**Diesel School Buses and Children’s Health: What You Need to Know**

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**Why school-bus idling is harmful**

- Diesel exhaust is a likely human carcinogen, containing fine particles, commonly called 'soot.'
- Children are especially affected by soot because their lungs are still developing and they breathe 50 percent more air per pound of body weight than adults.
- Fine particles pose a significant health threat because they easily reach deep into the lungs.
- Diesel exhaust worsens asthma, bronchitis and existing allergies and may contribute to decreased lung function, lung cancer and heart disease.
- Diesel exhaust ranks among the air pollutants that the EPA believes pose the greatest public health risks.
- Between 10 percent to 13 percent of all students in grades K-12 have asthma.

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**Safety first**

School buses are the safest mode of student transportation, according to the School Bus Information Council, but we can make them much safer by eliminating unnecessary idling.

- Each child rides a school bus an average of 1.5 hours per day.

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**It’s the law!**

New Jersey law prohibits idling by diesel vehicles for more than three minutes.

- Call your local police department or (877) WARN-DEP to report idling.
- Eliminating unnecessary idling promotes good health and saves money.

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**What you should do**

New Jersey school districts and school bus drivers are encouraged to protect our children’s health by implementing best practices to reduce harmful diesel emissions. These best practices include:

- Turning off engines when waiting to load and unload students.
- Replacing oldest buses in the fleet first as they often release the most emissions.
- Using newest buses for longest routes.
- Maintaining buses to eliminate any visible exhaust.
- Developing strategies to prevent buses from queuing.
- Keeping bus windows open while in transit when comfort allows.
- Encouraging children to sit in front seats if bus is not full.
- Avoiding congested roads when possible.
- Avoiding directly following other diesel vehicles.

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**Learn more**

Visit www.StopTheSoot.org

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**State of New Jersey**

Department of Environmental Protection

Catherine R. McCabe, Commissioner