

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

RESOLUTION NO. 07-124

Adopting a Policy to Reduce Benzene Pollution

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:

- a. Protecting public health is a primary duty of Multnomah County, requiring it to take timely and appropriate actions to ensure that residents have clean air to breathe.
- b. The level of benzene, a known carcinogen, is well above safe levels in many Oregon communities.
- c. The principal source of this benzene in the ambient air is from automobile exhaust and the transfer of gasoline.
- d. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has recently adopted a rule to limit the level of benzene in gasoline in the Northwest by 2012. After 2012, the level of benzene in the Northwest will still be two times higher than the national safe average.
- e. The reduction of benzene vapors from idling engines and burning gas from tanks that are topped off can further reduce the levels in the ambient air around schools and provide improved air quality for residents.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Resolves:

1. To reduce benzene vapors by requiring county vehicle operators to limit idling time to no more than one minute whenever reasonably possible, and prohibit topping off at county-owned fuel stations.
 - a. This policy should be written by the Office of County Management; specifically the Office of Sustainability and Fleet Management.
 - b. The Office of Sustainability and Fleet Management will present the Board with a final policy to be executed immediately no later than June 7, 2007.
2. Multnomah County will partner with the following private entities that are working to diminish idling whenever reasonably possible from their fleet vehicles and topping off of gasoline tanks:
 - a. Elephants Deli
 - b. Hoffman Construction Inc.

- c. Legacy Health Systems
 - d. Neil Kelly
 - e. New Seasons Markets
 - f. Providence Hospitals
 - g. Temp-Control Mechanical Corp.
3. To work with its private partners and the Oregon Toxics Alliance to educate and encourage county residents and schools to reduce idling and topping off.
4. To direct the Chair will implement this policy and provide a report to the Board no later than June 7, 2007.

ADOPTED this 28th day of June, 2007.

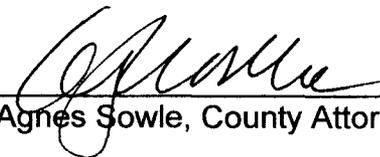


BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON


Ted Wheeler, Chair

REVIEWED:

AGNES SOWLE, COUNTY ATTORNEY
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By 
Agnes Sowle, County Attorney

SUBMITTED BY:

Jeff Cogen, Commissioner, District 2

MULTNOMAH COUNTY BENZENE REDUCTION POLICY

As required by Multnomah County Resolution No 07-073

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to protect the public health and environment by reducing emissions of benzene while conserving fuel and reducing engine wear.

II. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all County Fleet vehicles and commercial vehicles delivering to County owned and leased facilities.

III. RATIONALE

Multnomah County has a primary duty of protecting public health, including the quality of air that residents breathe. The county's Sustainability Principles, adopted in 2004, state that the county will: "Take necessary precautions to prevent toxic pollution and waste through proactive measures."¹ More specifically, the Toxics Reduction Strategy, adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in 2006, committed the county to implementing "a comprehensive idle reduction program that includes vendors and contractors servicing the city and county" by 2010 in order to minimize particulate matter and other emissions of concern from county vehicles and equipment.²

Currently, atmospheric benzene, a known carcinogen, is well above safe levels in many Oregon communities. Exposure to this chemical can cause lung damage and respiratory problems and also exacerbates asthma and existing allergies. The principal source of atmospheric benzene is from automobile exhaust and vapors from gasoline transfer.

As part of the County's commitment to public health and air quality, this policy was developed to reduce engine idling and eliminate the practice of topping off in Fleet vehicles. Turning off the engine when not in use and practicing proper fueling technique will reduce the release of harmful benzene compounds into the atmosphere. This will enhance environmental quality and reduce health risks.

This policy also has financial benefits. Eliminating unnecessary engine idling saves fuel and reduces engine wear and maintenance costs. Proper fueling technique prevents fuel recirculation and fuel spills, which results in efficient fuel use and savings at the pump.

IV. DEFINITIONS

- (a) **Idling**: running the vehicle engine at any location while the vehicle is stationary
- (b) **Topping off**: attempting to dispense gasoline in to a motor vehicle fuel tank after the dispensing nozzle has shut off automatically
- (c) **Fuel recirculation**: pumping fuel into underground storage tanks to prevent fuel spillage and vapor loss when a vehicle is "topped off"

V. REQUIREMENTS

(a) IDLING

Effective immediately, Multnomah County employees shall reduce idling time to no more than twenty seconds in all County Fleet vehicles and commercial vehicles (Res 07-073) unless a public safety issue is present or considered imminent.

EXCEPTIONS

This idling restriction policy shall not apply to:

¹ Multnomah County Sustainability Principles, 2004.

www2.co.multnomah.or.us/jsp/Public/EntryPoint?ct=7eecdf87476cc010VqnVCM1000003bc614acRCRD

² City of Portland - Multnomah County Toxics Reduction Strategy, 2006.

www2.co.multnomah.or.us/jsp/Public/EntryPoint?ch=54372609c4d7c010VqnVCM1000003bc614acRCRD

- i. Police, fire, ambulance, public safety, military, other emergency or law enforcement vehicles, or any vehicle being used in an emergency capacity
- ii. Vehicles that are stopped by traffic congestion, an official traffic control device or signal, or at the direction of a law enforcement official
- iii. Vehicles engaged in an operation for which the engine power is necessary for an associated alternate work function and alternative means cannot be made available. For example, vehicles that must idle to operate auxiliary equipment such as cooling units, pumps, compressors, or lifts
- iv. Vehicles and equipment that are being serviced, where idling is required for diagnosis or repair
- v. Vehicles undergoing state or federal inspection, where idling is required as part of the inspection

(b) TOPPING OFF

Effective immediately, Multnomah County employees shall eliminate topping off at all County fueling gasoline stations on County premises and at commercial or cardlock fueling stations.

VI. GUIDANCE

- (a) If you are going to be stopped for more than 10 seconds, turn your engine off (except in traffic). Idling your vehicle for more than 10 seconds uses more fuel than it would take to restart your engine.
- (b) Reduce warm-up idling to 20 seconds. Avoid high speeds and rapid acceleration for the first five miles or so to allow all moving parts of your vehicle to warm up.

VII. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

(a) STAFF EDUCATION:

As part of this policy Fleet Management will notify all County staff of the new procedures and will provide education to all new employees

(b) NOTIFICATION

Fleet Management will ensure proper instructional signage at:

- i. Loading docks and other areas where there is an increased potential for idling
- ii. Fuel pumps (Do Not Top Off & No Idling)
- iii. Vehicle gas cap (Do Not Top Off)
- iv. Inside the vehicle cabin (No Idling)