

301.5AP – Bus and Vehicle Idling

Purpose

The Board of Education of Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools (NLPS) is committed to actions of environmental stewardship in response to the climate crisis and reducing carbon footprint.

Vehicle idling is an important environmental and economic issue due to the unnecessary emission of carbon dioxide, the primary contributor to the greenhouse gas effect. According to Natural Resources Canada, a typical vehicle produces approximately three times its weight in carbon dioxide each year.

Diesel and gasoline exhaust from idling school buses and other vehicles can accumulate in and around the vehicle and pose a health risk, both to children and drivers. Exposure to diesel and gasoline exhaust can cause lung damage and respiratory problems. Idling buses or vehicles is also wasteful of fuel and financial resources.

Objective

This administrative procedure was created to eliminate all unnecessary idling by district school buses and vehicles in all aspects of school district operations.

Scope

All employees who operate gas or diesel vehicles/equipment are responsible for ensuring the vehicles/equipment are operated in accordance with this policy.

Supervisors in each department will be responsible for the adherence and enforcement of the vehicle/equipment idle policy.

Procedures

1. Diesel Vehicles

Idle times from three (3) to five (5) minutes are allowed for diesel fuelled vehicles during their initial warm up and at subsequent times when the vehicle is being restarted after a prolonged period of shutdown. It is also necessary during the engine shutdown process to idle for one (1) to three (3) minutes before turning it off to allow heat dissipation in the engine if the unit has been used under load. Throughout normal daily operations, idle times are not to exceed one (1) minute, including buses waiting at school sites and charter pickup locations.

2. Gasoline Vehicles

Idle times up to one (1) minute are allowed for vehicles during their initial shift warm up, at subsequent times when the vehicle is being restarted after a prolonged period of shut down, and throughout daily operations.

3. Exceptions

- Vehicles/equipment engaged in emergency activities
- Vehicles that remain motionless because of traffic, an emergency, weather conditions, or mechanical difficulties over which the driver has no control.
- Vehicles idling for the purposes of defogging or defrosting windows. Idling must discontinue when the windows have cleared enough for the vehicle to be safe to drive. Operators must assist by manually clearing glass of snow and ice.
- Vehicles idling while passengers are embarking or disembarking
- Vehicles that are being used as a mobile workshop
- Vehicles that are being serviced or repaired
- Diesel engines that are in an active regeneration cycle
- Zero emission vehicles (electric) because they are carbon free

In the interest of *safety*, operators may use their own discretion in certain situations.

4. Further Guidelines

- When a vehicle must be left running for any reason, the operator must remain with the vehicle.
- Do not operate machinery within 30 meters of a building ventilation system.
- Contractors will be required to adhere to the idle policy while on school property.
- In cold weather, if the warmth of a bus is an issue, idling is to be at a very minimum and must occur outside of the school zone. The “warmed bus” is to enter the school zone as close to the pickup time as possible to maintain warmth and shut the engine off.

5. Compliance Monitoring

All District staff who operate district vehicles or equipment shall receive a copy of this Administrative Procedure at the beginning of each year.

Zonar GPS telematics will be used to monitor compliance to the idling guidelines. Department managers will be notified of operators that exceed the idle limit and will be responsible for follow up with employees.

Supporting Policy: 104 Environmental Stewardship

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