

DIESEL VEHICLE IDLING: MYTHS OR FACTS

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Myth: *It's important to warm up the engine with a long idle period, especially in cold weather.*

Fact: Idling and running an engine at low speed causes wear on engines compared to driving at regular speeds. With today's school bus engines, bus and engine manufacturers routinely suggest a warm up time of less than 5 minutes.

Myth: *It's better for an engine to run at low speed (idling) than to run at regular speeds.*

Fact: Idling or running an engine at low speed causes twice the wear on internal parts compared to driving at regular speeds.

Myth: *The engine must be kept running in order to operate the school bus safety*

equipment (flashing lights, stop sign). It's impossible to run this equipment off the internal circuitry of the bus because the battery will run down.

Fact: Safety equipment can be operated without the engine running through re-wired circuitry for up to 60 minutes with no ill-effects on the electrical system of the bus.

Myth: *Idling is necessary to keep the cabin comfortable.*

Fact: Many buses will maintain a comfortable interior temperature for a while without idling, except for extreme conditions. Idling is not an efficient way to keep the cabin warm. Bus routes should be timed so children and drivers do not need to spend a lot of extra

time on the bus when it is not en route, particularly in hot or cold weather. In addition, auxiliary heaters can be purchased and installed to keep the cabin comfortable.

Myth: *It's better to just leave the engine idling because a "cold start" produces more pollution.*

Fact: Restarted school bus contains less carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and other pollutants than if the school bus idled continuously over a 10-minute period. Idling for more than 3 minutes emits more fine particle (soot) emissions than at restart (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency).

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