

## Diesel Exhaust Regulations Drive Up City's Costs

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**Diesel exhaust regulations drive up city's costs**  
 By JENN KLEIN - Staff Writer  
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CHICO -- Regulations intended to clean up diesel exhaust will hit on the city but should result in cleaner air, city officials said.

Four regulations passed by the state Air Resources Board will every piece of diesel equipment the city owns, from vehicles to construction equipment, said Erik Gustafson, the city's fleet manager.

"It's a big economic burden, but we also realize that protecting harmful potential is the utmost importance," Gustafson said. "It cost, in my mind. We need to make sure we're contributing to protecting the citizens."

Gustafson said the most immediate cost comes from a regulation of the city's diesel vehicles be 2007 models or newer, or be ret Those filters, which trap up to 85 percent of diesel particulate n with installation.

The fleet manager said the city owns 34 vehicles — including c sweepers and trucks used to trim trees — that would need to b regulation by 2011 — a total cost of more than \$400,000.

CHICO -- Regulations intended to clean up diesel exhaust will have a big financial hit on the city but should result in cleaner air, city officials said.

Four regulations passed by the state Air Resources Board will eventually affect every piece of diesel equipment the city owns, from vehicles to generators and construction equipment, said Erik Gustafson, the city's fleet manager.

"It's a big economic burden, but we also realize that protecting our citizens from the harmful potential is the utmost importance," Gustafson said. "That comes at no cost, in my mind. We need to make sure we're contributing to clean air and protecting the citizens."

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Gustafson said the most immediate cost comes from a regulation requiring that all of the city's diesel vehicles be 2007 models or newer, or be retrofitted with a filter. Those filters, which trap up to 85 percent of diesel particulate matter, cost \$12,000 with installation.

The fleet manager said the city owns 34 vehicles — including dump trucks, street sweepers and trucks used to trim trees — that would need to be compliant with this regulation by 2011 — a total cost of more than \$400,000.

To meet timelines, the city retrofitted five diesel vehicles with filters last December, and needs to install another 14 filters by December 2009 — a \$168,000 cost.

But Gustafson is hoping the final cost won't be so high. The city's ongoing fleet optimization has already identified about 30 vehicles the city won't replace. Some of the 34 diesel vehicles might be found to be unneeded.

"Hopefully the burden won't be as bad," Gustafson said.

Other regulations will require the city to replace or retrofit other equipment, such as 23 pieces of construction equipment.

A fourth regulation will include all of the city's generators. Gustafson said this

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regulation won't have much of an impact now, but in the future, generators — which are at every fire station, police station, police dispatch, the fire training center and city hall — will need to be replaced.

The regulations are intended to cut back on the sooty material known as particulate matter emitted by diesel engines. The Air Resources Board has identified particulate matter as a “toxic air contaminant” with the potential to cause cancer, premature death and other health problems, according to its Web site.

The board found diesel particulate matter exposure responsible for 2,000 premature deaths a year, 250 cases of lung cancer, and health problems such as chronic bronchitis and aggravated asthma.

Interim Assistant City Manager Dennis Beardsley said the city is in agreement with the need to have the regulations and is seeking to follow them as economically as it can. He said as with most new regulations, it results in an upfront cost and a better end result.

Gustafson said following the regulations has become a balancing act where each diesel vehicle has to be carefully looked at to determine what's more cost-effective — retrofitting the vehicle, retiring or replacing it. He said if a diesel vehicle is an older, worn-down model already incurring maintenance costs, it's obviously not worth investing more in.

“It's going to be a huge undertaking financially, but the result will be very positive environmentally, and reduce emissions in the atmosphere,” he said. ###



A \$12,000 filter installed on the city's diesel vehicles is expected to lead to cleaner air.