

Louisiana School Bus Idling Policy

School District Name:

Policy Number:

Effective Date:

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. The exhaust from buses idling pollutes the air around and inside the bus and possibly inside the school building if the exhaust gets into heating and ventilating systems. Diesel exhaust contains small particles that can penetrate deep into the lungs to cause lung damage, respiratory problems, and exacerbate asthma and allergies. Diesel exhaust contains smog-forming and toxic air pollutants, some of which may be classified as carcinogens by the EPA and other organizations. Children are more susceptible to the pollution because they breathe 50 percent more air per pound of body weight than adults and their respiratory systems are still developing.

Purpose

Eliminate all unnecessary idling by [district] school buses such that idling time is minimized in all aspects of school bus operation.

Guidance

1. It is recommended that all school buses, upon entering the school grounds, go directly to the designated school bus parking area. Once parked, the engine should be immediately shut off and passengers disembarked (following all safety protocols for unloading passengers). The school bus engine should not be idling to load passengers. On the return trip, the school bus engine should only be started once all passengers are safely loaded and the bus has a direct path to exit the campus.

2. When school bus drivers arrive at loading or unloading areas to drop off or pick up 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
3. At school bus depots, limit the idling time during early morning warm-up to what is recommended by the manufacturer (generally 3-5 minutes) in all but the coldest weather.
4. Bus engine should not be started until ALL students have completely boarded the bus when participating in field trips, extracurricular activities or other events where students are transported off school grounds.
5. In colder weather, schools are directed to provide a space inside the school where bus drivers who arrive early can wait.
6. In colder weather, if the warmth of the bus is an issue, idling is to be at a very minimum and 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.
7. All service delivery vehicles shall turn off the engines while making deliveries to school buildings.
8. All drivers shall receive a copy of this bulletin at the beginning of every school year.
9. A copy of this policy shall be provided upon request at ALL times.