

Sample School Board Policy to Limit School Bus Idling

A. Purpose

This policy seeks to reduce student and driver exposure to diesel exhaust particulate matter by limiting unnecessary idling of school buses pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 123B.885 (diesel school buses: operation of engine: parking).

B. Applicability

This policy applies to district-owned school buses and contracted school buses while being operated for the purpose of transporting the school district's students at public expense.

C. Idling control measure

1. The school district shall:

- a) Relocate school building air intake systems more than 100 feet away from school bus parking areas when practical and shall take other measures to reduce intake of school bus exhaust where relocating intake systems is not feasible, such as regulating closure of air intake vents.

2. A driver of a diesel school bus:

- a) must turn off the bus upon reaching a school or other destination and must not turn on the engine until necessary to depart from the school or destination; and
- b) must park the bus at least 100 feet from a known and active school air intake system, unless the school district has determined that alternative locations block traffic, impair student safety or are not cost-effective

3. The employer of the school bus driver must ensure that:

- a) the bus or vehicle driver upon employment, and as necessary thereafter, is informed of the requirements of this policy and the reasons therefore

4. The employer of the school bus driver must ensure that:

- a) all complaints of non-compliance are reviewed and remedial action is necessary

D. Exemptions

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 five minutes before turning off the 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 not to exceed three minutes. (The warm up should be in accordance with the bus manufacturer's specifications).

*Sample school board policy created by the former Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance and the Sierra Club Air Toxics Campaign. OEA and the Sierra Club would like to thank transportation directors throughout Minnesota for assistance in developing this sample policy. | December 2002

2. Cold weather

- a) If the outside temperature is between 32 degrees and –ten degrees, idling to operate heaters is allowed for up to 15 minutes.
- b) If the outside temperature is below –ten, there is no time restriction on idling to use heating equipment.
- c) In cold weather, if bus drivers will be at a location for more than 15 minutes, an indoor waiting area is encouraged.

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 an air conditioner of a bus during loading, unloading, or transport of children with exceptional needs;
- c) use of defrosters, heaters, air conditioners, or other equipment for safety or health considerations;
- d) use of the bus headlights or four-way flasher warning lights for visibility purposes; or
- e) for other traffic, safety, or emergency situations
- f) In any of the above cases, if equipment can be run from the battery then the drivers should refrain from idling, unless there is a 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, including to measure vehicle emissions