



# OC Commuter

News for a better commute from the OC Rideshare Office



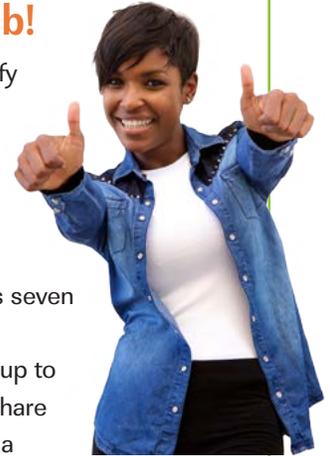
## Join the Club!

You might qualify to receive special incentives through the County of Orange if you telework and/or rideshare as few as seven times a month.

When you sign up to join the Club Rideshare program, you'll get a \$40 bonus added to your paycheck (plus annual \$15 renewal bonuses). You'll also automatically be entered into monthly, \$25 gift card drawings.

To qualify, you just need to have commuted by carpool, vanpool, bus, rail, bike or walk, or have teleworked 20 or more times over the past 90 days.

It's easy to [sign up](#). Plus learn about other perks for commuters (like a \$100 bonus if you lease or buy an electric vehicle).



## Answers to Your Most-Often Asked Questions about Carpool Lanes

Orange County boasts 235 miles of carpool lanes on portions of nearly every major freeway, plus another 41 miles of express toll lanes on the 91 Freeway.

By riding in a carpool lane, you'll typically get where you're going faster. Carpools also help reduce carbon emissions by moving more people in fewer vehicles.

Here, we answer your most-often asked questions about Orange County's carpool lanes and express toll lanes.

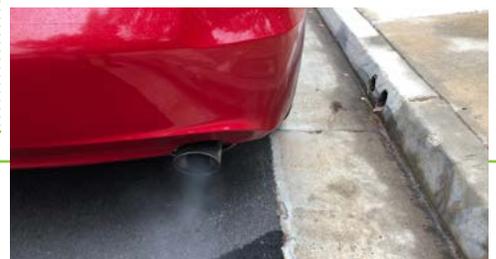
### "Where are carpool lanes available?"

You can find carpool lanes on portions of the 5, 22, 55, 57, 91, 405 and 605 freeways. Stretches of these lanes are designated by posted signage identifying them as High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes—but most people still call them carpool lanes.

[\(More on page 2\)](#)

## Did You Know...?

Emissions from cars and trucks account for nearly one third of the nation's total greenhouse gas emissions, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Transportation is the largest contributor of these emissions.



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## Answers to Your Most-Often Asked Questions about Carpool Lanes *(Continued from page 1)*

### “How many people need to be in the car to ride in the carpool lane?”

In Orange County, all carpool lanes require at least two people be in the car (and, yes, kids count as passengers).

The exceptions: Motorcyclists can ride solo, as can electric vehicles, provided they display a **valid decal**.

### “How do I show there are enough people in my car?”

Unlike toll lanes and the 91 Express Lanes, carpool lanes do not require an account or special transponder. California Highway Patrol is responsible for enforcement of the lanes to make sure drivers aren't violating the rules.

If you don't meet carpool requirements but think you might take your chances and hop in the carpool lane anyway, be warned: The minimum violation fine is \$490.

### “Can I enter and exit carpool lanes any time I want?”

Orange County features the most miles of what are referred to as “continuous access” carpool lanes in Southern California. These lanes allow drivers to enter or exit freely throughout most of the carpool lane (but not entirely).

It used to be that carpool lanes were primarily marked by solid double yellow or white lines, and drivers are not allowed to cross over those lines. They can only enter and exit during the brief breaks marked by white dashes (similar to general purpose lanes).

In a continuous-access carpool lane, most of the carpool lane is striped with white dashes that allow drivers to go in or out. The lanes are based on research that this approach can reduce accidents by cutting down on sudden accelerations and quick lane changes.

### “Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, is it safe to ride in a car with someone else?”

Carpooling has many advantages over driving alone. You may be able to save time in the carpool lane. You'll save money on gas and *(More on page 3)*

## Enjoy Orange County—Virtual and In-Person Hikes

Throughout the year, OCTA offers free virtual tours, in-person hikes and equestrian rides to allow people to experience the wildlife preserves it protects.

The next hikes scheduled are April 2, 9-10 a.m. at Trabuco Rose and May 21, 9-10 a.m. at Wren's View Preserve.

Look for the full 2022 event calendar and register to participate at [preservingourlegacy.org](http://preservingourlegacy.org).



## Have a Commute Question? Dial 511

511 is the nation's official transportation help number—and in Southern California, you can call it to get fast, free information on freeways, transit, Park & Rides and more.

The automated system will connect you with the help you need (including a live representative during certain hours).

The 511 phone service is in partnership with the online transportation resource [go511.com](http://go511.com) (Los Angeles/Orange/Ventura) and [IE511.org](http://IE511.org) (Riverside/San Bernardino).





## 52 Ways to Help Save the Planet

Earth Day is April 22, and it's a day to make a commitment to doing what you can to reduce pollution.

Not sure what that is? Earth Day organizers offer a handy guide of **52 things you can do to make a difference**—from driving less, to driving clean-fuel vehicles, to reducing plastic waste and more.

Already trying to make positive changes? Use the **Carbon Footprint Calculator** to see how those little changes can really add up—plus identify areas where you can improve.

If you rideshare or telework—even if only on some days—you can track how many pollutants you're saving over driving alone by logging your trips at [ridematch.info](http://ridematch.info).

Find out about virtual and in-person Earth Day events at [earthday.org](http://earthday.org).

## Construction Updates if You Drive the I-405



OCTA, in cooperation with Caltrans, is widening a 16-mile stretch of the I-405 Freeway—between SR-73 in Costa Mesa and I-605 (near the L.A. County line).

The project will add the 405 Express Lanes, using the existing carpool lanes and adding a new lane in each direction, as well as a new bike lane.

For construction updates, follow the I-405 Improvement Project on [Twitter](https://twitter.com) and [Facebook](https://facebook.com), or sign up for updates at [octa.net/405improvement](http://octa.net/405improvement).



## Answers to Your Most-Often Asked Questions about Carpool Lanes *(Continued from page 2)*

wear and tear on your vehicle. Plus, if you trade off driving duties, you aren't stuck behind the wheel so often.

That said, always use your best judgment when deciding if carpooling sounds like the right option for you. For better health and safety, consider carpooling only with friends, family or coworkers already "in your bubble," wear masks (which are not mandated in carpools as they are on transit), have the passenger sit in the back seat diagonal to the driver, and/or be sure to drive with the vent set to open to better circulate the air.

For guidelines on COVID safety, visit the CDC at [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov).



### "Do carpools ride free on the 91 Express Lanes?"

Account holders with three or more people in their vehicle travel toll-free except eastbound, Monday through Friday, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. (during which they get 50% off the posted toll).

All vehicles must drive under the designated 3+ carpool lane with a transponder set to "3+" to receive the discount.

Please note, however, that there are portions of the 91 Freeway that are not part of the express lanes but standard carpool lanes where the "2+" minimum applies. These sections are free to use without a transponder. Always look for posted signage.

### "Do carpools ride free on The Toll Lanes in Orange County?"

No, **tolls on the 73, 133, 241 and 261** apply to all vehicles, regardless of the number of passengers.

### "Sometimes carpool lanes aren't very busy—wouldn't traffic move faster if people could use any lane they want, regardless of the number of riders?"

While traffic flow in carpool lanes can vary, overall, they are effective as an incentive to take cars off the road. That helps traffic move faster in *all* lanes.



# Get Ready for Bike Month

## 8 Resources for a Better Biking Experience

May is Bike Month, and Orange County will have plenty in store to celebrate all month long. Here, we offer some resources to help you gear up for the big event...

**1. Bike Safety Guidelines.** If it's been a while since you've dusted off your bike and took to the road, be sure to brush up on safety rules. OCTA offers an [online guide](#) with tips for bike maintenance, how to ride alongside auto traffic, and more.



**2. Orange County Bikeways Map.** Orange County is criss-crossed by about 1,000 miles of bikeways that can take you from Santa Ana to San Juan Capistrano, from Brea to the beach. OCTA offers an [online map](#) so you can plan your route.

**3. Bring Your Bike on Board.** All OCTA buses are equipped with bike racks, located at the front of the bus, which hold two bikes. [Click here](#) for a how-to guide for safely stowing your bike.



Bikes are also allowed on all Metrolink trains (with special train cars designed to hold up to 18 bikes).

Get the rules for riding at [metrolinktrains.com](#).

**4. Biking Apps.** Free apps such as [MapMyRide](#) and [Strava](#) help you find a bike-friendly route, highlighting routes with wider streets and bike lanes where available.

**5. The OC Loop.** [The OC Loop](#) provides off-street trails that connect to some of Orange County's most popular destinations, including transit hubs. So far, 54 miles of the loop are open (there will be 66 miles when the project is complete).

**6. A Ride Home in Case of Emergency.** Need to get home in case of illness or emergency on a day you rode your bike to work? With the [Guaranteed Ride Home](#) program, you can be reimbursed for the cost of a ride home by rental car, taxi, transit, Uber/Lyft or car share.

**7. Thinking About Trying an e-Bike?** An e-bike is an electric bicycle equipped with fully operable pedals and an electric motor of less than 750 watts. Before you hop on an e-bike, [watch this video to learn basic e-bike safety rules](#).

**8. OCTA Special Bike Month Promotions.** OCTA will be kicking off Bike Month in April and will be celebrating cycling throughout May. Join them on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or check back at [octa.net/bike](#) for updates.



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## Take the Train & Save

If you're ready to get back on the train, but not every day, Metrolink's new **5-Day Flex Pass** might be for you.

With Flex Pass, you'll save 10% off the regular round-trip price. It includes five 1-Day passes, valid for travel within 30 days.

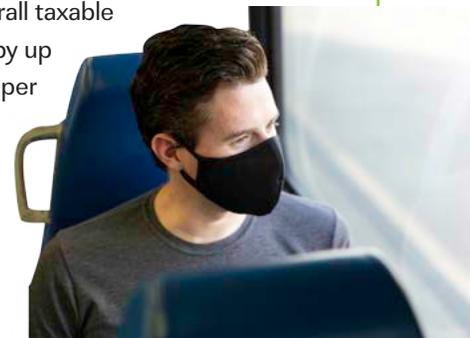
Purchase it in advance exclusively on the [Metrolink Mobile App](#).

## More ways to save on Metrolink...

- On Saturdays and Sundays, a 1-Day Pass is only \$10 to ride all day, [anywhere Metrolink goes](#). Kids 17 and under ride free on weekends (up to three per paying adult).

- Metrolink's [So Cal Explorer loyalty program](#) rewards riders with points toward free rides, as well as exclusive offers and perks from local businesses and attractions throughout Southern California.

- [Pay for your Metrolink fares through payroll deduction](#) and reduce your overall taxable income by up to \$280 per month.



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