



Clean Air Zone

Health effects of diesel exhaust

Did You Know?

- ✓ The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare estimates that 130,000 Idahoans and at least 10% of Idaho children suffer from asthma.
- ✓ The Center for Disease Control states that asthma is the most common chronic illness among children, and the number one cause of absenteeism nationwide.
- ✓ The prevalence of asthma has risen and continues to rise in every region of the country and across all demographic groups, whether measured by age, race or gender.

What are the Health Impacts of Diesel Exhaust?

Diesel exhaust contains fine particulate matter, approximately 1/30 the thickness of a human hair. Particulates can pass through the nose and throat and lodge in the lungs, posing potential health concerns. The particles can irritate the eyes, nose, and throat, and cause coughs, headaches, or nausea. Diesel exhaust has been shown to aggravate asthma, emphysema, bronchitis, or other respiratory diseases. It may also make people with allergies more susceptible to allergens. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has concluded that diesel exhaust contains 40 toxic chemicals, including 15 cancer-causing substances.

Who is at Risk?

Children, the elderly, and people with existing heart or lung disease are most sensitive to the health effects of fine particles found in diesel exhaust. Children are particularly at risk because their lungs are still developing. Children also breathe at a faster rate than healthy adults and are more likely to play actively outdoors.

The Idaho Statewide Asthma Plan

A key goal of the *Idaho Statewide Asthma Plan - 2003* is to improve outdoor environmental factors that contribute to the prevalence of asthma by reducing school bus diesel emissions. For further information, call the Idaho Asthma Prevention and Control Program at 1-800-491-1464 or 208-334-5544.

How You Can Help

By joining Clean Air Zone Idaho, your school has made the first step toward reducing the impacts from diesel idling and emissions. The *Clean Air Zone Idaho* toolkit offers step-by-step assistance and ideas to help your school "get into the zone"!