



SANTA BARBARA COUNTY  
2010 *Sustainability Action Plan*

## Vehicle Anti-Idling Policy



The County has established an anti-idling policy for its vehicles. An idling car uses almost as much fuel, and emits almost as much carbon dioxide, as a car in motion. Therefore, to reach County goals for fuel reductions, as well as comply with new California Air Resources Board (CARB) mandates, the County has established a vehicle anti-idling policy. The CARB (a State entity) mandate required the County to establish and enforce a policy that limited the idling time of all County-owned diesel-powered vehicles and equipment. When the County's anti-idling policy was written, the County elected to include all County vehicles and equipment regardless of fuel type.

## Hybrid Vehicles

The County purchased the first of its hybrid vehicles in 2001. Since that time the County's transition from conventional gasoline powered vehicles to hybrid powered vehicles has been conservative. The County currently operates approximately twenty-five hybrid powered vehicles. These vehicles have proven to be very reliable and have performed extremely well. To date, all hybrids originally purchased by the County are still in operation and several of these vehicles have in excess of 120,000 miles.

Part of the Vehicle Operations' conservative approach includes a careful examination of the total operating cost of all fleet vehicles. A vehicle's operational cost (cost per mile to operate the vehicle) is a primary consideration when selecting vehicle types to purchase. In its dedication to responsible vehicle purchasing, Vehicle Operations has resisted making large-quantity hybrid vehicle purchases. For example, in 2008, the County purchased several compact sedans (Ford Focus EPA; 28\36 MPG) for \$13,040.98 per vehicle. That same year the County also purchased one hybrid (Toyota Prius EPA 48\45 MPG) for \$23,337.57. The cost differential for the Prius compared to the Focus was over \$10,000.00.

At today's fuel prices, the County could never recover the additional funds required to purchase the more expensive hybrid vehicles based on the fuel cost savings alone. Vehicle Operations does recognize the environmental benefits of hybrid vehicles and attempts to strike a practical balance between fleet emission reductions and operating the County's fleet in a cost effective manner. As the price of fossil fuel rises and as hybrid vehicles become more price competitive, the operational cost gap between hybrids and conventional compact sedans will narrow.

