

Fact Sheet

The Car

Cars and the Environment

Cars are one of the worst polluters of the environment. Car exhaust contains harmful substances, such as carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, lead, sulfuric acid and nitric acid.

How pollution adds up

- During the average Canadian summer, over 50% of Canadians are exposed to various concentrations of ground-level ozone termed "unacceptable" by Health and Welfare Canada.
- Automotive fuels account for 17% of global carbon dioxide releases.
- Motor vehicles are the largest source of nitrogen oxide.

CARS ARE ONE OF THE WORST POLLUTERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Direct costs of the car

The true cost of the car is much higher than it appears. The Canadian government spends over \$11 billion a year supporting the cars' needs by:

- Building and repairing highways instead of building and operating public transit
- Car-related policing and court costs
- Medical-treatment of accident victims
- Control and clean-up of car-related pollution

Hidden costs of the car

Hidden costs of the car include:

- Increased likelihood of injury or death in accidents: cars are the largest cause of accidental death in Metro Toronto
- Stress, grief and financial loss from accidents
- Health problems caused by ground-level ozone
- Increased incidence of skin cancer caused by ozone layer depletion
- Air and water pollution from the fuel exploration and production industries
- Destruction of farmland to build roads and parking lots
- Acid rain
- Global warming caused by carbon dioxide emissions released in the burning of fossil fuels

What you can do

- Walk, cycle and use transit wherever possible; use a car for shorter distances
- Have only one car per family for longer trips
- Use only unleaded gasoline and tune up your car twice a year
- **NEVER** leave your car idling
- Help research routes and expand the network of bicycle lanes and paths in your neighbourhood

Sources

Save Our City: Block by Block. Toronto Board of Health.

The Car Fact Sheet: Pollution Probe

Transporting Ourselves to sustainable Economic Growth by Sue Zielinski.
Paper submitted for the International Institute for Sustainable Development,
Employment and Sustainable Development Meeting. June 23-25, 1994.
Winnipeg, Canada

Ways To Go. Healthy City Office