



MECKLENBURG COUNTY

Office of the County Manager

October 28, 2005

To: Department Directors

From: Harry L. Jones, Sr.
County Manager

Re: Idle Reduction Policy

On February 17, 2004, the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) adopted an Environmental Leadership Policy resolution that directs County departments to actively explore options that may provide environmental benefits. Through adoption of this resolution the BOCC also created the Environmental Leadership Team (ELT).

The Environmental Leadership Team is appointed by the County Manager's office and is composed of managers from various departments within the County with expertise in areas such as air quality, water quality, solid waste, and land use. The ELT has evaluated an Idle Reduction Policy and recommended its implementation.

This is very important because the Mecklenburg County region violates the national health-based air quality standard for ozone. Air pollution created by idling vehicles unnecessarily releases harmful pollutants and exasperates the air quality challenges in our region. Furthermore, poor air quality can cause or aggravate lung illnesses such as asthma, chronic bronchitis, and emphysema. In addition to the health and air quality implications, idling vehicles unnecessarily wastes fuel and increases long-term engine maintenance costs.

By adopting an idle reduction policy for County owned vehicles and equipment, we will conserve resources, reduce air pollution, and serve as a role model for environmental stewardship to local governments, businesses, and the general public. Therefore, effective immediately, I am directing all County departments to implement the attached Idle Reduction Policy.

If you have questions regarding this policy, please contact Don Willard (Air Quality Program Director) at 704.336.5435.



MECKLENBURG COUNTY

Office of the County Manager

Idle Reduction Policy

October 24, 2005

Purpose:

On January 23, 2004, the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners adopted an Environmental Leadership Policy that directs county departments to actively explore the feasibility of implementing new practices that provide environmental benefits. Mecklenburg County violates the national health based air quality standard for ozone. Air pollution can cause or aggravate lung illnesses such as asthma, chronic bronchitis and emphysema. In addition to negative health consequences, air pollution imposes economic costs on the community. Motor vehicles that are allowed to idle unnecessarily release harmful pollutants that contribute to poor air quality in the region. Unnecessary idling is also a waste of fuel and therefore money. By adopting an idle reduction policy for county owned vehicles and equipment, Mecklenburg County will conserve fuel and money, reduce air pollution, and serve as a role model for environmental stewardship to other area governments, local business and the public.

Policy:

All Mecklenburg County gasoline and diesel powered vehicles and equipment, regardless of size, shall be idled only as necessary to perform the required duties of a given employee's position or the essential function(s) of the equipment.

Applicability Guidance:

A driver of a vehicle must turn off the engine upon stopping at a destination, and must not cause or allow an engine to idle at any location for more than five consecutive minutes. An operator of an off-road piece of equipment must not cause or allow the off-road equipment to idle at any location for more than five consecutive minutes.

The following circumstances are considered “necessary”:

- Idling while stopped for an official traffic control device or for traffic conditions over which the driver has no control
- Idling to ascertain that the vehicle or equipment is in safe operating condition as part of the daily vehicle inspection or as otherwise needed
- Idling for testing, servicing, repairing or diagnostic purposes
- Idling for a period not to exceed three to five minutes or as recommended by the manufacturer to cool down a turbo-charged heavy-duty vehicle before turning the engine off
- Idling to accomplish work for which the vehicle/equipment was designed other than transporting goods
- Idling to operate a lift or other power take off driven piece of equipment designed for use with the vehicle

- Idling to operate defrosters, heaters, air conditioners, or other equipment to prevent a safety or health emergency, but not solely for the comfort of the driver or passengers
- Idling to recharge a battery or other energy storage unit of a hybrid electric vehicle/equipment
- Idling to operate equipment that runs intermittently in normal use.