

# Idling engine ban

[Environment](#), [Pollution](#)



1. To what extent do you agree with the idling engine ban? A few years ago, the Environmental Protection Department proposed to legislate the idling engine ban, under which all vehicles must switch off their engines. I totally disagree with the idling engine ban, for I think that this policy not only cannot bring benefits to pedestrians in air quality, but instead brings harm to drivers and passengers. To start with, the idling engine ban brings inconvenience to drivers. As the idling engine ban proposes that a driver has to switch off their idle engines immediately, drivers had to switch off their engines even if they had to wait in a place for as short as 3 minutes. This abrupt switching off and on of the engine is not only bothersome to drivers, but may lead to a shorter lifespan of motor vehicles. Apart from the harm to the driver, a problem of poor ventilation is caused by the idling engine ban, which affects both drivers and passengers. As stated by the government, vehicles are the second largest local source of air pollutants. In the middle of the road where traffic is intense, if a driver has to switch off the air conditioner and open the windows, the driver and the passengers will breathe in harmful gases which will affect their health in the long term. Also, when the temperature reaches above 30 degrees in summer, drivers and passengers have a high chance of suffering from heat strokes if the air conditioner is turned off. To maintain a driver's good condition of health is crucial when driving, therefore the idling engine ban is not feasible. Moreover, from the government's perspective, it is difficult for the idling engine ban to be implemented. Firstly, a fine of \$320 may not be severe enough to stop drivers from switching on their idling engines. Secondly, as there are many exemptions to the ban, the police will not be able to identify

violating vehicles effectively. The usefulness of the ban would be greatly decreased. The government stated that the idling engine ban can reduce air pollution in Hong Kong as vehicles are a main pollutant. I agree that the ban can improve the health of Hong Kong citizens and pedestrians in particular, though only in a small extent. However, statistics show that emissions produced when vehicles are idle are only a small part of gas emitted by vehicles. In fact, running vehicles produce a major part of pollutants. Thus, I think that the idling engine ban is not significant enough; the government should consider alternatives to tackle the major problem of the increasing number of private cars to reduce air pollution. To conclude, the idling engine ban would cause inconvenience to drivers and affect the health of drivers and pedestrians. It would be difficult to implement and ineffective to reduce air pollution. Therefore, I totally disagree with the idling engine ban as it brings harmful effects to all stakeholders.

2. What can individuals, private organizations and the government do to ease the costs you have identified in Q1? In Q1, I have identified the costs of the idling engine ban as inconvenience to drivers, poor ventilation during hot weather, difficult implementation and insignificance in reducing air pollution. Firstly, if the idling engine ban was implemented, individual drivers can develop more self-discipline and abide to the laws so that gas emissions will decrease. They can also report on cases of violating the ban. The effectiveness of the ban would increase and implementation of the ban would be more successful. Individuals can also ride on public vehicles more often, so that the major source of air pollutants would be cut down. Secondly, private organizations such as environmental organizations can tell Hong Kong citizens the benefits

of the idling engine ban through large-scale functions or advertisements, so that more drivers will see the meaning behind the ban and will not complain that it is inconvenient. They will obey the ban more strictly. Thirdly, the government can ease the poor ventilation during hot weather by changing the ban to allow exemption of all vehicles from switching off the idle engine when the temperature is over 30 degrees. Also, the government can increase the fine so that drivers would not violate the ban easily and it would be easier to implement the ban.