

Engine Idling Reduction Program for Snow Resorts

Partnership Opportunities with Buses



Why Buses?

Charter motor coaches and school buses are a popular means of transportation for groups travelling to and from snow resorts in Ontario. They provide a valuable service by reducing the number of personal vehicles travelling to snow resorts, thereby reducing vehicle emissions as well as reducing stress on limited parking availability at resorts. However, the issue of unnecessary engine idling and resulting emissions has been of growing concern at Ontario snow resorts.

The Challenge

It is common practice for bus drivers to leave their engines running periodically throughout the day while their passengers are on the ski hill. This allows the vehicle interior to remain powered and heated for the comfort of both the drivers, many of whom remain in their buses throughout the day, and the returning passengers.

In general, newer buses require less idling time than older buses. For example, it has been found that 10 minutes of idling prior to departure in cold weather is sufficient for most new motor coaches (Natural Resources Canada, 2005: Smart Driver for Motor Coach Handbook).

Why Buses Idle

1. Passenger and driver comfort particularly in older buses (running the engine produces electricity and heat in the cabin)
2. To ensure engine start-ability at the end of the day in extreme cold weather
3. Drivers and passengers not aware of the benefits of reduced idling:
 - Extends engine life (unnecessary idling causes accelerated engine wear)
 - Cuts harmful greenhouse gas emissions
 - Conserves non-renewable resources
 - Saves money (an idling bus can burn 4 litres of fuel in one hour. Even the best-tuned engine gets zero kilometres per litre when idling!)

What Skiers & Snowboarders Can Do

When booking a bus for a ski trip, or when taking part in any such trip, stress the importance that the chosen bus company has idling reduction practices in place.

When arriving at the ski hill, advise your bus driver that your group would prefer that the bus not idle and similarly indicate that the cab temperature need not be fully heated upon re-entering the bus at departure time.

The Engine Idling Reduction Program for Snow Resorts is a project of the Ontario Snow Resorts Association's Environmental Best Practices Taskforce developed with generous support from Natural Resources Canada.

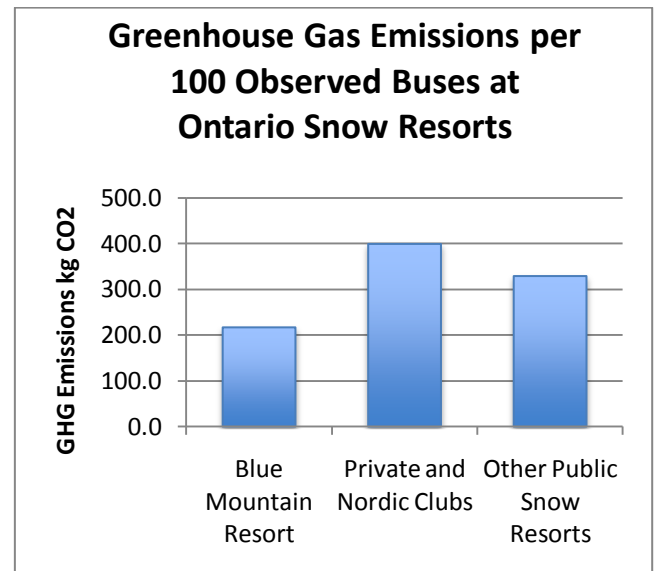


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What Snow Resorts Can Do

Snow resorts can offer incentives to bus drivers to get them out of their buses and inside the resort, thereby reducing the need for periodic idling throughout the day. Blue Mountain Resort, for example, has had great success in doing this by offering bus drivers free shuttle rides from their buses to the Blue Mountain Inn, where drivers can spend the day in a lounge. Drivers are also given free coffee or tea vouchers and discount meal coupons. As a result of these efforts, Blue Mountain Resort has seen a decrease in incidences of idling of 40% compared to the other observed Ontario snow resorts that offered no incentives for bus drivers to turn off their vehicles (see above diagram). Overall the benefit to the environment equates to a savings of 130 kg of carbon dioxide per 100 observed buses.



What Bus Companies & Drivers Can Do

Reducing idling can lead to significant fuel savings for bus companies, and consequently many bus companies have taken steps to reduce idling, including:

- Installing engine heaters, which keep engine coolant warmed to an appropriate temperature, reducing the amount of idling time necessary prior to departure.
- Installing on-board computers, which record and transmit bus and driver performance back to bus company head offices. This allows bus companies to track idling and encourages driver accountability.
- Participating in '**SmartDriver Training**' – a free, interactive driver training program offered from Natural Resources Canada's fuel-efficient driving program, '**FleetSmart**'. The workshop addresses the importance of fuel-efficient driving, factors affecting fuel-efficiency, effects of vehicle emissions on health, vehicle maintenance and inspection, and smart driving techniques. In fact, companies can reduce their fuel consumption by 5-10% after participating in a driver training program. E-mail SmartDriver@Bronson.ca or call (613)253-1086 for questions or to reserve your in-house session. Alternatively, you can visit www.fleetsmart.gc.ca for more information.

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