

## **In cold weather, no need to warm your car's gasoline engine by idling - just drive off slowly**

COLUMBIA, Mo. - Letting your car idle to warm its gasoline engine in cold weather is a waste of fuel and not really needed, said a University of Missouri Extension agricultural engineering specialist.

"There are better ways to warm an engine than sit letting it idle," said Bill Casady. "In most cases, the simplest and best answer is no."

It's better to bring engines up to operating temperature by being gentle on the gas pedal to stay at low engine speeds as soon as the engine starts and runs smoothly. In most cases, this means starting the engine and heading out of the driveway immediately, he said.

Accelerate gently for the first couple of minutes to allow the engine oil to warm before placing a significant load on the engine. In this way, the warm-up period will be shorter and the engine will reach its most fuel-efficient operating conditions more quickly, he said.

Gasoline must be vaporized to burn. When the engine is cold, quite a bit of fuel either condenses on cold engine parts or fails to vaporize. This means more fuel is needed to get enough vaporized fuel into the combustion chamber.

So for the first few minutes of operation, the engine wastes more fuel than it will after it is warmed, but the amount of wasted fuel is small compared to fuel wasted by idling, where all the fuel being used is wasted, he said.

If you turn off the engine while running errands you don't have to let your engine idle after restarting. "An engine retains quite a bit of heat and will stay plenty warm for a while," he said.

Casady said it sometimes is necessary to idle the engine to produce enough heat to free the windshield from ice.