



New
Jersey
Department of
Environmental
Protection

ENFORCEMENT ADVISORY

Compliance Alert

Making You Aware of Anticipated Enforcement Activities

Compliance and Enforcement

Issued: March 2005

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DEP to Step Up Enforcement of Idling School Buses

Who is affected by this initiative?

Department of Environmental Protection regulations at N.J.A.C. 7:27-14 prohibit diesel-powered vehicles, including school buses, from idling for more than three consecutive minutes if the vehicle is not in motion. As part of a statewide effort by the DEP to reduce diesel emissions in New Jersey, the DEP has been and will continue to target various types of diesel-powered vehicles that operate on the roadways of the state as well as owners of property upon which idling violations occur.

Why is DEP targeting idling school buses?

Diesel-powered vehicles produce a wide variety of air pollutants, including particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, formaldehyde and other toxic air pollutants. These unhealthy emissions quickly and easily build up in school buses during idling. Children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of diesel exhaust because they breathe 50 percent more air per pound of body weight than adults. Children's immune and respiratory systems are still developing, making them particularly susceptible to both acute and chronic respiratory problems such as asthma. Exposure to idling emissions is also an occupational hazard as it exposes drivers to dangerous levels of fine-particle pollution and other toxins.

In the fall of 2004, the DEP contacted all New Jersey school districts to raise awareness of the three-minute idling requirement. The DEP also sent a fact sheet about the health effects of diesel exhaust and encouraged school districts to sign a no-idling pledge as part of a volunteer effort to eliminate all idling.

In addition to the environmental risks, idling school buses unnecessarily consume fuel and increase long-term engine maintenance costs. Eliminating school-bus idling will save school districts money.

What is DEP doing?

While the DEP has enforced the three-minute idling standard in New Jersey for over a decade, the DEP has increased its enforcement efforts in the past year. The DEP will continue this increased level of enforcement activity. DEP inspectors will respond to resident complaints with the help of the local environmental health agencies throughout the state. Residents can call the DEP 24-hour hotline (1-877-WARN-DEP) to register suspected violations of the idling standards. Failure to comply with the idling standards will result in enforcement actions and civil administrative penalty assessments for the property

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owner and the vehicle operator, starting at \$200 per day. The DEP will also increase its activities in locations where the illegal idling of school buses is suspected.

What should I do?

Carefully review the following general guidelines to ensure compliance but please refer to the regulations at www.StopTheSoot for a comprehensive list of the requirements.

- Ensure that school buses do not idle for more than three consecutive minutes if the vehicle is not in motion (one allowable exception to this requirement is noted below).
- School buses are permitted to idle for a maximum of 15 minutes if the vehicle engine has been stopped for three or more hours.
- Encourage your school district to sign the no-idling pledge, when school districts or private bus companies agree to go beyond compliance with the law by turning off engines while loading and unloading students, using newest buses for longest routes, and completing school-bus driver training regarding idling laws and the hazards of diesel emissions. It will save you money and protect everyone's health.
- Encourage your local parent-teacher organizations to play a visible role in reminding school-bus drivers of the need to reduce idling.
- Explore alternatives to idling, such as engine block heaters for cold weather starts and in-cabin heaters.

Whom should I contact with questions or complaints?

DEP Diesel Risk Reduction Team -- for general questions	(609) 633-2306
Northern Field Office for complaints in: Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex and Warren counties	(973) 656-4444
Central Field Office for complaints in: Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean and Union counties	(609) 584-4100
Southern Field Office for complaints in: Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem counties	(856) 614-3601

Please note this advisory is intended to be a summary explanation of a DEP initiative. It does not include all potentially applicable requirements. If you have any questions related to compliance with this initiative, please contact the numbers listed above.