

The Link Between Asthma and Exhaust from Idling

- 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.
- **Diesel exhaust ranks among the air pollutants** that EPA believes **pose the greatest public health risks**.
- A recent EPA study in Westchester County New York concluded that **idling for more than three minutes generates more pollution than stopping and re-starting the engine**. The pollution level from buses that idled more than three minutes had 66% more fine particles than pollution generated from shutting off buses and then restarting them(1).
- Approximately one-third of **diesel school buses** now in service were **built before 1990**. They can **emit six times more pollution than buses built after 2004** and possibly **60 times more than new buses** that meet 2007 diesel standards (1)

Possible steps to take:

1. Have school bus drivers turn off buses as soon as they arrive in the school yard
2. Limit idling time during early morning warm-up
3. Provide a space inside the school where drivers can wait

Adapted from: What You should Know about Diesel Exhaust and School Bus Idling, EPA
<http://www.seql.org/Whatyoushoul%20knowaboutdieselexhaustandschoolbusidling.pdf>

Resources:

- EPA study
<http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/d10ed0d99d826b068525735900400c2a/b46195ea25bc1552852572e20052c3b7!OpenDocument>
- EPA Tools for Schools
<http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/>
- EPA National Idle Reduction Campaign
<http://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/antiidling.htm>
- Mass EPA
<http://www.mass.gov/dep/air/community/schbusir.htm>
- ALA's Asthma Friendly Schools Tool-Kit
<http://www.lungusa.org/site/apps/s/content.asp?c=dvLUK9O0E&b=34706&ct=67480>