

VALLEY AIR NEWS

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Back to school

School is back in session. How are your children getting to school? Have you thought about the air-quality impact associated with the daily practice of driving just one child a mile or two to school and then idling your vehicle while waiting to pick them up?

Emissions from vehicle idling during the back-to-school rush presents a significant air-quality problem in the San Joaquin Valley. The school day ends during peak ozone hours, and students are exposed to a noxious cloud of exhaust fumes as they depart from classes into a sea of idling cars, minivans and SUVs.



District grant targets single truck owner/operators

The Air District is targeting single diesel truck owner/operators for a replacement grant of up to \$50,000 per vehicle.

Funding is still available in the Truck Voucher Program to aid as many single owner/operators in the Valley as possible before the state deadline of Jan. 1 to replace older diesels with new, much cleaner trucks.

Seven million dollars must be allocated before the end of 2013 for truck replacements. Qualifying owner/operators are eligible for up to \$50,000 toward each truck replaced, significantly lowering the amount of nitrogen oxide and particulate matter pollution in the Valley's air.

Single owner/operators and small-fleet owners of on-road, diesel trucks subject to the Jan. 1 compliance date should contact the Air District's grants department as soon as possible to apply. More information is available at: http://www.valleyair.org/Grant_Programs/GrantPrograms.htm#On-Road%20Voucher%20Incentive%20Program.

Cars crowd in front of a Valley elementary school, in some cases blocking traffic, as parents wait to pick up students from class during peak ozone hours.



Late summer and early fall is also the time of year that the Valley is most at risk of exceeding the federal 1-hour ozone standard. Vehicle idling has been shown to be a major contributor to ozone pollution in August and September.

Consider alternatives to driving your child to school to help reduce ground-level ozone.

- Walk your child to school or organize a safe walking route to school for groups of students with one or more parents to accompany them. This is also known as a "walking school bus."
- Encourage your children to bicycle and you can ride with them.
- Organize a carpool with other parents so that fewer vehicles are driving on a daily basis.
- Refrain from idling your vehicle while waiting to pick up your child from school.

This dad (left) avoids waiting behind idling vehicles by walking his three daughters to and from school.



High school students (right) emerging from their classrooms at the end of the day are greeted by hundreds cars lining the streets, causing congestion and filling the area with exhaust fumes.

