



West Virginia Asthma Coalition

Helping West Virginians with Asthma Breathe Easier

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School Bus Idling and Your Child's Asthma

In West Virginia, 210,000 students ride the school bus. Diesel exhaust from idling school buses can accumulate on and around the bus and pose a health risk, particularly to children. The Environmental Protection Agency and the American Lung Association rank diesel exhaust among the air pollutants that pose the greatest public health risk. Exposure to diesel exhaust can cause lung damage and exacerbates asthma and existing allergies. What can be done about it?

“Reduce Idling” Policy

The West Virginia Department of Education has a policy in place to reduce idling problems near schools. It regulates the school buses idling by stating:

- ✚ **In normal weather, a school bus operator shall not idle the bus while waiting for or loading students.**
- ✚ **Buses will be allowed to idle when the temperature is 40 degrees F. or colder, when needed to defrost driving windows, when the safety comfort of the students is in question, or when emergency dictates.**
- ✚ **School bus operators are prohibited from idling the buses for more than 10 minutes unless defrosting windows and then idling shall be limited to thirty minutes**

What Can We Do to Protect Our Children?

As parents and teachers, we need to make our principals and bus drivers aware of the policy and make certain they adhere to it. Encourage other parents to follow the “no idling” rules too. In addition to reducing school bus idling, following at least three car lengths behind a vehicle with visible exhaust or noticeable odor can reduce the health risks associated with vehicle exhaust.

The West Virginia Asthma Coalition in conjunction with the American Lung Association encourages you to be aware of asthma triggers that are more common during the fall and winter months at home and at school. To find out more, go to www.lungusa.org, or for more information on diesel emissions visit the Environmental Protection Agency website at www.epa.gov/ne/eco/diesel .