

Anti-Idling

CASE STUDY

Lenox

EDUCATION ENCOURAGEMENT ENGAGEMENT EVALUATION ENGINEERING EQUITY | URBAN RURAL SUBURBAN

Background

The goal of the [Massachusetts Anti-Idling Law](#) is to improve air quality by reducing unnecessary pollution from idling vehicles. Massachusetts General Law limits engine idling to **five minutes**, including on school grounds, with exception when idling is necessary. For example, school buses idling to operate required flashing lights is necessary, while idling to sit in a parking lot in mild weather is unnecessary.

Schools across Massachusetts are working with municipal officials to install permanent “NO IDLING” signage to remind staff, families, and bus operators to protect campus air quality. Ongoing education and awareness are essential to help school communities understand why anti-idling matters and how small actions can reduce pollution.

Overview

The Town of Lenox was one of the first municipalities in Massachusetts to address unnecessary vehicle idling. Through flyers, news articles, and signage, the “Making Lenox Idle-Free” campaign raised awareness of the environmental and health impacts of idling. In 2007, Lenox adopted the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection’s Idling Reduction Toolkit, providing a strong framework to expand its anti-idling efforts. Using this guidance, the Town developed a local resolution and educational materials to promote awareness and compliance. Building on early success, Lenox turned focused on school grounds, where anti-idling enforcement has encouraged better driver habits and strengthened the community’s commitment to reducing its carbon footprint.

Lessons Learned

- ✓ By prioritizing education over enforcement at the start of the campaign, the Town of Lenox highlighted the negative effects of idling and inspire the community to adopt lasting, positive anti-idling habits.
- ✓ Community outreach requires a dedicated group of individuals, and partnering with networks already focused on environmental impacts can amplify the message.



Impacts



The Lenox campaign has been described as a national model for idling reduction efforts; partnering with the American Lung Association’s Idle-Free Massachusetts campaign.



The success of this campaign shows how small, local initiatives can make a meaningful impact on both the community and broader environmental policies