



Section: *Operations*
Title: *School Bus Idling*
Adopted: *9.15.05*
Revised:

811 *School Bus Idling*

Applicability: *This policy applies to the operation of every district owned and/or contracted school bus.*

Rationale: *Diesel exhaust from idling school buses can accumulate in and around the bus and pose a health risk to children, drivers and the community at large. Exposure to diesel exhaust can cause lung damage and respiratory problems. Diesel exhaust also exacerbates asthma and existing allergies, and long term exposure is thought to increase the risk of lung cancer. Idling buses also waste fuel and financial resources.*

Guidance: 1. *When school bus drivers arrive at loading and unloading areas to pick up or drop off passengers, they should turn off their buses as soon as possible to eliminate idling time and reduce harmful emissions. The school bus should not be restarted until it is ready to depart and there is a clear path to exit the pick up area. Exceptions include conditions that would compromise passenger safety, such as:*

- A. Extreme weather conditions;*
- B. Idling in traffic.*

2. *At school bus depots, driver should limit the idling time during early morning warm-up to what is recommended by the manufacturer (generally 3 to 5 minutes) in all but the coldest weather.*

3. *In colder weather, schools are directed to provide a space inside the school where bus drivers who arrive early can wait.*

4. *In colder weather, if the warmth of the bus is an issue, idling*

is to occur outside the school zone. The “warmed” bus is to enter the school zone as close to pick up time as possible to maintain warmth and then shut down.

5. *Buses should not idle while waiting for students during field trips, extracurricular activities or other events where students are transported off school grounds.*

Exceptions: *The requirement that a driver of a diesel school bus must turn off the bus and must refrain from idling does not apply for the period or periods during which idling is necessary under the following circumstances:*

1. *Turbo-diesel Engine Cool Down or Warm Up*
 - A. *To cool down a turbo-charged diesel engine for a period not to exceed 5 minutes before turning off engine. (The cool down should be in accordance with the bus manufacturer’s specifications).*
 - B. *To warm up a turbo-charged diesel engine for a period of not to exceed 3 minutes. (The warm up should be in accordance with the bus manufacturer’s specifications).*
2. *Cold Weather*
 - A. *If the outside temperature is between 32 degrees and -10 degrees, idling to operate heaters for up to 15 minutes; or*
 - B. *If the outside temperature is below -10, idling to use heating equipment is permitted without any time restriction.*
3. *Safety of Children and Emergencies*
 - A. *Use of lift equipment during loading or unloading of children with one or more disabilities;*
 - B. *Use of a heater or air conditioner of a bus during loading, unloading or transport of children with exceptional needs; Use of defrosters, heaters, air conditioners, or other equipment for safety or health considerations;*
 - C. *Use of bus headlights or four way flasher warning lights for visibility purposes; or*

D. For other traffic, safety, or emergency situations.

Note: In any of the above cases, if equipment can be run from the battery, drivers should refrain from idling, unless there is significant concern of draining the battery.

4. Maintenance of Operations

A. To Charge a battery of a school bus, if needed; or

B. For testing to verify that the bus is in safe operating condition as part of the daily pre-trip vehicle inspection or, as otherwise required, such as measuring vehicle emissions.

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