TORONTO

REPORT FOR ACTION

Anti-idling By-law Report

Date: February 12, 2025
To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee
From: Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry Division and General Manager, Fleet Services Division
Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report responds to direction from City Council to report back on:

- How Toronto's Idling Control By-law is currently being enforced;
- The timing and nature of public education since 2015;
- Steps taken to discourage idling within the City's fleet; and
- Options to increase public education.

The Idling Control By-law limits idling to no more than one minute in a sixty-minute period, except in specific circumstances where vehicles are required to idle for operational purposes (e.g., Fire, Police and Paramedic), which reduces unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions and improves air quality in Toronto.

Enforcement of the anti-idling by-law is conducted on a complaint basis.

Public enforcement is complemented by City fleet actions, including:

- A requirement of City employees who operate a City-owned, -leased or -rented vehicle or equipment to comply with the City's anti-idling policy;
- Leveraging fleet technologies, training, and awareness for vehicles where some idling is necessary;
- Enhancing regular anti-idling communications to all divisions, agencies, and corporations; and
- Procuring zero- and low-emissions vehicles to replace existing internal combustion engine vehicles where feasible and operationally viable, including those with idle-reducing technologies.

Public education is currently conducted through the installation of over 2,120 anti-idling signs across the city, with approximately 25 additional signs being installed per year in high-complaint areas or in response to Councillor requests. A City website also contains more information for residents.

Public education efforts on climate change generally are increasing over time as part of the City's overarching TransformTO Strategy, of which anti-idling represents just one action citizens can take to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and air pollution.

Idling emissions are expected to shrink over time due to an increase in the purchase of electric and other zero-emission vehicles (ZEV) and a fleet-wide standardization of "start-stop" technology in vehicles with internal combustion engines (which turns a vehicle's engine off while stopped at traffic lights and stop signs).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry Division and General Manager, Fleet Services Division recommend that:

1. City Council direct the Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry Division, and the General Manager, Fleet Services, to report fleet idling performance through the Annual TransformTO Net Zero Progress and Accountability Report.

2. City Council direct the General Manager, Fleet Services to provide idling data to client divisions as part of an overall effort to reduce idling through awareness, education and technology.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the report. There are existing and budgeted resources that are responsible for anti-idling enforcement as part of the overall transportation enforcement efforts. Any future budget impact will be put forward in future reports or budget submissions.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer have reviewed this report and agree with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

On June 15, 2022, City Council adopted MM45.16 titled "Cutting down on idling in Toronto", which included the following direction:

> *1. City Council direct the General Manager, Fleet Services to enhance in-service training for drivers employed by the City of Toronto on emissions reductions initiatives and idling by-laws, with updates to be informed by the City's TransformTO strategy.*
>
> *2. City Council direct the Executive Director, Environment and Energy, in consultation with the General Manager, Transportation Services, to report back to City Council with options to increase public awareness of, and compliance with, Toronto's idling by-laws, including posting of signage on public buildings, and an education campaign.*

The City Council document can be viewed at: Agenda Item History - 2022.MM45.16 (toronto.ca)

On December 15, 2021, City Council adopted IE26.16 titled "TransformTO - Critical Steps for Net Zero by 2040", which included the following direction:

> *40. City Council request the Director, Environment and Energy to report to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee on the following:*
>
> *b. on how the Idling By-law is currently enforced and the number of tickets that have been given out per year since 2015;*
>
> *c. the time and nature of the most recent public education campaign on the Idling By-law that have been conducted since 2015;*
>
> *d. the current steps undertaken by Corporate Services and other Agencies and Corporations to measure and reduce idling in the City fleet and how to discourage idling in other vehicles;*

The City Council document can be viewed at: Agenda Item History - 2021.IE26.16 (toronto.ca)

On June 8, 2010, City Council adopted HL30.2 titled "Improving Toronto's Idling Control By-law: Update" which made the anti-idling by-law easier to understand and easier for the City to enforce. Improvements included decreasing the allowed idling time, clarifying the language in the by-law, removing some of the exemptions, and strengthening enforcement.

The City Council document can be viewed at: Agenda Item History - 2010.HL30.2 (toronto.ca)

COMMENTS

1. Background

a. Municipal Code Chapter 517

Municipal Code Chapter 517, Idling of Vehicles and Boats (2010), defines idling as: "The operation of the engine of a boat or vehicle while the vehicle or boat is not in motion and not being used to operate auxiliary equipment that is essential to the basic function of the vehicle or boat, and 'idling' has a corresponding meaning."

The restrictions on idling under Chapter 517 state that: "No person shall cause or permit a vehicle or boat to idle for more than one minute in a sixty-minute period".

Exceptions to the above are permitted for City vehicles such as Fire, Police and Paramedic emergency response vehicles as they are considered under the by-law as "Mobile Workshops", which is defined as "a vehicle serving as a facility for taking

measurements or making observations operated by or on behalf of a municipality, public utility or police, fire or ambulance service".

b. Enforcement

The "On-Street Permit Parking" unit of Transportation Services enforces the by-law on a complaint basis due to limited enforcement resources. The enforcement approach focuses on education and compliance and is consistent with other Ontario jurisdictions.

The idling by-law is enforceable on both public and private property. For example, if a complaint is registered about a vehicle idling in an underground garage or mall parking lot, Transportation Services has the authority to investigate.

The current idling by-law complaint-based process is as follows:

- Concerned residents register a complaint with 311, providing detailed information (e.g., make, model, license plate, location, time, etc.) of the vehicle in question.
- Staff send a letter to the address associated with the vehicle containing a warning, providing wider education about the harms of idling, and describing possible fines.
- In the unlikely event of repeat offenders, a by-law officer may be deployed to observe and enforce a fine.

Note that in 2019 and previous years, some proactive enforcement was conducted, and tickets and summons were issued. However, given limited resources, proactive enforcement is no longer conducted.

A vehicle owner can be fined a maximum of $5,000 through the court summons process, with the highest fine to date being $2,500 in 2002. Transportation Services' experience continues to show that issuing warnings is the best method to obtain compliance.

Table 1: Enforcement Statistics* (2015-2023):

Year	Number of complaints	Number of Warnings issued	Number of tickets issued	Summons issued
2015	1011	995	1	0
2016	1430	1148	0	0
2017	3064	2041	0	0
2018	2020	1800	2	0
2019	1625	1555	29	2
2020	588	337	0	0
2021	130	110	0	0
2022	712	620	0	0
2023	737	716	0	0

* Reference: Internal data collected by Transportation Services Division

There are currently two Transportation Standards Officers responsible for overall enforcement, including of the anti-idling by-law, therefore by-law enforcement is done

on a complaint basis only. However, prior to 2011, one enforcement blitz was undertaken in May and another in September.

c. Public Education

Anti-idling signs (see image below) are the primary source of public education and have been installed across the city on a discretionary basis. Currently, there are more than 2,120 anti-idling signs installed on both private and public property. Transportation Services installs approximately 25 additional signs per year in high-complaint areas or in response to Councillor requests.

[ALT TEXT: "A picture of the anti-idling signage installed by Transportation Services"]

Written warnings issued to drivers who have been caught idling contain information about the by-law, the harms of idling, and the responsibility of the owner/operator of the vehicle with respect to compliance to the by-law.

The City also previously distributed a postcard to idling vehicles, with visuals similar to the anti-idling signage.

The City website also contains more information about the harms of idling.

d. City Fleet Actions

Fleet Services' Fleet Safety Policy complies with the City of Toronto's Municipal Code Chapter 517, Idling of Vehicles and Boats, and instructs City fleet operators never to leave their engine on unnecessarily for more than one minute in a sixty-minute period.

By-law Exceptions

Some exceptions to Chapter 517 apply to specific City vehicles and specific weather conditions. Approximately 10 per cent of vehicles and equipment in the City's fleet, including specialized units such as cranes and dump trucks, have been identified as vehicles that are required to idle for operational reasons due to conducting work while stationary.

When City drivers are in the field in extreme weather conditions with no option of entering a building, the City is obligated under the Ontario Health and Safety Act (OHSA) to take every reasonable precaution to protect the health and safety of workers, including protection from heat stress or cold exposure. Idling is permissible in conditions where the temperature inside a vehicle is more than 27°C or less than 5°C.

Training and Education

City employees with a Class G (light duty vehicle) City Operator's Permit receive training in the City's anti-idling protocols. This information is incorporated in the City's eLearning (ELI) training program for City staff completing Class G permit training to operate City-owned, -leased, or -rented fleet equipment that falls under this licence class. City employees operating other vehicle classes (such as heavy-duty vehicles and equipment) receive training on idling protocols pertaining to the specific vehicle or equipment.

Anti-idling educational messaging is also provided regularly by Fleet Services to staff within divisions, agencies, and corporations through routine driver health and safety talks that complement annual training. Additionally, Fleet Safety and Compliance field staff conduct routine compliance checks that include addressing unnecessary idling.

Fleet Services also trains vehicle operators for Toronto Public Libraries, Toronto Zoo, Toronto Parking Authority, and Toronto Community Housing Corporation. TTC, Toronto Police Service, and Toronto Hydro all benefit from the sharing of training, polices, procedures, and practices as part of the Fleet Management Steering Committee that meets quarterly and is chaired by the General Manager of Fleet Services.

Anti-idling Technology and the Transition to Low- and Zero-emission Vehicles

Since 2008, Fleet Services has procured vehicles with start-stop anti-idling technology, where the system detects that a vehicle has come to a stop and automatically shuts off the engine until the vehicle starts moving again. A total of 487 or 10 per cent of vehicles in the City fleet managed by Fleet Services, are equipped with anti-idling technology. Fleet Services' focus on transitioning the fleet to zero-emission vehicles will drive down any emissions created by excessive idling. Currently, of the 4,845 vehicles in the Fleet Services managed fleet, 1,279 vehicles or 26 per cent, emit zero greenhouse gases (electric vehicles and bicycles) or use a low-emissions energy source (including compressed natural gas and propane). The number of zero and low-emissions vehicles will increase as Fleet Services works to achieve the asset transition goals set out in TransformTO.

Engagement Through Idling Reduction Campaign

Additionally, an Idling Reduction Campaign was launched on September 21, 2023 (Global Zero Emissions Day) to bring greater awareness to City employees about the financial and environmental impacts of the idling of City-owned fleets and the need for action to reduce vehicle idling. As part of the Idling Reduction Campaign, Fleet Services worked with the City's Strategic Communications team to bring greater awareness and action by City employees to reduce vehicle idling while operating City-owned vehicles.

A memo was also sent to division, agency, and corporation heads announcing the idling study and campaign. Infographic posters were created for client divisions, agencies, and corporations to post in offices and City operated garages, highlighting the negative impacts of unnecessary vehicle idling.

Further, a staff survey was disseminated to collect feedback from City employees who operate City-owned vehicles. The survey solicited input on driver awareness of the City's anti-idling protocols and requested their feedback on potential actions and measures that could be implemented to further reduce unnecessary idling of City-owned vehicles.

Fleet Services also initiated an idling study in April 2023 which gathered quantitative and qualitative data regarding the idling of City-owned vehicles. While fleet idling emissions in 2023 showed a slight increase of five per cent over 2022 levels, it is unclear whether this is behaviour-related versus other complicating factors such as hotter or colder weather in a given year (where health and safety requirements for minimum/maximum operator temperatures to protect workers would lead to more idling) or continued ramp up of services post-pandemic.

As part of the 2023 idling study, Fleet Services engaged the City of Calgary and the City of Ottawa to review their respective idling reduction programs. These municipalities shared insights on data dashboards that include data about the idling of fleet vehicles. Fleet Services is following this example by piloting the incorporation of idling metrics in key performance indicator (KPI) dashboards that are shared with divisions. Providing key metrics, such as GHG emissions and fuel consumption, can support Fleet Services and City staff to assess the impacts of vehicle idling on a regular basis and help identify operators that could benefit from intervention to reduce excessive idling.

Dissemination of Idling Data

In 2022, Fleet Services increased its efforts to install telematics (GPS technology) devices on City vehicles. These devices gather vehicle and equipment data that are used to monitor and improve safe vehicle and equipment operation, to proactively detect maintenance issues that contribute to inefficient performance, and to track vehicle idling.

Currently, about 2,830 Fleet Services vehicles and equipment are configured with telematics out of an estimated 3,050 on-road assets that emit GHG emissions when idling. As noted above, Fleet Services is piloting ways to communicate idling data to clients as part of KPI dashboards. When idling is deemed excessive, Fleet Services will also specifically engage the relevant teams within the client division.

Further, Fleet Services is exploring the inclusion of idling data into driver-level scorecard tools to support behavioural change. This focus on dissemination of telematics data at varying levels of the organization will support a shift in operator behaviour, in addition to all other efforts Fleet Services is making around education, use of technology and fleet transition to reduce greenhouse gas emissions resulting from idling.

2. Increasing Public Education

The City has installed over 2,120 anti-idling signs and continues to add 25 additional signs per year. These serve to educate the public 24 hours per day, seven days a week, and are targeted to high-complaint areas or in response to Councillor requests.

Public education efforts on climate are also generally increasing over time as implementation of the TransformTO Strategy accelerates. Anti-idling represents just one action that citizens can take to reduce GHG emissions and air pollution.

Staff recommend that Fleet Services begin reporting City fleet idling annually as part of the TransformTO Net Zero Progress and Accountability Report, and that Fleet Services provide idling data to client divisions as part of an overall effort to reduce idling through awareness, education and technology.

CONTACT

Alice Xu, Director, Policy, Planning and Research, Environment, Climate and Forestry Division, Telephone: 416-392-2085, Email: Alice.Xu@toronto.ca

Cris Renna, Director, Transformation, Fleet Services Division, Telephone: 416-338-6668, Email: Cris.Renna@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

James Nowlan
Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry Division

Abi Thomas
General Manager, Fleet Services Division

ATTACHMENTS

N/A