



Key Facts About Diesel Pollution

Diesel and Health

- **Diesel pollution makes people sick.** It contains lung irritants, more than 40 “air toxics” including carcinogens and fine particulate matter (PM). Tiny particles in diesel exhaust are inhaled deep in the lungs, where they can trigger asthma and heart attacks.
- **Nationally, diesel PM cuts short the lives of approximately 21,000 people per year** - more premature deaths than caused by homicide or drunk driving.
- **Illinois ranks 6th in the list of states that have the highest numbers of premature deaths from diesel exhaust.**
- **The Chicago Metropolitan Area ranks 3rd in the nationwide list of metropolitan areas with the gravest health impacts from diesel exhaust.**
- **Buses, trucks, construction and industrial equipment, locomotives and marine vessels are sources of diesel pollution.** Since sources are concentrated in urban areas, people who live and work in cities are exposed to higher levels of risk.
- **Diesel soot is a global warming pollutant.** Black carbon from diesel exhaust, pound for pound, is thought to have a warming effect at least 220 times more powerful than carbon dioxide.

Solutions for Illinois

- **Beginning in 2007, federal standards will require new diesel engines to be 90% cleaner than they are today.** But since these new standards only apply to new engines, diesels built to yesterday’s emission standards will be on Illinois’ roads and at Illinois’ job-sites for many years to come. **Unless we act now.**
- **Solutions are available today.** The same fuels and technologies that make 90% PM emission reductions possible from new engines are available for in-use engines as well.
- **We support immediate emissions reductions to the lowest level achievable in school buses, transit buses, and construction equipment used in public projects.** These priority fleets endanger our most sensitive populations: children, seniors, and urban residents. **There is no reason to delay.**
- **The Illinois legislature has shown its support for diesel emission reduction,** passing Public Act 094-0845 in Spring 2006, which aims to eliminate unnecessary idling of diesel vehicles, saving fuel and lives. Many school districts have adopted more strict anti-idling policies to protect children, one of the populations most vulnerable to diesel exposure.

With your help, Illinois can largely eliminate health risks from diesel vehicles by retrofitting emission controls; switching to cleaner fuels; rebuilding or replacing older engines; eliminating unnecessary idling; improving the efficiency of freight and transportation systems; and building institutional support for diesel pollution prevention.



A joint project of the Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago (RHAMC) and Citizen Action/Illinois
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