

Texas Clean School Bus Program

Sample Policy to Limit School Bus Idling for Texas School Districts and Charter Schools

Section 00.000 Idling School Bus Diesel Engine at School or School Event Prohibited

- (a) **Purpose.** This policy seeks to limit unnecessary idling of school buses to reduce student and driver exposure to diesel exhaust and improve fuel economy.
- (b) **Definition.** In this section, “idling” means allowing an engine to run while the motor vehicle is not engaged in forward or reverse motion.
- (c) **Applicability.** This policy applies to diesel school buses being operated for the purpose of transporting students to or from school or a school event in a vehicle that is:
- (1) Owned and operated by the school district; or
 - (2) Otherwise contracted for use by the school district to transport students.
- (d) **General.** Except as provided by subsection (e), the driver of a school bus equipped with a diesel engine may not allow the idling of the bus engine while the bus is parked at a school or school event.
- (1) Buses should not idle while waiting for students during field trips, extracurricular activities, or other events where students are transported off school grounds.
- (e) **Exemptions.** The limitations provided in subsection (d) do not apply for the period or periods during which idling is necessary under the following circumstances:
- (1) *Weather.* Limit the idling time of a school bus to the minimum time necessary to heat or cool the bus before departure, provided that the engine is turned off when students get on or off the bus at a school or event.
 - (2) *Traffic.* Exceptions to idling of a school bus diesel engine include normal traffic situations, or other traffic-related circumstances including:
 - A. Traffic conditions over which the driver has no control;
 - B. An official traffic control device or signal; and
 - C. Directions or commands from a uniformed police officer or another person otherwise authorized to direct traffic.
 - (3) *Turbo-charged Diesel Engine Cooldown or Warm-up.* Limit idling of a turbocharged school bus diesel engine to the manufacturer’s specifications for required cooldown period or a warm-up period.
 - (4) *Safety of Children and Emergencies.* Limited idling of a school bus diesel engine is allowed during emergency situations or other situations involving:
 - A. Use of life equipment during loading or unloading of children with one or more disabilities;

- B. Use of a heater or an air conditioner during loading, unloading, or transport of children with exceptional needs;
 - C. Use of defrosters, heater, 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.
- (5) *Maintenance of Operations.* Idling of a school bus diesel engine is not prohibited to charge a battery of a school bus, or for testing to otherwise verify that the bus is in safe operating condition as part of the daily pre-trip vehicle inspection, or as otherwise required.