

**Question by Dr Lim Wee Kiak:**

To ask the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources (a) how many vehicles have been booked during the past three years for leaving the engine of their stationary vehicles running; (b) what is the duration allowed before the vehicle owner can be penalised; and (c) what is the Ministry doing to raise awareness of this rule to vehicle owners.

**Reply by Minister Masagos:**

Under the Environmental Protection and Management (Vehicular Emissions) Regulations, it is an offence to leave the engine of a motor vehicle running when it is stationary for reasons other than traffic conditions. Leaving the engine running when the vehicle is stationary results in fuel wastage and unnecessary environmental pollution. While there is no grace period allowed for the idling of vehicle engine in the Regulations, NEA officers will exercise judgement on the ground before errant motorists are booked. Over the past three years, NEA has booked more than 12,000 motorists for idling their vehicles.

2 As part of its outreach programmes, NEA works closely with stakeholders such as the authorised vehicle inspection centres, private and public transport operators and schools to disseminate educational pamphlets and decals so as to raise awareness of the regulation and forewarn motorists not to leave their vehicle engines idling. To promote greater awareness, NEA has also installed anti-vehicle idling signage at places where vehicles frequently congregate, such as carparks, loading/unloading bays and along the roadside near schools.

3 Everyone has a part to play in safeguarding our environment and public health. Members of the public who spot idling vehicles are encouraged to report them to NEA via their hotline or the myENV app.

**Supplementary Question by Dr Lim Wee Kiak:**

I would like to thank the Minister for his answer. I was a bit surprised to hear that 12,000 have been booked in the last three years. In a similar PQ three years ago, the advisory note was 320 per year. That was given in 2012. And 12 drivers were booked for offences. And now Minister has replied that 12,000 have been booked. Why is there such a big jump from 12 to 12,000? Is the number correct and if that is so, isn't that a cause for concern that there are more offences now?

**Reply by Minister Masagos:**

Indeed it is an area of concern. But the numbers have increased, largely because we have conducted more enforcement, and there have been more complaints from the public. I think it is useful for people who drive to know that today, modern technology does not require you to warm up your engine before you drive. Sometimes there is this misperception that you have to continue keeping your engine warm, so that you can get better fuel efficiency, or make the engine last longer. In reality, today, vehicle manufacturers we have consulted say that the engine warms up faster to reach the optimal temperature when the vehicle is driven at moderate speeds upon starting. So that's the new technology that we have today. So I hope we will move away from the old habits, where old engines need to be warmed up before they move, to new habits because engines today do not need to do so.

**Supplementary Question by Dr Lim Wee Kiak:**

Thank you Madam. Can I ask the Minister one more supplementary question. What is the quantum of the fine that was given to these 12,000, and whether we should revise the fine, if our deterrence measures do not work.

**Reply by Minister Masagos:**

Under Regulation 21 of the Environmental Protection and Management Regulations, it is an offence for any driver to leave the engine of a motor vehicle idling when the vehicle is stationary for reasons other than traffic conditions or the working of on-board machinery for some ancillary purpose. The offence carries the following court penalty: A maximum fine of \$2,000 for the first offence, and a maximum fine of \$5,000 for the second and subsequent offence. There are provisions under the Regulations to compound the offence, and the quantum of the compound fine is currently fixed at \$70. We will look at whether we need to review this for the future.

(ends)

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