

Take the No Idling Challenge!



photo © BJ Kirschhoffer



A Community Action Toolkit
for Inspired Youth (11–18 years)

Part of our **Save Our Sea Ice** campaign
www.polarbearsinternational.org



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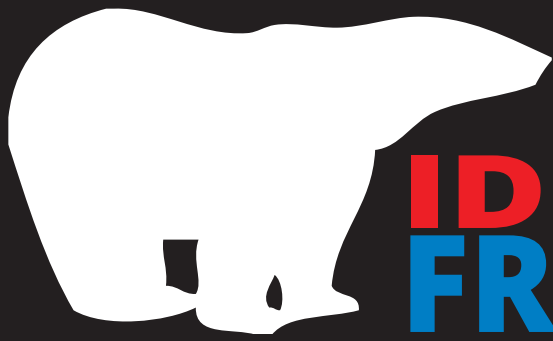
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photo © Dan Guravich



IDLE
FREE FOR

POLAR BEARS

You're INSPIRED. You want to HELP. Here's HOW!



photo © BJ Kirschhoffer

DID YOU KNOW that we can help save the polar bear's sea ice habitat by changing our transportation habits? One way is by not idling our cars for more than 10 seconds. The link to polar bears is direct, because most vehicles burn fossil fuels. When we burn fossil fuels for transportation we add more and more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. This buildup acts like a blanket that traps heat around the world, disrupting the climate, and melting Arctic sea ice. So, let's turn off our engines and speak up for no idle zones in our communities!

[Visit polarbearsinternational.org/climate-change]

Take the No Idling Challenge

Rockwood, MO School District photo



Many people idle their vehicles in drive-thrus, when picking up or dropping off passengers, or to warm up their engines before driving. Idling vehicles waste fuel and money and release heat-trapping gases that contribute to climate change.

What's the Impact? You can calculate the cost of idling your own vehicle. The next time you run errands, take a stopwatch and paper with you to record the time spent idling. For every two minutes an average vehicle idles, it burns the same amount of fuel it takes to drive one mile. (Remember, it's unsafe to turn off your engine in traffic.)

[Visit www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/driveHabits.jsp]



Our Actions Matter!



Around the world, communities are investing in mass transit, bike infrastructure, and no idle zones. This is good news, since fossil fuel-based transportation currently produces almost 30% of carbon emissions! The key to getting the climate system back to functioning the way it should and to preserving a future for polar bears across the Arctic is to move away from fossil fuels for energy altogether. In the meantime, we can take steps to use much, much less of the kind of energy that adds heat-trapping gases to our atmosphere.

Expand to Your Community

Individual families, schools, and businesses can help reduce heat-trapping gases by not idling—but the real impact comes when we invite others to join us. Make your community idle-free and gain the added benefit of cleaner air.



Start by looking for an existing project in your community. Use search terms like “no idling” and your city’s name. If you find one, consider joining the effort.



Define the focus of your No Idling Challenge. Will you ask individuals to “Park & Walk In” vs. using drive-thrus? And to “Turn It Off” while waiting? Or maybe you want to set up a no idle zone at school, asking bus drivers and parents to take part? For businesses, you could suggest that delivery trucks turn off their engines while loading or unloading.



Request a meeting with your principal or, better still, the superintendent of your school district or campus facilities manager. Use our sample email to request a meeting. Then prepare a presentation on the No



Idling Challenge with the help of our talking points. Reward anyone who joins in with a static cling decal for their vehicle window so others can see they are making a difference.



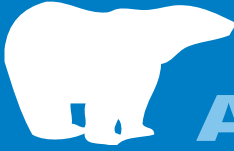
Do the same with local shops, churches, and businesses. Use our sample email to request a meeting. Be prepared to make the case for why the No Idling Challenge is important and what benefits each of us will gain by not polluting. (See our talking points.) Reward those who take the pledge with a static cling decal.

THINK BIG: Write letters to your local paper and government representatives inviting them to join the No Idling Challenge. A heartfelt letter from a young person who cares will help inspire action.



Tell Your Story

Celebrate your success! Share a photo and caption of your action on Polar Bears International’s social media sites, using [#saveourseaice](#).



Sample Emails



photo © Dan Guravich

Teachers, principals, and business owners are busy! Following are sample emails to get you started.

GETTING STARTED. The purpose of this email is to introduce yourself and explain why you want to meet. At this point, all you want is a response agreeing to a meeting. You'll describe your project later.

Before writing the email, do your homework and find out the name of the teacher, principal, school district supervisor, or business owner so you can address the email personally. After you've scheduled a meeting, see our talking points for suggestions on how to make your pitch.

Email template inviting a local business to participate in the No Idling Challenge:

TO: (NAME and TITLE of business)
FROM: (NAME)
SUBJECT: Ideas for cleaner air from a __th grade student at _____ [name of school]

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. ____:

My name is ____ and I'm ____ years old. [If applicable, personalize the note "My family banks with you/My parents shop in your store," etc.]

I'm volunteering with a community project called the ____ [insert name of your city] No Idling Challenge for Polar Bears. I have some ideas on how you can stop air pollution and show customers that you care about the environment. I have a cool static cling decal for your window to share to show you're taking part!

Could I stop by on ____ (DATE and TIME) to introduce myself and talk about the project?

Sincerely,
[Your name and contact information]

Email template for your school's principal or superintendent to ask about school policies regarding no idling zones:

TO: (NAME and TITLE)
FROM: (NAME)
SUBJECT: Ideas from a student on cleaner air

Dear Mr./Mrs ____:

My name is ____ and I'm a ____ [insert grade level] student at ____ [name of school].

I'm volunteering with a community project called the ____ [insert name of your city] No Idling Challenge for Polar Bears. I have some ideas on how our [school/school district] can stop air pollution and show our community that we care about the environment. I have cool static cling decals for your window to share to show our [school/school district] is taking part!

Could I stop by on ____ [DATE and TIME] to introduce myself and talk about the project? Or would another time be better?

Sincerely,
[Your name and contact information]



Talking Points to involve local businesses or your school/campus in your Community Action Plan



photo © BJ Kirschhoffer

The key to launching a successful No Idling Challenge is being able to explain what you are asking others to do.

Following are suggested topics to cover. Whether you put together a PowerPoint or one-page paper, these topics will help the listener feel your passion for the project, understand what you are asking for, and become motivated to join you. (See our sample email resource for help with setting up a meeting.)

GET STARTED. Introduce yourself and talk about why the No Idling Challenge is important to you. Express your interests and concerns.

CLEARLY EXPLAIN WHAT YOU ARE REQUESTING. “Please join me in taking the No Idling Challenge for Polar Bears. I’d like to work with you on ways to stop vehicles from idling [at our school/at your business], which will reduce air pollution and save money.”

GET TO KNOW THEM. Talk with the business owner or school principal about their current procedures concerning idling vehicles. Do trucks idle while picking up or delivering goods? Do parents keep their engines running while waiting in carpool lines? Do bus drivers pre-start their vehicles to warm or cool them?

SHOW BENEFITS

- ◆ Consumers want action on climate change. Community members want clean air. By taking part in the No Idling Challenge and displaying the static cling decal on vehicles or an office window, a business/school can show its commitment to clean air and saving energy.
- ◆ Talk about the importance of clean air. Fumes from vehicles can irritate the eyes, nose, and

throat and cause a variety of health problems, including asthma.

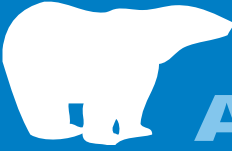
- ◆ Share the fact that idling engines pump massive amounts of CO₂ into the atmosphere! In the U.S alone, this amounts to about 58 million tons of CO₂ a year.
- ◆ Idling engines also waste fuel, with an average vehicle burning a mile’s worth of fuel every two minutes. A no idling policy will save money.
- ◆ Peer pressure works! Have other businesses/schools joined the campaign? Be sure to share this news and let the business/school know this is a community effort.

STAY IN TOUCH

Nearly everyone enjoys an encouraging word and needs support. Use phone calls, emails, and visits to see how they are doing.

BE READY TO HELP!

Offer to make presentations to their employees or staff a table outside to talk with customers or students. Then, celebrate the success by sharing a photo and caption about the business or school and their participation on Polar Bears International’s social media sites, using [#saveourseaice](https://www.polarbearsinternational.org/saveourseaice).



Sample Letter to the Editor

A good way to spread the word to a wider audience is to write a letter to the editor of your local paper. Following is a sample. Feel free to adapt this to make it your own.

A Greener ____ [insert name of your city here]

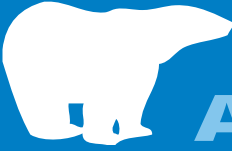
My name is ____ and I'm a ____ [insert grade level] student at ____ [name of school].

I'm volunteering with a project called the No Idling Challenge for Polar Bears to help reduce greenhouse gas pollution in our community. My family has stopped idling our vehicles for waits longer than ten seconds. We don't use drive-thrus and we turn off our car when loading and unloading passengers or waiting in carpool lines.

Will you join us in this action? It's SO easy to do! The more families, schools, and businesses that take part, the cleaner the air in ____ [insert name of city] will be and the brighter the future for our planet.

I think it would be cool to have EVERYONE take part. I learned about this on the Polar Bears International website. Let's show the world that ____ [insert name of city] cares about the environment and we're doing ou part!

[Your name]



Social Media

We've written some sample tweets and content for you to post on social media. If you create your own, use the hashtags **#IdleFree** and **#SaveOurSeaIce** to help build momentum.



SAMPLE FACEBOOK AND GOOGLE+ CONTENT (to use with images when sharing)

Join me in taking the No Idling Challenge for Polar Bears!
#SaveOurSeaIce, polarbearsinternational.org/get-involved/save-our-sea-ice-campaign/

Be **#IdleFree**! Visit **#SaveOurSeaIce**, polarbearsinternational.org/get-involved/save-our-sea-ice-campaign/

Take the No Idling Challenge for Polar Bears. **#SaveOurSeaIce**, polarbearsinternational.org/get-involved/save-our-sea-ice-campaign/

Join me in saving sea ice! Take the No Idling Challenge for Polar Bears! **#SaveOurSeaIce**, polarbearsinternational.org/get-involved/save-our-sea-ice-campaign/



SAMPLE TWEETS

Ask me about the No Idling Challenge for Polar Bears!
Visit bit.ly/noidletoolkit **#IdleFree** Via **@PolarBears**

Help **#SaveOurSeaIce**! Take the No Idling Challenge.
Visit bit.ly/noidletoolkit **#IdleFree** Via **@PolarBears**

Waiting? Turn off your engine. Take the No Idling Challenge for Polar Bears! bit.ly/noidletoolkit **#IdleFree**

I'm taking the No Idling Challenge for Polar Bears:
bit.ly/noidletoolkit **#IdleFree** Via **@PolarBears**



NO IDLING Challenge Pledge Cards

Instructions: Print out this page, cut on dotted lines, and have pledgers sign their name.



I'm taking the
NO IDLING PLEDGE

FOR POLAR BEARS

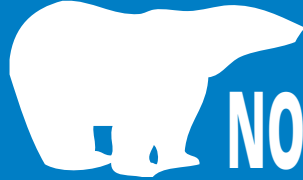
www.polarbearsinternational.org



I'm taking the
NO IDLING PLEDGE

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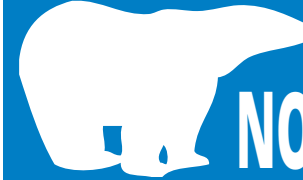
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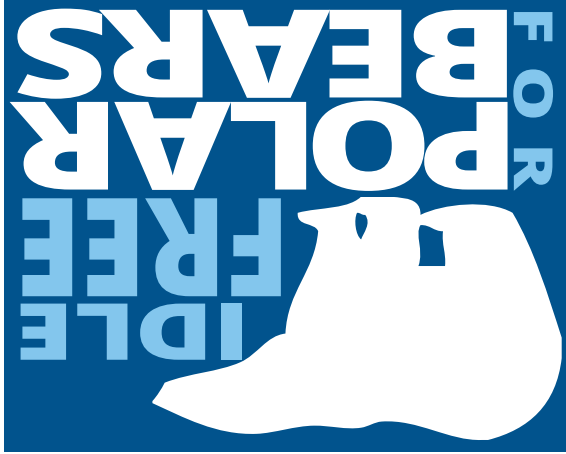
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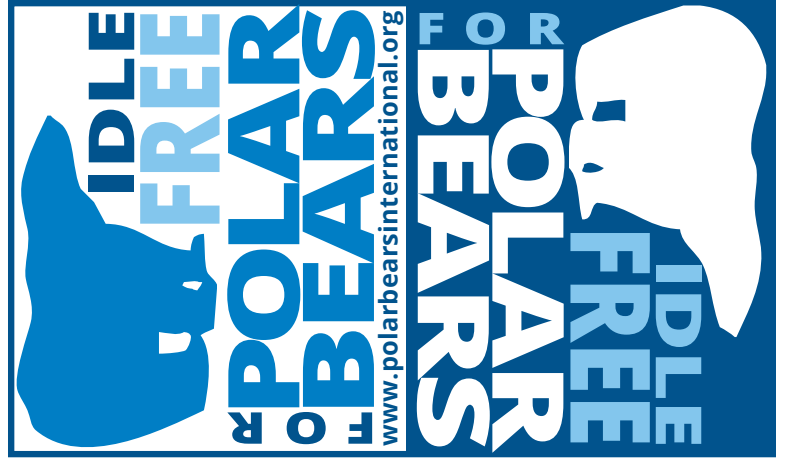
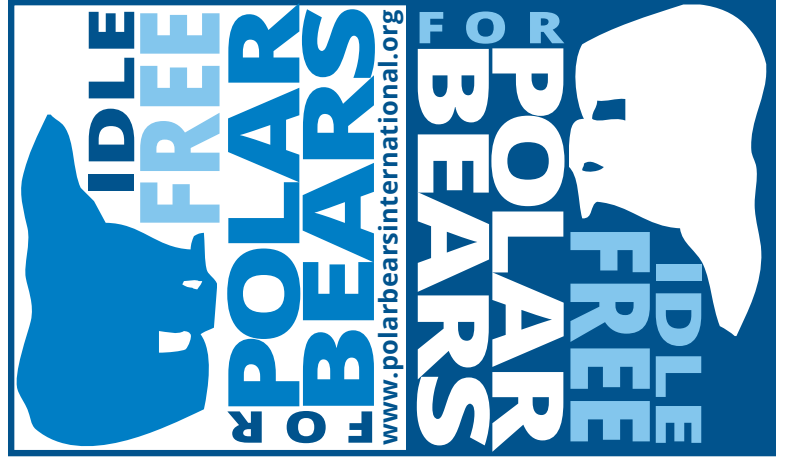
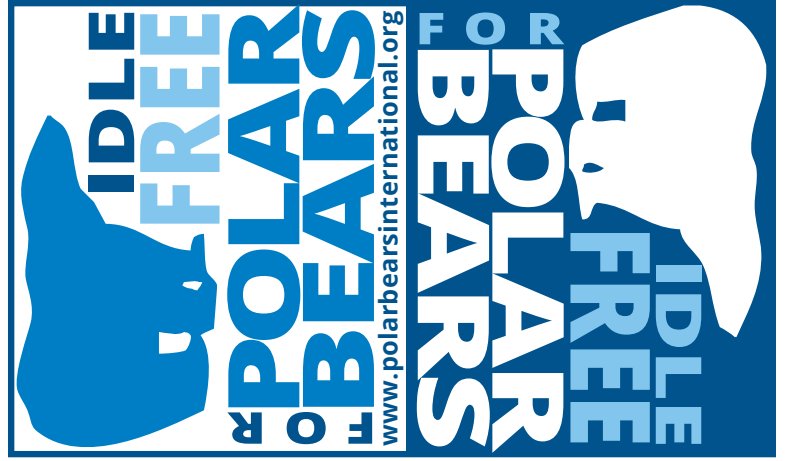
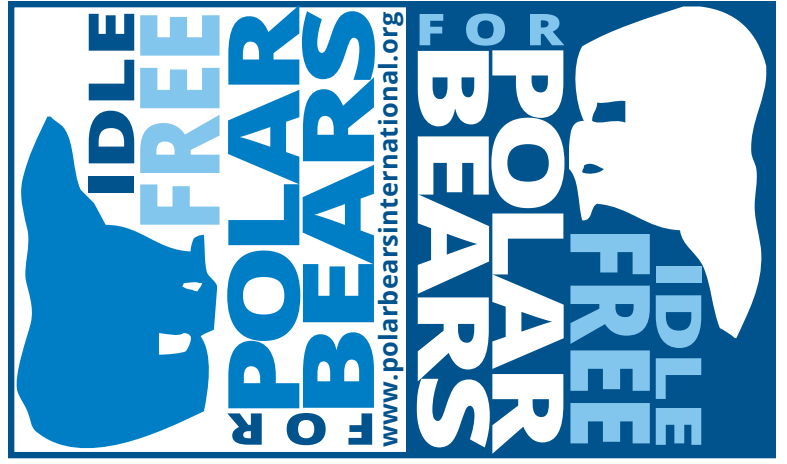
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NO IDLING PLEDGE

FOR POLAR BEARS

www.polarbearsinternational.org



Idle Free Stickers: Check with an office supply store for sticker and static cling sheets. You can even order online!



Save Our Sea Ice stickers





Your Role as an Adult in Supporting Enthusiasm to Fix a Global Problem

Young people have an amazing capacity to make a difference. Here are a few tips to successfully support your budding activists, beginning with the golden rule: be a hands-off supporter! First, ask what type of support would help. Then, create an agreement about how you will communicate to make sure expectations are met.

MAKE IT FUN & SOCIAL

Collaborative work is fun and actually more productive. Help young people work through the challenges. Encourage them to learn from other successful projects. A good place to start is by looking in their local community for efforts they could join. Support excellence in teamwork by encouraging them to listen with an open mind, compromise, stay focused, and be respectful.

REMEMBER, IT IS THEIR PROJECT

If you want to do a community-based action project, go ahead, start your own effort! But let the young people do their own—your role is to mentor, coach, and most important, be a cheerleader, problem-solver, and supporter.

YOU HAVE A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE

Guiding young people in a project is a delicate balance. You want to provide sources of new information when they are stuck, not step-by-step instructions. Let them create their own path! You can help make that path smoother by looking ahead to the next step and anticipating challenges. Most important, provide encouragement.



© Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium

JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT

A successful challenge arouses emotions that motivate individuals to take action. This holds true for young people trying to lead a community conservation action. As an advisor, your role is to apply just the right level of expectation and emotion—too much causes anxiety, too little causes apathy and disinterest.

TAKE TIME TO CELEBRATE

Community efforts are a process. Celebrate the steps that are accomplished, whether they are a success or not. If a school principal says “no” to the full proposal, celebrate the success of holding the meeting and having the opportunity to educate someone about the issues. Share your successes on Polar Bears International's social media sites, using [#saveourseaice](#).

MANAGING SOCIAL MEDIA

Our action toolkits include sample social media content that students can share. Please remind students that they must be 13 to be on Facebook and other sites. Also discuss privacy settings with them.