TRANSPORTATION INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: **ALL DRIVERS**

FROM: MICHAEL HAWKINS, ASSISTANT MANAGER OF TRANSPORTATION OPERATIONS

MICHAEL BURTON, ASSISTANT MANAGER OF TRANSPORTATION MAINTENANCE

RE: REDUCING DIESEL EXHAUST

DATE: APRIL 2, 2003

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School Buses have an excellent safety record and according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the school bus is the safest way to transport students to and from school. However, some recent evidence of adverse environmental and health impacts from diesel exhaust, such as inducing asthma attacks, has raised concerns with the Department of Education (ODE) and with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

The Oregon Department of Education has instructed school districts across the state to develop guidelines for drivers that will help to minimize the impact of emissions from our buses. Please begin immediately to practice the following guidelines.

1. Drivers should turn bus engines off upon reaching their destinations, or whenever idling time exceeds 2-3 minutes. Buses should not be started until ready to depart. Exceptions should include conditions that would compromise passenger safety, such as:
    a. Extreme weather conditions
    b. Idling in traffic

2. After the driver completes the pre-trip inspection, the engine should be turned off until time to depart or the driver should depart immediately. Do not sit with you bus idling to warm it up. Diesel engines do not warm up unless they are at high idle or unless they are under a load. Pre-trip inspection of the buses is to be done without the engine running as much as possible. The only time the engine should be running is during the mandatory brake check. All lights, gauges and alarms will work with the key in the “on” position without starting the engine.

3. Driving slowly onto the lot or onto a school loading zone is sufficient “cool down” time for the engines. Once you pull into your bus stall, buses should run no more than 30 seconds.

Besides polluting the air, an idling bus consumes fuel and adds wear to the engine. According to DEQ, a bus idling for an hour each day during the school year adds the equivalent of 1260 miles of wear on the engine. Operational costs with this idling are estimated at about $250 per year per bus. Reducing idling time is not only a good health environment policy, but it also makes good economic sense.

Attached you will find an article which will provide more information for you in this very important area.