

Truck and Bus Regulation¹ Low-Use Vehicle Exemption

Last Updated October 21, 2014



On December 12, 2008, the California Air Resources Board (ARB/Board) approved the Truck and Bus regulation to significantly reduce particulate matter, or PM, and oxides of nitrogen emissions from existing diesel vehicles operating in California. This summary describes the exemption for low-use vehicles and has been updated to describe amendments that were approved by the Air Resources Board on April 25, 2014. This information does not apply to school buses.

What is the low-use vehicle exemption?

Vehicle owners to identify which vehicles will meet the annual mileage limits and will be exempt from PM filter or engine-upgrade requirements in any calendar year.

What qualifies for the low-use vehicle exemption?

A low-use vehicle is one that operates less than 1,000 miles per calendar year within California's borders. Until January 1, 2020, low-use vehicles also include vehicles that travel less than 5,000 total miles per calendar year. Engine or PTO hours are no longer used to determine low-use.

How do I take advantage of the low-use vehicle exemption?

Each January you can designate which trucks will use the low-use exemption for the year. You must report vehicle information and odometer readings by January 31 of the compliance year or within 30 days of purchasing a vehicle. You must also report end of year odometer readings and when the vehicle is sold to demonstrate the vehicle met the mileage limits. You must also keep records of odometer readings, vehicle purchases, and sales.

I travel in and out of California, how can I qualify for the low-use exemption?

If you travel less than 1000 miles per year in California, you will need to report odometer readings like other fleets; however, you will also need to track and report the total miles traveled outside of California. The miles traveled outside California are subtracted from the total miles operated when determining compliance. Fleet owners must keep documentation of the miles travelled inside and outside California, like International Registration Plan records, fuel tax records, or other documentation. The owner must provide records to the Air Resources Board (ARB) upon request.

How do miles traveled for emergency use count when using the low-use extension?

The mileage accrued in support of an emergency event does not count towards the usage limits of the low-use exemption. Emergency events include wild fires, floods, and other natural disasters where the vehicle was dispatched by a local, state, or federal agency. Emergency use includes miles travelled to and from an emergency event, and delivery of services or supplies in connection with the emergency event. The vehicle owner must report the miles the vehicle was used to support emergency events for any vehicle that exceed the annual limits.

Can I claim the low-use exemption if my odometer is not functioning?

No, you cannot claim a mileage base extension without a properly functioning odometer. If the odometer does not operate, you must use a hub-odometer that has a unique serial number, and has a lock-out feature that permanently prevents tampering. The serial number must be reported if a hub-odometer is used.

¹ The regulation does not apply to state and local government vehicles, solid waste collection trucks, drayage trucks that transport marine cargo, and public transit buses because they are already subject to other regulations.

What happens if I go over the usage limits for a vehicle using the low-use exemption?

If a vehicle is expected to exceed the mileage limit of the low-use vehicle exemption, the owner must bring the vehicle into compliance before exceeding the usage limits and must report what actions were taken to remain in compliance within 30 days of the change.

Can I use the low-use exemption to reduce my fleet size and qualify for the small fleet option?

No, the low-use exemption does not change the fleet size when determining whether you qualify for the small fleet option. For example, if you own four vehicles with a GVWR greater than 14,000 lbs you cannot claim the small fleet extension even if two trucks use the low-use exemption.

How do I determine compliance for my fleet if I am using the low-use exemption.

Vehicles covered under the low-use exemption are relieved from the clean-up requirements regardless of compliance option used. Owners that use the phase-in option can exclude low-use vehicles when determining how many PM filters are required each year to bring the fleet into compliance. Vehicles that use the low-use exemption must also be counted in the existing fleet when calculating the downsizing credits, except if the vehicle has been reported as not being operated in the compliance year.

Can I use the low-use exemption for a two-engine street sweeper?

Yes. A street sweeper with two engines may use the low-use exemption like other trucks if it meets the low-use mileage limit for the drive engine, with one exception. Tier 0 auxiliary engines cannot be operated more than 100 hours per year starting January 1, 2014, and their usage must be reported. Otherwise, the reporting and record-keeping requirements are similar as for other vehicles.

How do I determine compliance if I have several vehicles that use extensions?

The [Truck and Bus Fleet Calculator](#) is an Excel spreadsheet that you can use on your own computer to help you evaluate various compliance strategies from now until 2023. The calculator allows you to determine compliance with one or more options in the regulation, including credits, extensions, and special provisions.

Where can I get more information?

Fact sheets, compliance tools and regulatory documents about the Truck and Bus Regulation are available at www.arb.ca.gov/dieseltruck. If you have questions or wish to obtain this document in an alternative format or language, please call ARB's diesel hotline at (866) 6DIESEL (634-3735). TTY/TDD/ Speech to Speech users may dial 711 for the California Relay Service.