

Vehicle Idling Policy for the University of Southern Maine

WHEREAS the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has found that exposure to diesel exhaust, even at low levels, is likely to pose a risk of lung cancer, as well as other respiratory risks;

WHEREAS diesel emissions are well documented as an asthma trigger;

WHEREAS air inside university buildings begins as air immediately outside the buildings;

WHEREAS diesel emissions frequently pervade portions of the university campus when vehicles are idling on campus properties;

WHEREAS unnecessary idling contributes to engine wear, fuel waste and unnecessary releases of climate disrupting gases and other air pollutants;

WHEREAS the University of Maine System Board of Trustees Environmental Policy (Section 1002) requires the university to operate all facilities in a manner that encourages environmental responsibility and promotes sustainable development on campus properties and in local communities; and

Work cooperatively with government, industry and other organizations in developing reasonable and cost-effective environmental, health and safety legislation and regulations that protect the human health and the environment.

NOW THEREFORE, University of Southern Maine enacts the following policy relating to the operation of buses, vans, automobiles, delivery, service, construction, and trade vehicles (gas or diesel) on university property or as stated:

Section 1. All buses will warm up their engines, only as necessary for safe operation of the bus, at a location at least 50 feet from a university building doorway or building ventilation air intake. The intent of this section is to discourage unnecessarily long warm-up periods and avoid situations where vehicle exhaust gases move into nearby buildings.

Section 2. Unless ambient air temperature is below 20 degrees Fahrenheit and the wait is expected to be more than two minutes, all buses dropping off passengers must turn off their engines immediately upon arrival at university bus stops and leave engines off until the buses depart. Special events buses that have been waiting to load may operate their engines for no more than ten minutes immediately prior to departure time if provision of air conditioning or heating services is considered reasonable by the bus driver.

Section 3. Other than buses, all private and university vehicles servicing the university, and private vehicles on university property, will turn off their engines when the vehicle is expected to be parked, stopped, or standing for more than one minute. This provision includes university-owned vehicles operated at any location, on or off university property.

Section 4. When engine operation is needed to provide a required service, such as an emergency vehicle, cherry-picker, back hoe, cement truck, lift gate operation, or fuel delivery truck, idling longer than one minute is permitted only if the vehicle is performing such a service or the temperature is below 20 degrees Fahrenheit. Except as noted above in Section 2 and as needed to defrost or clear windows of any vehicles, this policy does not permit engine operation when the primary purpose of such operation is to heat or air condition a vehicle.

Enforcement: The posting of “Idle-Free Campus for Cleaner Air” signs is encouraged in areas where idling vehicles have generated valid complaints about air quality in the past. Abbreviated wording will be incorporated into contracts with University vendors and the full policy will be made available on the University website. Non-compliant University vehicles and their drivers will be handled through normal disciplinary procedures similar to any University policy violation. Other non-compliant vehicles will be subject to receiving informational “tickets” possibly printed in the form of a parking citation.

HISTORY: Submitted by the President's Council on Climate Neutrality, 11/14/08. Updated by the President's Council on Climate Neutrality, 11/13/12. Authorized by President Kalikow 1/31/13.