

## SCHOOL CROSSING GUARDS *Be Seen! Be Safe!*

By: Ellen Burgum, Occupational Safety Officer

You may only see them for a few hours every weekday but they have one of the most important jobs in public service. School crossing guards ensure children safely cross the road at schools or near intersections. School crossing guards must keep a watchful eye on traffic, their own safety, and the safety of the school children they are protecting. Their visibility to vehicular traffic is extremely important as roads become more congested with vehicles hurrying to their destination. It is the responsibility of the employer to provide appropriate training and make the crossing guards aware of their responsibilities.

A school crossing guard may need to create a gap by stopping traffic temporarily. The guard stops traffic with a STOP paddle then verbally directs children to cross the street. A guard is always the first person in the street and the last person out of the street. A school crossing guard should not direct traffic unless specific training has been provided.

School crossing guards should possess the following qualifications:

- Good physical condition, including sight, hearing, and mobility
- Mental alertness
- Neat appearance
- Good character
- Dependability
- Sense of responsibility for safety of students



The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices or MUTCD (2003) contains national standards for the installation and maintenance of traffic control devices. Some MUTCD statements are considered mandatory, while others are recommended practices, permissive practices, or simply statements of support. Part 7 of the MUTCD addresses Traffic Controls for School Areas.



School crossing guards should wear apparel that makes them recognizable to motorists. The MUTCD Part 7 states, “Adult crossing guards shall wear high-visibility retro-reflective safety apparel labeled as American National Standards Institute (ANSI) 107-1999 standard performance for Class 2...”

The following are safety reminders for School Crossing Guards:

- Wear ANSI Class 2 high-visibility retro-reflective safety vests
- Proceed cautiously into the crosswalk as you alert motorists to stop
- Do not assume a vehicle will stop just because you are holding a STOP paddle
- Give vehicles more time to stop during wet and icy conditions
- Watch out for passing or turning vehicles
- Hold your STOP paddle up until you and the children have cleared the crosswalk

## Anti-Idling for School Buses—An Update

Back in 2002, Public Act #02-56 was adopted as a measure to reduce diesel exhaust emissions from school buses. This legislation made it an infraction for any school bus to idle the engine for more than three minutes. The State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CTDEP) was given the authority to enforce and promote this policy. This legislation also empowers any law enforcement officers with the ability to enforce this provision. The CTDEP has anti-idling regulations for all mobile sources (cars, trucks, construction equipment, etc.) which are enforced by the DEP Air Management Field Staff. Since that time, more information has been gathered which further supports the practice of “anti-idling.”



For example, children are more sensitive to air pollution because they breathe 50 percent more air per pound of body weight than adults. Idling vehicles create emissions that contribute toward smog and ground level ozone, and produce carbon dioxide (a greenhouse gas). Diesel exhaust even contains toxic air pollutants, including aldehydes (formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, acrolein), benzene, 1,3-butadiene, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH's). The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that nationally, diesel engines are the third largest source of fine particles, which can cause lung damage and aggravate respiratory conditions including asthma and bronchitis. In a letter in 2005, the Commissioner of the DEP stated, “A recent study conducted by Yale University researchers in conjunction with Environment and Human Health, Inc., clearly shows that idling school buses are a major contributor to the diesel exhaust exposure of children. School bus exhaust

can compromise air quality on and around buses, including nearby sidewalks, school yards, playgrounds, and can even lead to poor air quality inside school buildings.”



Given the current cost of operating vehicles, reducing diesel engine idling also saves money by conserving fuel and reducing wear and tear on engine parts. It was estimated that a diesel engines, idling for more than ten seconds uses diesel fuel at a rate of approximately eight tenths to one gallon per hour.

The CTDEP's Air Management Field Staff work to ensure compliance with Connecticut's idling restriction through monitoring of vehicle behavior and pursuing enforcement when idling violations are observed. Field staff also responded to complaints of idling vehicles when citizens report problems to the DEP's complaint line. Enforcement questions can be directed to the DEP Air Quality Complaint Line at (860) 424-3436, or for questions regarding compliance call Mr. Robert Girard at (860) 424-4152.

Anti-Idling outreach is another service that the CTDEP provides to assist public schools in reducing diesel exhaust emissions. The CTDEP will provide free anti-idling signs upon request to public schools who agree to post the signs.

We would like to thank the CTDEP for their assistance in the writing of this article. If you have any questions regarding the Anti-Idling Efforts in Connecticut, please contact Dr. Ellen Pierce at (860) 424-3027.

## OSHA Issues Final Rule ~ Employer-Paid Personal Protective Equipment

The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has announced a final rule on employer-paid personal protective equipment (PPE). This rule was published in the Federal Register on November 15, 2007. Under the new rule, employers are to pay for the minimum level of PPE required by the standard.

The following is an overview of the changes under the new rule:

- The employer is not required to pay for non-specialty safety-toe protective footwear (including steel-toe shoes or steel-toe boots) and non-specialty prescription safety eyewear, provided that the employer permits such items to be worn off the job-site.
- If Metatarsal guards are required and the employer provides metatarsal guards that attach to shoes they are not required to pay for Integrated Metatarsal guards.
- Logging boots, as required by 29 CFR 1910.226(d)(1)(v), will continue to be exempted from the employer payment rule.
- The employer is not required to pay for ordinary clothing items used solely for protection from weather unless unusually severe weather conditions exist or the employee is working in an artificially controlled hot or cold environment. This includes: winter



coats, jackets, gloves, parkas, rubber boots, hats, raincoats and ordinary sunglasses. Skin creams which offer protection from the weather are also included.



- It remains the employer's responsibility to pay for required PPE and replacement PPE, except when the employee has lost or intentionally damaged the PPE.

For a more complete understanding of the changes you should refer to the final rule which can be found in the Federal Register, number 72:64341-64430.

As of the publication date of this newsletter this change in the PPE standard only applies to private sector employers. It is anticipated that this new rule will be adopted by the State of Connecticut in the near future. All employers should audit their operations on a regular basis to be sure of compliance with all enforcement requirements.



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# Hazard Corner...

## A Crossing Guard Fatality

Crossing guards have a very important job. As our children walk to and from school, it is the crossing guard that makes sure they cross roadway intersection safely. We have to remember that their job is very dangerous and we all have a responsibility to make sure that they also go home safely. CONN-OSHA recently conducted an investigation to determine the cause of a fatality involving a crossing guard and a speeding car.



The crossing guard arrived at his post at approximately twenty minutes before he was to go on duty. He had parked his car off the road near a stop sign and proceeded to cross the street to his post. At the same time, a car heading southbound on the same road was traveling at approximately 100 miles per hour. It ran a stop sign at a four way intersection and

became airborne. As the car landed on the ground, it struck the crossing guard who was transported to the local hospital where he passed away.

Crossing guard safety training and education is very important. These men and women put their lives on the line every time they enter a roadway crossing zone. Crossing guards should be provided training on the safety of vehicular traffic, the proper personal protective equipment such as high visibility safety vests and also with safety tools such as hand paddles. It's also important that the employer provide training on the proper use of the equipment that is provided.



## CONN-OSHA ~ Training Update...

**Breakfast Roundtable** This discussion group meets the third Tuesday every month from 8:15 am to 9:45 am. Pre-registration is required. To be placed on the e-mail distribution list, contact John Able at, [able.john@dol.gov](mailto:able.john@dol.gov)

**Hazard Communication September 9** Employees will be better able to take steps to protect themselves when they know what the hazards of chemicals are and how to avoid exposure. This session will help attendees develop an effective Hazard Communication Program.

**Construction Site Safety September 11** This session will discuss the four major hazards of the construction industry: Fall Protection, Scaffolding and Ladders, Electrical Hazards, and Trench Safety. **This class will be held from 8:30 to 11:30.**

**OSHA Recordkeeping September 12** This session will help you fill out the OSHA Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses (Form 300) accurately and correctly. **This class will be held from 9:00-12:00 noon.**

**Safe Driving October 22** Work-related vehicle crashes are the leading cause of occupational fatalities according to the U.S. Dept. of Labor. This session will describe safe driving and accident prevention skills. Your awareness of the need for and the benefits of safe driving will be greatly improved.

Classes are free and held at 200 Folly Brook Boulevard, Wethersfield, CT in Conference Room A/B from 10 am - 12 noon, unless otherwise noted in the class description. To register, contact John Able at [able.john@dol.gov](mailto:able.john@dol.gov).

**Pre-registration is required.** For more training information, visit [www.ctdol.state.ct.us/osha/osha.htm](http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/osha/osha.htm)

### Fatality & Casualty Reporting

**State & Town:** CONN-OSHA (860) 263-6946 (local) or 1-866-241-4060 (toll-free)  
**Private Employers:** Report to Federal OSHA at 1-800-321-OSHA(6742)