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AMBULANCE PARAMEDICS OF BC – CUPE LOCAL 873 LAUNCH IDLING REDUCTION CAMPAIGN

For Immediate Release

RICHMOND, BRITISH COLUMBIA (November 4, 2023) –

The Ambulance Paramedics of BC (APBC) is proud to announce our vehicle idling reduction campaign. For the month of November the APBC will be writing our partnered emergency service workers, and running social media ads, promoting an idling reduction strategy.

The APBC recognize that in the year 2023 the practice of unnecessary idling needs to be addressed. Science has proven that vehicle emissions are not only harmful to one's health, but they are also exasperating the climate emergency.

Emergency service workers have a long history of idling our work vehicles for various legitimate reasons. For example, as paramedics, we often leave our vehicle idling for heating or cooling the vehicle in anticipation of a sick patient, and all emergency service vehicles need to idle our vehicles to operate our emergency lights at times. However, in light of new science around the health impacts and social standards regarding exposure to emissions of all kinds, and knowledge in how vehicle emissions contribute to climate change, the APBC are encouraging our membership, other emergency service workers, and the public in general, to consider how we idle our work vehicles.

Health Impacts

As it is already well understood that both second hand cigarette smoke and e-vapor have a number of negative health impacts, and we already have social norms and laws in place restricting their use in public places, it is easy to extend a similar social construct to excessive idling. Vehicle emission exposure is linked to an increased risk of:

- Cancer
- Heart disease
- Lung disease¹²

Idling vehicles can also impact patient care. For example, a loud idling engine can hinder the ability for a weakened patient to hear and be heard. The exhaust, heat, and noise from an idling vehicle can have a fatiguing effect on not only a sick patient, but also on emergency crews working around the idling vehicle.

¹ <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/human-health-risk-assessment-gasoline-exhaust-summary.html>

² <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/human-health-risk-assessment-diesel-exhaust-summary.html>

Climate Impacts

While limiting the amount you idle your vehicle may seem like a drop in the bucket of overall CO2 emissions, making this change collectively can have a real impact. A 2016 study by the Government of Canada found that if Canadian motorists avoided idling for just three minutes every day of the year, CO2 emissions could be reduced by 1.4 million tons annually.³ This would be equal to saving 630 million litres of fuel and equivalent to taking 320,000 cars off the road for an entire year. This same study found that eliminating unnecessary idling is one of the easiest actions Canadians can take to reduce their GHG emissions that are contributing to climate change. The APBC also recognize that using an idling reduction strategy where we work fosters a respectful culture of sustainability, and this is important for the segment of our population who are concerned about how the climate emergency is going to impact future generations, our lives and communities, and our children's futures.

Recommendations for Idling Less

Turn Off Your Engine If Stopped for More Than 60 Seconds

- Letting your engine idle for more than 10 seconds consumes more fuel and generates more greenhouse gas emissions than turning it off and starting it up again. The amount of time to offset any potential maintenance costs to the starter or battery is under 60 seconds. So consider turning off your engine if your going to be stopped for 60 seconds or more.⁴

Clothing

- If you are idling for heating or to stay cool, consider adjusting your clothing to help regulate your temperature.

Re-position

- If you have to idle your vehicle, do so away from others, building entrances, or intakes, as much as possible.

Check Bylaws

- Many municipalities have idling bylaws that apply to not only the general public, but also emergency service vehicles. Check and respect the idling bylaws of the municipality where you live and work.

Plug In Your Vehicle to Shore Power

- If your vehicle is equipped with the ability to heat itself and/or charge its batteries via shore power, then plug it in whenever possible.

³ <https://natural-resources.canada.ca/energy/efficiency/communities-infrastructure/transportation/cars-light-trucks/idling/4415>

⁴ <https://toolkit.bc.ca/tool/idle-reduction-bylaw/>



Stay Safe

- If not idling your vehicle would put an undue risk on the safety of yourself or anybody else, idle your vehicle.

The APBC invite our partnered emergency workers, labour organizations, and the public in general, to join us in this campaign to idle less. Together we can create healthier emergency scenes and communities, and promote a respectful culture of sustainability. If you have any comments or questions, please reach out to info@apbc.ca.

Sincerely,

The Ambulance Paramedics of BC

Local 873

