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# Cedar Hill bans long truck idling

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Turn that engine off!

In the main item of business at its May 12 agenda, the **Cedar Hill City Council** approved an ordinance adopting the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's Idling Limitations Rule, as suggested to cities throughout the Metroplex by the North Central Texas Council of Governments. The COG is especially targeting semis and other heavy-duty diesels, noting they create 15 times as many emissions in idling as gasoline engines.



Under the rule, all vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 14,000 pounds cannot idle for more than five minutes from April-October, the peak of North Texas' ozone season. Other restrictions ban semi drivers from idling to control a sleeper berth in a residential neighborhood, school zone or hospital area, or within 2 miles of a facility offering external heating and air conditioning, such as a truck stop offering external hook-ups for semis.

By incorporating the rule as an ordinance, Cedar Hill gives its police department, as well as the Dallas County Sheriff's Department and constables, the power to enforce the rule. In this area, Lancaster, Arlington and Dallas are the next-closest cities with idling ordinances on the book. In Cedar Hill, a truck driving school and several large retailers are likely to be primarily affected by the rule.

In addition to the pollution question, reducing idling promises other

benefits. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates excessive idling wastes 1 billion gallons of diesel fuel a year, lowers engine life by 20 percent, and lessens carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides and particulates emissions.

In addition to some truck stops offering external power connections, many new semis are built with auxiliary power units, small engines designed just to power heating and air conditioning units.

The council then approved an amended site plan for Babe's Chicken Dinner House. The amended plan was because the sign Babe's proposes for its downtown Cedar Hill site at 200 Main St. did not have a setback as far as city regulations, and was taller than city regulations.

The council delayed acting on a site plan at 157 Hood St. The city's Main Street Commission had previously rejected the plan for the site, but the Planning and Zoning Commission approved it after some changes. The council indicated it wanted the applicant to work more with Main Street before considering the request itself.

In a pre-meeting briefing session, City Planner Rod Tyler discussed a proposal to require Hardie Plank-type products instead of wood on new residential construction, as well as lowering the percentage of housing exterior walls that need to be masonry-faced. The council indicated interest in expanding the optional use of Hardie Plank, but were less sold on mandatory requirements.

They suggested Tyler start discussion with the Planning and Zoning Commission.



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