

Brockton Public Schools School Committee Policy

“No Idling” Policy

Application

This policy applies to the operation of all vehicles, including diesel-powered school buses, on school grounds. For purposes of this policy, “school grounds” shall mean in, on, or within 100 feet of school property, whether school is in session or not, and shall include any athletic field or facility and any playground used for school purposes or functions which are owned by the City of Brockton or the Brockton Public Schools, regardless of proximity to a school building, as well as any parking lot appurtenant to such school, athletic field, facility, or playground.

Purpose

According to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, idling vehicles pollute the air and present several health and environmental hazards. Gasoline and diesel vehicles produce carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and oxides of nitrogen (NOx). Carbon monoxide causes respiratory distress and in high concentrations can be lethal; carbon dioxide is a primary contributor to global warming; and VOCs and NOx form ground-level smog, and impair lung function. In addition, diesel exhaust contains fine particulate matter, which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has designated as a likely carcinogen. Children, the elderly, and the chronically ill are all particularly vulnerable to these health effects because their lung function is still in development, decreased, or impaired.

This policy is adopted in order to reduce the health and environmental effects of vehicle exhaust, comply with the Commonwealth’s idling reduction regulations and law, and decrease our use of fuel by reducing unnecessary idling.

General Restrictions

- (1) Except in the circumstances outlined below, no motor vehicle operator shall cause or allow the engine of any motor vehicle operated by him or her on school grounds to idle for more than five minutes.
- (2) No motor vehicle operator shall idle a motor vehicle engine within 100 feet of a known and active school air intake system.

Exemptions

Engine idling is permitted in the following circumstances; however, in all cases idling is permitted only for as long as is necessary:

- (a) Traffic conditions
 1. For traffic conditions over which the driver has no control; or
 2. For an official traffic control device or signal; or

3. At the direction of a uniformed police officer or a person authorized to direct traffic.

(b) Queuing at a School

1. Where the physical configuration of a school requires a queue of vehicles for the sequential discharge or pickup of students, and the queue of vehicles is actively engaged in the discharge or pickup of students.

(c) Turbo-charged Diesel Engine Cool Down or Warm Up

When the manufacturer's specifications require idling the engine, to cool down or warm up a turbo-charged diesel engine. Documentation of this requirement shall be kept in the vehicle at all times.

(d) Cold/Hot Weather

1. If the interior temperature of any school bus is less than 35° F, idling is allowed to heat the interior of the school bus for a period or periods aggregating not more than three minutes in any 15 minute period during which the school bus is waiting to accept or discharge passengers; or
2. If the interior temperature of any school bus is greater than 80° F and it is not practicable or possible to open the windows or to park in a shaded area, and the school bus is equipped with air conditioning, idling is allowed to cool the interior of the motor vehicle for a period or periods aggregating not more than three minutes in any 15 minute period during which the school bus is waiting to accept or discharge passengers.
3. Idling of motor vehicles other than school buses is allowed under the conditions described above for an aggregate of not more than one minute in any 15 minute period.

(e) Safety and Emergencies

1. To ascertain that the school bus or other commercial vehicle is in safe operating condition and equipped as required by all provisions of law, and all equipment is in good working order, either as part of the driver's daily vehicle inspection, or as otherwise needed; or
2. To operate the flashing signal lamps and/or stop signal arm devices required by law where the operation of those devices can not be undertaken by battery power alone; or
3. To operate defrosters, or other equipment to ensure the safe operation of the vehicle, or as otherwise required by federal or state motor carrier safety regulations, or other local requirements; or
4. To operate a heater or an air conditioner for only the period necessary to ensure a reasonable interior temperature in a vehicle that has, or will have, one or more children aboard with temperature sensitive disabilities; or
5. To operate a lift or other piece of equipment designed to ensure safe loading, unloading, or transport of persons with one or more disabilities; or
6. Use of school bus as an emergency vehicle.

(f) Maintenance of Operations

1. For testing, servicing, repairing, or diagnostic purposes; or
2. To recharge a battery or other energy storage unit of a hybrid electric bus.

(g) Exemption to Prohibition on Idling Near Air Intake System

Where the school has determined that alternative locations block traffic, impair student safety, or are not cost effective.

All school district bus drivers and private transportation companies will receive a copy of the Brockton School Committee's "No idling" policy at the beginning of every school year.

Legal Reference: M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H; M.G.L. c. 90, § 16B; 540 C.M.R. § 27.00