

Deputy Minister's Bulletin

Ministry *of* Education



Q&A – FUEL AND TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS – IMPACT TO K-12 SECTOR

November 21, 2021

General

Q: Should schools be cancelling face to face meetings that require staff travel?

- School districts and independent schools should consider deferring all non-essential travel at this time.
- This may mean postponing some events until the fuel supply challenges have been resolved.
- If a face-to-face meeting is essential, school districts and independent schools should look for ways to have participants reduce fuel usage (e.g., carpooling, public transportation). If the meeting is not essential it should be held remotely or deferred to a later date.

Q: Should school districts and independent school authorities encourage Board Office/Administrative/Facilities staff to work remotely to avoid travel?

- Yes. Minimizing fuel usage is one of the key priorities at this time.
- Those staff who can work remotely should be encouraged to do so in order to help maintain needed fuel supply for essential workers.

Q: What about routine maintenance and facilities projects – should they be deferred until Dec. 1st?

- Yes. Where possible, school districts and independent schools should defer any work that is not essential and requires additional use of fuel.

Q: What about extracurricular activities, field trips and sporting events? Can they continue?

- School districts and independent schools should consider deferring all non-essential travel at this time.
- This includes field trips, sporting activities and any event that requires travel both within and outside the district.
- All non-essential trips should be deferred to a later date.

Q: Is the Ministry considering providing direction to shift schools in the impacted areas to remote learning to conserve fuel?

- Maintaining the continuity of in-person learning is a key priority at this time as we have learned through the pandemic how important it is to keep schools open and accessible for students.
- There are no plans to direct a shift to remote learning provincially or regionally. Some school districts and independent schools may make operational decisions to provide online learning to students in schools that are in areas severely affected by the floods and mudslides.
- School districts and independent schools should be considering all available methods to reduce fuel usage while ensuring that schools remain open and accessible.

Travel Restrictions

Q: Will K-12 staff need special identification to travel in restricted areas/corridors (e.g., Hope/Agassiz)?

- The Ministry of Education is in communication with the Ministry of Transportation on a regular basis to discuss the implications of the current highway closures and travel restrictions.
- Where highways are restricted the Ministry will work with impacted school districts and independent schools to look at alternate ways to get K-12 staff through (e.g., carpooling, school buses, rented coach buses).
- At this time, it is not expected that anyone travelling in the impacted areas will require identification or proof of reason for travel.

Fuel Restrictions

Q: Are K-12 staff exempt from the fuel restrictions if they require more than 30L of gas for commuting?

- The current fuel exemptions are limited to essential vehicles (including school buses and school district vehicles).
- K-12 staff are not exempt from the fuel restrictions – however, each driver can purchase up to 30 litres of gasoline per visit to a retail gas station.
- All staff should be encouraged to carpool, use public transit, or alternate means of transportation where possible.

Q: Are maintenance vehicles exempt from the fuel restrictions?

- School district and independent school maintenance vehicles meet the definition of essential vehicles under the [Fuel Prioritization Order](#) and are exempt from the restrictions.
- Where possible maintenance vehicles should fill up at a commercial cardlock station. If that is not possible, they can use a retail outlet.
- If using a retail outlet, the vehicle must either be clearly marked as a school district vehicle or be equipped with a Letter of Certification.
- Superintendents or heads of a school authority can issue Letters of Certification for any school district or school vehicle deemed essential that requires access to a retail gas station and is not easily identifiable.
- A copy of the letter must also be sent to the Ministry by email at EDUC.Partner.Relations@gov.bc.ca.

Q: Will the fuel restrictions impact heating fuel supply and the ability to keep schools heated?

- No. Only transportation fuel is impacted by the Order, and there should be no issues with continuing to access heating fuel.

Q: Will TransLink increase services in the Lower Mainland to support minimized car usage?

- At this point, there has not been a specific increase in services but conversations with the Ministry of Transportation on this issue are on-going.