

Be switched on to the benefits of switching off

Drivers across South Lanarkshire are being reminded to switch off their engines to reap multiple benefits as the council launches a refreshed Engine Idling Campaign

The campaign will focus on drivers who wait with their engines running, particularly at schools, leisure facilities and hot-food drive-through outlets.

It is easy to be tempted to leave the engine running in colder weather to keep cars warm and in warmer weather for air conditioning.

In colder weather, cars are often switched on and left idling to defrost the windows and heat them up, but this is not only using fuel but also polluting the air for any passers-by and those who live around us. Modern cars heat up quickly when we start driving, anyway.

Stationary, idling vehicles can produce twice as many exhaust emissions as a vehicle that is on the move, and these fumes contain pollutants that can irritate and cause inflammation of the lungs as well as lowering resistance to respiratory infections such as Covid-19 and 'flu.

People with heart and lung conditions are particularly vulnerable, with 62% of people with asthma reporting that traffic fumes make their condition worse.

Children actually breathe 50% more for their size than adults, making them even more vulnerable to pollutants, but unfortunately engine idling is common outside schools, leisure centres and culture venues.

When a vehicle is waiting at a school, leisure or hot-food venue, the council is simply asking that the driver turn off the engine if the vehicle is likely to be stopped for more than 30 seconds.

Vehicle idling unnecessarily is an offence, and council officers will be patrolling the streets around schools, leisure facilities and drive-through food outlets. Any driver found to be idling their vehicle unnecessarily will receive a warning and, if the driver fails to turn the engine off, they may be issued with a £20 fixed-penalty notice.

If a driver of a school bus or taxi service is found to be idling, the driver's details and vehicle information will be recorded and a warning letter will be issued direct to the driver. Repeat patrols will take place and, if further engine idling is seen, the driver will be issued with a fixed-penalty notice.

Anyone wishing further information about engine idling or vehicle emissions can find it online at the [Vehicle emissions page](#) on the council website or can [email Environmental Services](#).