

School Bus Idling

This policy becomes effective on August 1, 2005, and applies to the operation of every system-owned school bus. 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. Therefore, the system will eliminate all unnecessary idling by Sevier County school buses and will minimize idling time in all aspects of school bus operation.

When school bus drivers arrive at loading or unloading areas to drop off or pick up passengers, they will turn off the engine as soon as possible to eliminate unnecessary idling and reduce harmful emissions. The school bus will 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 extreme weather conditions and/or idling in traffic.

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.

Buses will not idle while waiting for students during field trips, extracurricular activities, or other events where students are transported off school grounds.

In colder weather, schools will provide space inside the school buildings where bus drivers can wait. In colder weather, if the warmth of the bus is an issue, idling will be 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.

All service delivery vehicles will turn off engines while making deliveries to school buildings.

The transportation supervisor will revise bus schedules to avoid school bus caravanning and to insure the cleanest operating buses are assigned the longest routes. The supervisor will insure that a copy of this policy is given to each driver at the beginning of each school year and training is included in the annual in-service activities completed at the start of each school year.