you will also reduce the amount of money spent on fuel. With most modern vehicles, the cost of switching off the engine and starting up again after a minute or more will be less than the cost of leaving the engine idling. So, if you

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/idling-drivers-could-face-higher-fines-under-new-government-crackdown>

switch off for a minute or more, you'll be reducing the amount of air pollution your vehicle produces and reduce your fuel consumption.

The [RAC](#) and [AA](#) have produced information on how to reduce your idling and busting the myths around turning your engine on and off. The project [Clean Air for Colchester](#) has also produced a myth busting fact sheet. Please visit www.colchester.gov.uk/cleanair for more information.

Communications

Council staff who have visitors travelling to Council premises should make them aware of this policy in writing. The 'Information for Visitors' Summary should be attached to any meeting confirmation or invitation. This summary can be found on the Council intranet. Information about this policy will be included within new starter staff inductions. To help this, a summary has also been created and can be found on the Council's intranet.

Where possible, communications should highlight the no idling policy, sustainable transport, air pollution and health within advertisements or invitations to events or meetings carried out by the Council or its subsidiaries.

Reports of vehicle idling will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and if needed signage interventions or other interventions may be considered at some Council sites.

The Council requires drivers of licensed vehicles turn off their engines when waiting in the Borough's AQMAs. This is outlined within the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy. Please visit www.colchester.gov.uk/taxis-and-private-hire for more information.

Air Quality and Health

NHS and social care costs due to air pollution (PM_{2.5} and NO₂) were estimated to be between £42.88 and £157 million in 2017 with an estimated total cost between 2017 and 2025 of between £1.6 and £55.6 billion ⁵. Vulnerable groups are particularly at risk from the effects of air pollution. These include elderly adults', children, people with underlying heart and lung conditions or diseases and pregnant women.

Air pollution has been described by Public Health England “the largest environmental risk to the public’s health in the UK” ⁶. Health effects of air pollution range from short term to long term. Short terms effects of exposure to high levels of air pollution can cause irritation and inflammation of airways and lungs, and worsening of heart and lung diseases ⁷. Long term effects of air pollution are associated with a range of health impacts including asthma, respiratory disease, coronary heart disease, stroke and lung cancer ⁵. There are emerging links showing impacts on diabetes, low birth weight and dementia ⁵.

Additional information about Air Quality and Health

If you would like more information about the health impacts of air pollution and how to reduce your exposure and contribution please see the [Clean Air for Colchester Project](#) webpage or the [Clean Air Hub](#) website. For local information on air pollution in Colchester read the CBC [Air Quality Annual Status Report](#).

The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs’ [UK AIR](#) website has lots of information about air pollution, in addition to their UK Air, air pollution forecasting service. [Public Health England](#) also produces advice and information about the health effects of air pollution. The UK Government [Clean Air Strategy](#) outlines the health effects and sources of air pollution in addition to effects on the natural environment and economy.

The [Clean Air Hub](#) has a range of information relating to both indoor and outdoor air pollution. Their webpage contains facts about air pollution and health in addition to other information.

[AirTEXT](#) is a free service which provides 3-day air pollution alerts via email or text message. This service is particularly useful for people who have respiratory or heart conditions.

⁵ Public Health England, 2018. Estimation of costs to the NHS and social care due to the health impacts of air pollution: summary report.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/708855/Estimation_of_costs_to_the_NHS_and_social_care_due_to_the_health_impacts_of_air_pollution_-_summary_report.pdf

⁶ Public Health England, 2019. Review of interventions to improve outdoor air quality and public health
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/795185/Review_of_interventions_to_improve_air_quality.pdf

⁷ <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/air-pollution/effects>

CBC Premises

CBC owned premises include, Rowan House, Shrub End Depot, Leisure World, Town Hall, Parks and Gardens, Green Spaces and Sports Grounds.

Parks, Gardens, Green Spaces and Sports Grounds included are identified on the [mapping tool](#).

In addition, CBC premises also include Car Parks both within the town centre and in out of town locations, including parks. A list of CBC Car Parks can be found on the [CBC Car Parks page](#).

Glossary of Terms

AirTEXT

AirTEXT is a free service for the public providing air quality alerts by SMS text message, email and voicemail and 3-day forecasts of air quality, pollen, UV and temperature (<https://www.airtext.info/>).

AQMA

Air Quality Management Area is area where air pollutant concentrations exceed / are likely to exceed the relevant air quality objectives. AQMAs are declared for specific pollutants and objectives.

Attributable

Estimated from a specified risk factor. In this case, the cases quantified are due to the air pollutant⁸ i.e. health outcomes.

CBC

Colchester Borough Council.

Idling

Idling is leaving a vehicles engine running when it is stationary.

NO₂

Nitrogen Dioxide is a noxious gas. It is a local, primary traffic pollutant and a biologically relevant indicator of exposure to traffic related air pollution with known health effects⁸.

PM

Particulate Matter is an urban background pollutant which often disperses over a large area. PM consists of finely divided solids or liquids such as dust, fly ash, soot, smoke, aerosols, fumes, mists, and condensing vapours that can be suspended in the air.⁸ PM is linked with a health effects.

⁸

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/708855/Estimation_of_costs_to_the_NHS_and_social_care_due_to_the_health_impacts_of_air_pollution_-_summary_report.pdf

Document Information

The document owner sought consultation from Colchester Borough Council services or teams impacted by this policy.

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