

Protecting Students' Health by Protecting them from Vehicle Exhaust

In May 2002, Minnesota adopted a new state law to protect the health and safety of children at school from harmful diesel emissions. This law calls for schools to reduce the unnecessary idling of buses near the school building, and when possible reroute bus parking and loading farther away from the school's air-intake vents.

Why is idling of vehicles a problem?

- **Vehicle exhaust is hazardous to human health, especially children's.** Studies have linked pollution from vehicles to increased rates of cancer, heart and lung disease, asthma and allergies. Children breathe more rapidly and inhale more pollutants per pound of body weight than adults, and their lungs are still developing. A study by Yale University found that students on school buses are exposed to five to fifteen times the levels of particulate pollution. Levels are especially high when buses idle and line up back-to-front. Idling of cars also increases the levels of pollution near schools.
- **Idling wastes resources and damages the environment.** Burning fuel needlessly costs money and contributes to air pollution problems that harm plant and animals.
- **Idling vehicles can be easily stolen or can cause damage if accidentally engaged.**
- **Today's cars and buses do not need to be warmed up, except in extremely cold conditions (below 0° F).** In fact, for modern diesel engines idling can actually be harder on the engine than driving down the road.

____ (Name) __ School (District) **has taken the following steps to protect our students from vehicle exhaust and comply with the law:**

(Use all that apply)

- Implemented a no-idling policy for all vehicles at every school building.
- Posted "no idling" signs and alerted bus drivers, parents, and administrators that engines should be turned off when a vehicle is waiting, or parked.
- Redesigned bus parking zones to move bus parking area away from school air intake vents and park buses at a diagonal to avoid front-to-back passing of emissions.
- Required targeted maintenance of the bus fleet to reduce emissions.
- Invested in cleaner fuels and technologies, such as exhaust pipe retrofits for current buses and use of bio-diesel.

Parents and guardians are essential to ensuring the protection of children's health from vehicle exhaust. We appreciate your support in following our new no idling policy when visiting our schools.

For more information on the risks of idling, contact the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency at 651-296-6300, or visit <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/air/schoolbusretrofits.html>.

