Rhode Island Anti-Idling Regulation Fact Sheet

Reducing Emissions for Cleaner Air

Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
OFFICE OF AIR RESOURCES

What is it?

Rhode Island's Diesel Engine Anti-Idling Regulation was put into effect in 2007. It states that unnecessary idling of a diesel engine for more than five minutes in a sixty minute period is prohibited barring exceptions for traffic, purpose of the vehicle, and the health and safety of passengers and vehicle operators.

Why is it Important?

Engine idling emits large amounts of carbon dioxide, particulate matter, and nitrogen oxide into the air, all of which pose a serious threat to the environment by polluting the air and raising climate temperatures. Increased levels of these pollutants in the atmosphere can also lead to bronchitis, emphysema, and asthma, making them a public health risk.

What Types of Vehicles are Included?

This regulation is applicable to any on road diesel motor vehicle defined as "a vehicle powered by a diesel engine". This includes both light-duty cars such as pickup trucks, SUVs, minivans, and sedans as well as heavy-duty vehicles such as school buses, semi-trucks, and other on road diesel engines. It also applies to non-road diesel engines including farm vehicles, locomotives, aircraft, marine vessels, and other assorted industrial equipment.

What is the Penalty?

Violators of this regulation can be fined up to \$100 for the first offense and up to \$500 for each succeeding offense.

FACTS

- **Pollutants are at a higher concentration closer to the ground, creating a higher risk of adverse health effects from diesel emissions for children**
- **Idling causes unnecessary wear and tear on a vehicle's engine components, increasing maintenance costs and decreasing the overall life of the vehicle**
- **Idling wastes about 6 billion gallons of fuel each year in the U.S.**
- **One minute of idling produces more carbon monoxide than 3 packs of cigarettes**

Source: Maryland Idle Free Campaign

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What are the Exemptions?

1. Vehicles that are motionless due to traffic conditions or law enforcement directives.

2. Vehicle operators may idle their vehicle for 15 minutes per hour when temperatures are between 0 and 32 degrees Fahrenheit in order to properly heat the vehicle for safety reasons.
    a. Passenger buses may do so when temperatures are below 50 degrees Fahrenheit if non-driver passengers are on board.

3. Vehicles may idle if the engine must be running to power mechanical or electrical operations such as refrigeration.

4. Non-road diesel engines and on-road vehicles may idle for required maintenance, service, repairs, diagnostics, and state and federal inspections.

5. Police, fire, rescues, ambulance, and all other public safety and emergency vehicles as well as military and other vehicles may idle when being used in an emergency or training capacity.

6. Armored vehicles may idle when a person remains inside to guard the contents or while the vehicle is being loaded and unloaded.

7. Airfield maintenance vehicles may idle while being used to achieve their intended purpose.

8. Any diesel engine that must continuously operate to perform their intended function such as generators are exempt from the anti-idling policy.

9. Operating a vehicle mounted auxiliary power unit or generator set as a means to heat, air condition, or provide electrical power as an alternative to idling the vehicle's main engine is not considered idling.

How Does it Impact Me?

The anti-idling regulation only applies to diesel engines, meaning if you drive a gasoline vehicle, this regulation doesn't apply to you. That being said, this regulation will have direct, positive impacts on Rhode Island residents by decreasing their chances of breathing in polluted air and facing the potential negative health effects associated with diesel engine emissions.