

Division of Fleet Management Services
Standard Operating Procedure 1100
Vehicle Idling

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to provide direction for all Fleet Management Services staff to reduce vehicle engine idling to the greatest extent possible. This procedure applies to all County Fleet vehicles while under the control of a Fleet Management Services employee or contractor.

DEFINITION: “Idling” means the engine is running while the vehicle is stationary.

BACKGROUND: This procedure is required because unnecessary vehicle idling wastes fuel, pollutes the air, causes excess engine wear and needless noise, and is prohibited by Maryland State Regulation. In pertinent part, Maryland Transportation Regulation Article §22-402(c)(3) states the following:

- (3) A motor vehicle engine may not be allowed to operate for more than 5 consecutive minutes when the vehicle is not in motion, except as follows:
 - (i) When a vehicle is forced to remain motionless because of traffic conditions or mechanical difficulties over which the operator has no control;
 - (ii) When it is necessary to operate heating and cooling or auxiliary equipment installed on the vehicle;
 - (iii) To bring the vehicle to the manufacturer’s recommended operating temperature; or
 - (iv) When it is necessary to accomplish the intended use of the vehicle.

This regulation is enforceable by fines of not less than \$500.00. The intent of the language of this section (22-402) of the regulation is to control excessive noise and vehicle exhaust. Numerous other states have enacted idling regulations. The American Transportation Research Institute published a compendium of these regulations. There are 34 regulations cited from various states and cities nationwide. The idling limits range from 0 minutes to 15 minutes; the predominant idling limit is 5 minutes (14 of 34 cited).

REQUIREMENTS: In accordance with Maryland Transportation Article §22-402(c)(3), all Fleet Management Services staff and contractors will limit engine idling of any County vehicle under FMS staff or contractor control to no more than 5 consecutive minutes when the vehicle is not in motion.

The following situations are necessary and acceptable exceptions to the 5 minute idling limit.

1. Idling which is necessary in cold weather (below 40 degrees F) to build up air pressure and bring the vehicle engine to the manufacturer’s recommended operating temperature, and prevent the fuel from jelling (extreme cold), especially where block heaters are not employed.
2. Idling which is necessary to allow a vehicle with air brakes time to build air pressure, regardless of weather conditions.

3. Idling which is necessary for testing, servicing, repairing or diagnostic purposes. Idling under this exception will be inside the maintenance facility with appropriate vehicle exhaust hose connected whenever possible.
4. Idling which is necessary, normally for a three to five minute period, to cool down a turbo-charged diesel engine and allow the turbo to wind down to prevent engine damage before turning the engine off.
5. Idling which is necessary solely to recharge a battery or other energy storage unit of a hybrid electric bus or vehicle.
6. Idling which is necessary for buses queued at the service lane; however, queuing of buses should not normally cause buses to idle in queue in excess of 15 minutes.
7. Idling which is necessary when the enhanced cleaners are working on buses in extreme temperatures.
8. Idling for traffic conditions over which the driver has no control (e.g., stopped in a line of traffic).
9. Idling in an emergency situation as directed by authorized emergency personnel (e.g., police, fire/rescue).

Failure to comply with this procedure will result in disciplinary action which will be taken in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement and Personnel Regulations.

REVISION NUMBER:	DATE:
MANAGER'S APPROVAL <i>GA</i>	DATE: <i>8/14/08</i>
DIVISION CHIEF: <i>Michael M. Sanders</i>	DATE: <i>8/14/08</i>