



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Six Back to School Tips for Commuters and Parents from Georgia's Clean Air Force**

**ATLANTA (August 25, 2014)** – As the summer draws to a close and kids head back to school and parents hit the roads, [Georgia's Clean Air Force](#) (GCAF), a partnership with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD), reminds motorists of some common sense tips for saving time and money on their commute, while contributing to cleaner air in the Atlanta metro region.

“This can be a stressful time of year for commuters and parents who have to drive their children to and from school. However, there are ways that motorists can save time and money, while also being aware of the impact that their driving habits have on the environment,” said Pamela T. Earl, Air Protection Branch Program Manager, Environmental Protection Division.

The experts at Georgia's Clean Air Force offer six simple tips for motorists during the back-to-school season.

- **Avoid Idling.** For parents who are waiting to pick up their children from school, it may seem convenient to keep the car running, but it is not. It wastes gas, and it is extremely harmful to the environment. For every 10 minutes of idling you cut from your commute, you can save one pound of harmful carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere. The rule of thumb is to turn off your engine if you'll be idling for more than 30 seconds.
- **Stagger Your Commute.** Inevitably, high traffic areas become even more congested as the school year begins. Drivers can avoid getting stuck in traffic by staggering their commute. Ask your boss if you can arrive for work later in the morning, when school related traffic is minimal. Or even better, look into whether your company allows telecommuting, and skip the traffic entirely.
- **Take the Road Less Traveled.** Many commuters get stuck in school traffic while traveling to work. To save gas and time, research some additional routes to your workplace to avoid school traffic. Google Maps and MapQuest offer interactive mapping options to explore alternate routes that bypass school traffic.
- **Unjunk Your Trunk.** Late summer is a good time to evaluate what you have in your car and remove any unnecessary items. The heavier the vehicle, the more fuel it consumes. Dropping 100 pounds from your car can increase your fuel economy from two to five percent. Don't carry bulky items like sports equipment unless you need to, and remove the roof rack unless you plan on using it.

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- **It's Cool to Carpool.** Consider setting up a back-to-school carpool with the parents of four other kids in your neighborhood. This way, you only have to make one trip to school a week, instead of five. You can save even more money by carpooling to work on the days that you don't lead the kids' carpool.
- **Maximize Performance.** Late summer is a good time to have your car inspected by your local mechanic. He or she can check for malfunctioning oxygen sensors, underinflated tires, clogged filters, and other factors that conspire to reduce fuel economy.

For additional information or to download an infographic with back-to-school commute tips, visit Georgia's Clean Air Force website at [www.cleanairforce.com](http://www.cleanairforce.com) or contact the GCAF Call Center at (800) 449-2471.

#### **About Georgia's Clean Air Force**

Georgia's Clean Air Force, part of the Environmental Protection Division (EPD), is responsible for the management of the Enhanced Vehicle Emission Inspection and Maintenance (I/M) Program throughout Atlanta's 13 metro counties. Since 1996, the Georgia EPD has worked to reduce harmful vehicle emissions. Georgia's Inspection and Maintenance Program has prevented tons of ozone-forming pollutants from entering the air we breathe by identifying and repairing nearly two million heavy-polluting vehicles. For more information visit [www.cleanairforce.com](http://www.cleanairforce.com).

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