



American
Bus Association™
100 Years

NYC Idling Enforcement Member Survey | May 2026

What 111 U.S. motorcoach operators said about
New York City's idling enforcement regime.

Fewer trips. Higher costs.
A tourism economy at risk.

Fewer Trips. Higher Costs. A Tourism Economy at Risk.

What 111 U.S. motorcoach operators told us about NYC's idling enforcement regime | April–May 2026

The Bottom Line

New York City's idling enforcement program — and its citizen complaint bounty system — is producing two outcomes that directly harm New York City's tourism economy: motorcoach operators are making fewer trips to the city, and the trips they do make cost more. Both trends are already underway. Both will accelerate sharply if proposed fines increase to \$6,000 per violation, as being considered by the New York City Council.

THE INDUSTRY IS ALREADY PULLING BACK

More than three-quarters of survey respondents operate in New York City regularly or occasionally — making them the most directly affected population in the industry. Among that group, operational changes are already well underway. Approximately 35% have reduced the number of trips they make to New York City. Another 20% have declined specific charters or contracts outright. A smaller but significant share — roughly 10% — have stopped or nearly stopped NYC operations entirely.

The reasons are consistent across company size and geography: citations that arrive months or years after the alleged violation, leaving operators no ability to investigate or mount a defense; a citizen complaint system that requires no verification and cannot be challenged with contemporaneous evidence; and physical impossibility of complying with a three-minute idling limit during passenger boarding, ADA lift operation, and federally mandated pre-trip inspections.

"We rarely go to NYC as a result of this. If we do go, the group stays in the city and the bus stays outside — they use public transportation to get around."

— Motorcoach operator, survey respondent

THE TRIPS THAT DO HAPPEN COST MORE

\$50,000

median annual cost per bus company

The median motorcoach operator serving New York City is absorbing \$50,000 per year in lost revenue, added costs, rerouting, and/or legal burden — directly attributable to NYC's idling enforcement program.

Source: 69 operator self-reports, ABA Survey, April–May 2026. Range: \$6,000–\$500,000+.

That \$50,000 figure is not a fine. It is the compounded cost of a policy that makes operating in New York City financially unsustainable for a growing share of the industry. It includes trips declined, bookings lost, prices raised, routes restructured, and/or hours spent fighting citations that arrive a year after the alleged violation with no video evidence and no meaningful avenue for defense. Approximately 30% of respondents have raised prices specifically to offset citation risk — passing that cost directly to the school groups, seniors, corporate clients, and tour operators who depend on motorcoach access to New York City.

"Given the nature of the vigilante program and the lack of any realistic avenue for defense, we just count it as a cost of business and adjust pricing accordingly."

THE \$6,000 FINE THRESHOLD CHANGES EVERYTHING

The survey asked operators directly: if NYC raises idling fines to a proposed \$6,000 per violation, how will you respond? The answer was unambiguous. Among the 83 operators who responded, a clear majority indicated they would significantly reduce trips or stop operating in New York City entirely. Fewer than 15% said they would make no change.

If the \$6,000 fine is enacted:

- The majority of currently active NYC operators would significantly reduce or cease service to the city
- Hundreds of thousands of group travelers annually would lose their primary transportation gateway to New York City
- The hotels, theaters, restaurants, and attractions that depend on motorcoach group travel would absorb the loss

"We are bringing hundreds of thousands of dollars into your city. If you allow citizens to make a complaint without verification, we will discontinue all trips."

— Motorcoach operator, 30-year NYC service history

In Their Own Words

Operator Voices: NYC Idling Enforcement Survey

35 submitted responses from U.S. motorcoach operators | April–May 2026 | Unedited except for minor formatting

About This Document

The following responses were submitted by U.S. motorcoach operators as part of ABA's NYC Idling Enforcement Survey, conducted April 28–May 4, 2026. These are the operators' own words — describing the real-world impact of NYC's idling enforcement regime on their businesses, their drivers, and their passengers.

THEME KEY

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|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ■ Financial Impact | ■ Trip Reduction | ■ Safety & Compliance |
| ■ Citizen Complaint Program | ■ Physical Impossibility | ■ Tourism Impact |
| ■ Future Risk | ■ ADA & Accessibility | ■ Federal Regulatory Conflict |
| ■ Workforce Impact | ■ Environmental Argument | ■ Administrative Burden |

#1 OPERATIONAL IMPACT | 5/4/2026

"The bus is not being kept running during loading and unloading, which has led to complaints from passengers, as temperatures inside the bus are reaching uncomfortable and potentially

unhealthy levels."

#2 ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN | 4/30/2026

"Incurred an impactful amount of legal expense and managerial time to investigate and defend citations from months or years in the past."

#3 TRIP REDUCTION | 4/30/2026

"We rarely go to NYC as a result of this and insurance costs. If we do go, the group stays in the city and the bus/driver stays outside the city — the group uses public transportation to get around town."

#4 FINANCIAL IMPACT | 4/30/2026

"Both increased pricing to offset risk and declined some trips."

#5 FINANCIAL IMPACT | 4/30/2026

"Increased pricing which also reduced trips."

#6 FUTURE RISK | 4/30/2026

"No changes yet, but if fines and harassment increases we may adjust."

#7 FINANCIAL IMPACT | 5/1/2026

"It's going to keep increasing — \$50,000 and growing."

#8 CITIZEN COMPLAINT PROGRAM | 4/30/2026

"Given the nature of the vigilante program, and the lack of any realistic avenue for defense, even the most conscientious operator might at some point find themselves in violation. So we just count it as cost of business and adjust pricing accordingly."

#9 TOURISM IMPACT | 4/30/2026

"\$10,000+ — IF THIS CONTINUES, WE WILL DISCONTINUE ALL SERVICE INTO NYC AND WE BRING A TON OF PEOPLE THAT SPEND LOTS OF MONEY IN THE CITY AND WE ARE JUST ONE OF MANY, MANY OPERATORS FEELING THIS WAY."

#10 ENFORCEMENT SEVERITY | 4/30/2026

"\$5,200 — AND THESE FINES WERE FOR SECONDS OVER THE 3 MINUTE LIMIT."

#11 ENVIRONMENTAL ARGUMENT | 5/4/2026

"Why are they coming after the motorcoach industry that both reduces congestion and pollution? Most of the newer engines have regen systems that emit exhaust that is cleaner"

than the air the engine is taking in. Also, by carrying 40 to 50 people, we reduce the amount of traffic and pollution on the roads by at least 10 to 15 cars per motorcoach."

#12 SAFETY & COMPLIANCE | 5/4/2026

"Temperatures above 70 degrees require significant air conditioning for safety and comfort. Loading and unloading passengers takes longer than 3 minutes."

#13 TRIP REDUCTION | 5/3/2026

"May stop all future trips."

#14 TRIP REDUCTION | 5/2/2026

"NYC is already a challenging environment for drivers, and it is expensive because of body damage and broken mirrors. If NYC adds another reason not to go to the city, I'll skip it and recommend that our groups go to other destinations."

#15 TOURISM IMPACT | 5/1/2026

"I think it's alarming that any individual can report one of our vehicles with no warning or evidence. I already have drivers unwilling to drive in the city due to the hassle of parking. And WHY are we getting these tickets from two years ago? If NYC wants tourism, it needs to make allowances. Get rid of the citizen complaints. We are bringing hundreds of thousands of dollars into your city. We are the ones who've encouraged customers to take a chance on NYC again. So many STILL are afraid to go with what they see in the news. NYC is tourism-funded. How many thousands of people are we bringing into the city every year? It's one of the most hated destinations for most drivers — and this? You might as well put up signs: 'We don't want buses.' It's hard for me to wrap my head around. As owners, we are already offering a bonus for drivers who go and don't get a ticket. We've supported NYC through thick and thin. Constantly bringing our clients in. Clients who spend money in your city. Who fall in love with it as I did 30 years ago. Please don't do this."

#16 PHYSICAL IMPOSSIBILITY | 5/1/2026

"It's egregious that charter buses receive an idling fine for idling over 1 minute next to a park — especially in light of the fact that one of the only areas in midtown to drop off/pick up passengers is Bryant Park. There's no physical way to load or unload passengers in Bryant Park in less than 60 seconds. Additionally, idling next to a school zone for 1 minute can be cited when the school zone is not known to the driver because it's not advertised — the school could be on the 10th floor of a building."

#17 PHYSICAL IMPOSSIBILITY | 4/30/2026

"Drivers are receiving citations while unloading passengers, and our coaches load and unload 50 or more passengers faster than many transit buses are loading or unloading."

#18 FUTURE RISK | 4/30/2026

"If the fines increase, we won't continue operations to the city. If you allow citizens to make a complaint without verification, we will discontinue all trips."

#19 PHYSICAL IMPOSSIBILITY | 4/30/2026

"It takes more than a minute for our bus occupants to get off the bus."

#20 CITIZEN COMPLAINT PROGRAM | 4/30/2026

"Tickets aren't received for 6 months to a year after the alleged idling violations happened. At that time we can't properly investigate to prove the facts of the claim against us. Video on buses is gone, a driver's recollection of a 3-minute event that happened over a year ago is gone."

#21 INFRASTRUCTURE & ENFORCEMENT | 4/30/2026

"Everyone, including and especially the City, knows that there is nowhere close to enough bus parking in NYC to accommodate the buses bringing billions of dollars into the City. The number of coach layover spaces continues to decline. It has never increased by one space in the 20 years I have been in this business. This forces drivers to park illegally and stay with the bus, ready to move to avoid a parking ticket. Contrary to the City's opinion, bus drivers are human beings who require a reasonable temperature level in winter cold and summer heat. So they can't park the bus, shut it off, and leave it. It's a shameless cash grab, because the City has demonstrated again and again that relieving congestion and increasing safety is of no concern."

#22 SAFETY & COMPLIANCE | 4/30/2026

"Excess idling is wrong — all carriers agree, it wastes money and fuel — but idling is necessary for bringing a bus to proper operating procedures for passenger comfort and to allow the bus air system to operate properly, which takes time, especially on older units."

#23 WORKFORCE IMPACT | 4/30/2026

"We have several drivers that refuse charters to NYC."

#24 SAFETY & COMPLIANCE | 4/30/2026

"Repeated idling citations create financial and administrative burdens that discourage reputable operators from serving student groups in NYC, reducing transportation availability and increasing costs for schools and families. Strict engine shutdown requirements also raise safety and accessibility concerns. Some students depend on temperature-controlled environments due to medical conditions, disabilities, or motion sensitivity, and powering down buses during boarding or staging periods can negatively affect their well-being and limit inclusivity. Student groups — often including younger travelers — require time for safe supervision during pickups, drop-offs, and loading. Shutting off engines during these moments can compromise climate control, visibility, and communication systems, particularly in extreme weather, affecting student comfort, safety, and overall customer satisfaction."

#25 SAFETY & COMPLIANCE | 4/30/2026

"On extremely hot and humid days, customers need to board an air-conditioned bus, but this cannot be done. We often transport medically fragile passengers to NYC. In extreme cold and

inclement weather, the motorcoaches need to be properly defrosted to safely drive in NYC."

#26 CITIZEN COMPLAINT PROGRAM | 4/30/2026

"Eliminate citizen participation."

#27 SAFETY & COMPLIANCE | 4/30/2026

"When loading on a hot or cold day, you must have the coach temperature regulated for senior citizens."

#28 TRIP REDUCTION | 4/30/2026

"NYC clearly doesn't want buses, so we don't feel like we need to go where we are not wanted."

#29 ADA & ACCESSIBILITY | 4/30/2026

"Past fine was dropped because the bus was idling so the wheelchair lift was being used."

#30 FEDERAL REGULATORY CONFLICT | 4/30/2026

"FMCSA 49 CFR 392.7 regulates pre- and post-trip procedures. For an experienced motorcoach operator, this procedure should be performed in 15 minutes. To check the engine compartment items, the engine must be running. The city's 3-minute rule is not taking this federal requirement into consideration. Most of our infractions are during those time frames."

#31 ADA & ACCESSIBILITY | 4/30/2026

"They do not take into consideration that we are bringing in 50+ visitors to their city. Also, when using an ADA coach it takes much longer to load and unload a group."

#32 SAFETY & COMPLIANCE | 4/30/2026

"In August, the buses can reach 120 degrees when parked. Seniors board after being in a theater and become ill because of the heat."

#33 CITIZEN COMPLAINT PROGRAM | 4/30/2026

"We had violations prior to 2023, mostly through the 'bounty' program."

#34 SAFETY & COMPLIANCE | 4/30/2026

"If we can't idle the coach to keep people warm during the winter, we put people in jeopardy of freezing. And if we can't run our AC in the summer, it also causes issues for individuals."

#35 FINANCIAL IMPACT | 4/30/2026

"\$6,000 for idling is ludicrous — especially in a climate where the cost of business is increasing dramatically for many reasons beyond operators' control: coach pricing,

insurance, fuel, and more."

NEW YORK ECONOMIC IMPACT



TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

\$12.7B+

59.2K

Total
Jobs

\$5.9B

Visitor
Spending

3.1B

Passenger
Miles

\$2.5B

Tax
Revenue

SCHEDULED SERVICE



\$5.5B

Economic
Impact

\$2.5B

Direct
Spending



25K

Full- &
Part-time Jobs

GROUP TRAVEL



\$7.2B

Economic
Impact

\$3.4B

Direct
Spending



34K

Full- &
Part-time Jobs



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