



Valley Air News

A publication of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

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New limits on bus and truck idling near schools

In an effort to reduce children's exposure to toxic air contaminants from diesel engines, California law now limits the amount of time school and transit buses and other commercial vehicles may idle at or near schools.

As of February 1, 2005, vehicles such as buses and trucks are required to shut off their engines when parked within 100 feet of schools and other locations where school-aged children are present, such as bus stops and field trip destinations. School-aged children are identified as those between kindergarten and 12th grade.

Furthermore, the law prohibits buses and other commercial vehicles from idling longer than

five minutes within 100 feet of schools or homes. The drivers of buses and trucks are also not allowed to start their engines more than 30 seconds prior to departing the area where school-aged children may be present. The exceptions are:

- If passengers are boarding the bus, in which case idling is allowed for up to ten minutes;
- In the midst of traffic;
- To maintain safe operating conditions of the vehicle;
- For vehicle testing, service or repair; and
- To operate services needed by persons with disabilities or to operate heaters or air conditioners for children with special needs.

Although aimed primarily at protecting children and the public

from diesel fumes, the law also applies to buses and trucks that run on gasoline and compressed natural gas. Only electric vehicles are exempt.

The new law, Section 2485 of the California Health and Safety Code, titled "Airborne Toxic Control Measure to Reduce Diesel-Fueled Commercial Motor Vehicle Idling," was written to protect children, parents, teachers and nearby residents of schools from the potential adverse health effects of exposure to diesel particulate matter and toxic air contaminants. Health risks include eye and respiratory irritation, enhanced respiratory allergic reactions, asthma exacerbation and cancer.

Deadline drawing near for 2006 kids calendar artwork Clean air is theme of annual art contest

The Valley Air District calls upon young artists throughout the San Joaquin Valley to submit artwork for the 2006 Clean Air calendar. The deadline for submissions is Sept. 30.

Valley students in kindergarten through 12th grade are invited to enter the contest. Original artwork should be done in color and contain a message about ways we all can help clean the Valley's air. Artists should use white paper and place the page in landscape orientation, so the paper is 8 ½ inches high and 11 inches wide. Any media is acceptable, including crayons, watercolor, acrylics, pastels, ink or oils.

Fourteen drawings with clean-air themes will be selected and reproduced in a color calendar that is distributed free to schools, community groups, healthcare facilities, churches and non-profit organizations. At least 20,000 calendars will be distributed Valley-wide.

Entry forms and more information about ways to clean the air are available at www.valleyair.org.

Entries must include the artist's name, address, phone number, age, grade and school, and should be mailed flat in a large envelope to: Calendar Contest, Valley Air District, 1990 E. Gettysburg Ave., Fresno, CA 93726. Drawings should not be folded or stapled and must be received by the Sept. 30 deadline.

