

*South Carolina State Law Section 59-67-190 Idling of School Buses*

On August 14, 2001, in an effort to reduce unnecessary air pollution, the South Carolina Department of Education Office of the General Counsel interpreted the State Law regarding the presence of operators of school buses to mean that the school bus driver assigned to the school bus must be in the immediate vicinity of the bus, such as loading students while using a lift or conducting a pre-trip inspection. The driver cannot walk away from the bus while it is running, as is sometimes done to let the bus warm up. This means that when a bus is running there must be one driver per bus, not one driver cranking and warming multiple buses. The South Carolina Department of Education also established a guideline that buses should not be allowed to warm up longer than ten minutes before the bus route begins. However, during cold weather drivers are allowed to crank the engine a maximum of an additional five minutes before the route begins for the purpose of heating the interior of the bus, and clearing/defrosting the windshield and windows in the driver's area. If heating/defrosting is not necessary, the additional minutes are not allowed. These guidelines are necessary because additional engine warm-up time adds hours of operation to the engine, increasing fuel consumption, cost, and emissions.