



<http://www.epa.gov/schoolair/what.html>  
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## Assessing Outdoor Air Near Schools

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### What You Can Do

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Students, parents, educators and school administrators can also play a key role in protecting the quality of air in and around schools.

You can:

- [Reduce engine idling around schools](#)
- [Clean up old school buses](#)
- [Protect indoor air quality at schools](#)
- [Check the Air Quality Index](#)
- [See what your community can do to protect air quality](#)
- [Make simple choices on the road](#)

EPA has a number of programs that are designed to help schools and communities take action to protect children's health in one of the most important places—where children learn.

***Reduce engine idling around schools and clean up old school buses*** – School buses are the safest way for children to get to school. However, pollution from older diesel vehicles has health implications for everyone, especially children. The goals of the [Clean School Bus USA Campaign](#) are to reduce children's exposure to diesel exhaust and the amount of air pollution created by diesel school buses.

For tips on how to reduce engine idling and diesel emissions around schools and in the community, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/whatyoucando.htm>.

School districts interested in upgrading or replacing their older diesel buses may apply for Recovery Act funding. For application information, visit: <http://epa.gov/otaq/eparecovery/>.

***Protect indoor air quality at schools*** – About half of the nation's schools are implementing indoor air quality management programs, most of which are based on EPA's voluntary [Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Program](#), which helps schools identify, resolve and prevent indoor air quality problems using low- and no-cost measures. While indoor air quality monitoring is not part of this initiative, improving and protecting indoor air quality at schools is important to children's health. Indoor levels of air pollutants can be two to five times higher than outdoor levels. Sources of poor indoor air quality in schools range from inadequate ventilation systems to fumes from pesticides and cleaning agents.

For EPA's guidance on preventing and resolving indoor air quality problems in schools, visit <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools>.

EPA has also developed the Healthy School Environments Web Portal—a one stop shop for links to EPA and other programs addressing all environmental health issues in schools, from air pollution and asbestos to chemical management, pesticides and water conservation, including a free software tool

to help school districts assess and manage all of their environmental health and safety risks. Visit: <http://www.epa.gov/schools>.

**Check the Air Quality Index** – Children are one of the sensitive groups at risk for health effects from air pollution, in part because their lungs are still developing. The [Air Quality Index \(AQI\)](#) lets you know when air quality in their area is unhealthy and how you, your family, and your community can protect your health. The AQI uses a color-coded scale and maps to provide daily air quality information. The AQI is available at [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov) and it is reported in many local newspapers and on television and radio stations.

For tips on how you can reduce air pollution in and around your community, visit: [http://www.airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=jump.jump\\_youcando](http://www.airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=jump.jump_youcando).

To teach students about air quality, use EPA's toolkit: [http://www.airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=aqi\\_toolkit.main](http://www.airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=aqi_toolkit.main).

**See what your community can do to protect air quality** – To see what your community is doing or to get involved in your community's air toxics reduction efforts visit:

- [Community Action for a Renewed Environment \(CARE\) grant program](#) – See if your community is participating in EPA's CARE program. CARE is a competitive grant program that offers an innovative way for a community to organize and take action to reduce toxic pollution in its local environment. Through CARE, a community creates a partnership that implements solutions to reduce releases of toxic pollutants and minimize people's exposure to them. To see what projects are going on in your neighborhood, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/care/communitybyregion.htm>.
- [Community-Based Air Toxics Projects](#) – EPA supports air toxics projects in about thirty communities across the nation to help inform and empower citizens to make local decisions concerning the health of their communities.

**Make simple choices on the road** – Doing your part to improve air quality and reduce traffic congestion around schools and in your community is easy. Incorporating even a few of the simple steps offered here can help clean the air and reduce traffic congestion.

For easy tips, visit: [http://www.italladdsup.gov/resources/what\\_can\\_i\\_do.asp](http://www.italladdsup.gov/resources/what_can_i_do.asp).