



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 18, 2016

NEW TEXT ALERTS REMIND YOU TO PLUG @ 20
Get a text when temps in your zip code expected to dip below 20 degrees

The Anchorage Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), in collaboration with local nonprofit, Code for Anchorage, developed a simple service to remind Anchorage and Mat-Su residents to plug in their cars when the temperature drops below 20°F.

How does it work? Text your zip code to 1-907-312-2014 and the service will check the overnight temperature forecast. If overnight temperatures in your zip code are expected to dip below 20 degrees, you will receive a text reminder to plug in your car. Text "STOP" to end the service, and "START" to resume the reminders.

"This simple text reminder will help keep our vehicles and our air healthier. Thank you to Code for Anchorage for helping us develop new, innovative ways to make our community a healthy place to live, work and play," said DHHS Director Melinda Freeman.

Why Plug at 20 degrees? It is known to reduce engine wear and air pollution, and keep air cleaner in your neighborhood. Start-up is a period of maximum engine wear and minimum fuel efficiency. When you start your car cold, cold oil circulates slowly, leaving engine components unprotected. Block heaters pre-heat engines, allowing them to reach operating temperature sooner and get lubrication to moving parts.

Additionally, a study performed by Sierra Research in Anchorage and Fairbanks compared emissions from vehicles at cold temperatures. Local testing established that the use of block heaters substantially reduced start-up emissions and fuel consumption.

Exhaust from cold engines is rich in carbon monoxide (CO) and toxic air contaminants, but pre-heating engines two or three hours before starting reduces CO levels by nearly 60%.

In addition to the text reminder service, the DHHS Plug @ 20 Campaign distributed 332 timers for use with block heaters this past week.

Text your zip code now to 1-907-312-2014 to sign up.

For more information, please contact Amory Lelake at 1-907-343-4619

###