



OC Commuter

News for a better commute from the OC Rideshare Office



A Whole New Ballgame

Get to the stadium to cheer on your favorite baseball team without dealing with the hassle and expense of driving and parking.

The Angels Express Train Is Back

Metrolink is bringing back its Angels Express trains. The Angels Express will be available for select home games with trains operating from Oceanside, L.A. Union Station and Riverside-Downtown to Anaheim, just steps from the stadium. Round-trip fares are only \$10, and kids 17 and under ride free.

The Dodger Stadium Express

Ride Metrolink to L.A. Union Station, then catch the free **Dodger Stadium Express** bus to the ballpark for every home game.



5 Fast Facts About the New 405 Express Lanes

405 Express Lanes
14 miles
between the SR-73 freeway in Costa Mesa and I-605 near the L.A. County line

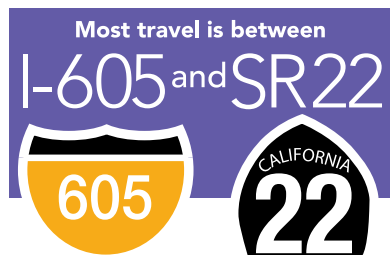
The 405 Express Lanes have already logged more than 2 million user trips since they opened December of last year.

That level of usage is about the same as that of the 91 Express Lanes, which Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) has owned and operated for more than 20 years.

Did You Know...?

1. The 405 Express Lanes cover 14 miles of I-405 between the SR-73 freeway in Costa Mesa and I-605 near the L.A. County line—one of the busiest stretches of freeway in the nation.

2. They carry about twice as much carpool traffic as nearby freeways due to a policy of allowing 3+ person carpools to travel for free. Roughly one in four of the vehicles using the toll lanes are carpools.



(Continued on page 2)



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5 Fast Facts... (Continued from page 1)

3. A FasTrak transponder with a valid account to pay tolls is required to use the lanes—even if traveling free as a carpool. As of February, 6,800 transponders had been issued to allow access to the lanes.
4. The heaviest traveled days are Fridays; the least traveled days are Sundays.
5. Most travel is between I-605 and SR 22.

For more information, visit 405expresslanes.com.



A Great Way to Stop Smog...

Ridesharing instead of driving alone is a good way to do your share for clean air. A car causes .96 pounds of CO₂ per mile to be spewed into the air—so driving alone means you're responsible for nearly a pound of pollutants for every mile you drive.

Transit on average is roughly half that, at .45 pounds/mile per person.

Vanpooling is only .22—so almost five people can travel for the carbon footprint of one.

Of course, bicycling and walking are a zero-emission way to go.

Getting people out of their solo commutes plays an important role in California's clean air efforts, since 37% of the state's total emissions come from vehicles.

Ride Free on Earth Day

Earth Day is April 22—and your chance to do your share for clean air.

Motor vehicles are the cause of most of the emissions that cause smog. To encourage people to try transit instead of driving alone, rides will be free all day on **Metrolink, OC Bus, Metro Bus/Rail**, and all **San Bernardino County** and **Ventura County** transit providers.



Earth Day organizers offer a guide featuring **52 Ways to Invest in Our Planet**—from driving less to switching to a clean-fuel vehicle to buying less plastic and more.

You can also link to a **personal carbon footprint calculator**—see how those changes you make (like ridesharing) can add up.

Go to earthday.org to find out about virtual and in-person Earth Day events.

Do You Live in the Inland Empire? Join the IE Earth Day Contest

If you commute from Riverside or San Bernardino counties, you can win prizes including gift cards, whale watching tickets and more when you log your trips in April.

Here's how to participate:

- Create or log into your account at IECommuter.org.
- Sign up for the promotion at IECommuter.org/EarthDay.
- Throughout April, log any day you rideshare or telework. Each day logged is an entry into the prize drawing.



OCTA Free Wilderness Hikes

OCTA oversees more than 1,300 acres of protected wilderness. To encourage people to appreciate the environment, they hold a series of guided wilderness hikes through these areas that are otherwise not open to the public.

Upcoming hikes are March 16 at Wren's View Preserve and June 1 at Pacific Horizon Preserve.

See the full schedule at preservingourlegacy.org.

Save the Date for the Next Lunch and Learn Workshop

The next Lunch and Learn is March 20, 12 Noon to 1 p.m. Tune in to learn more about how you can save money and make riding OC Bus more convenient by signing up for a Perk Pass.



Lunch and Learn virtual workshops are offered every other month by the Rideshare Office to help you find out ways to improve your commute. The 30-minute workshops are conducted online via Teams, followed by a 30-minute session for participants to ask questions.

You don't need to pre-register to attend the Lunch and Learn. Just [click on this link](#) at the start of the workshop to participate.

If you have questions, or to sign up for an email reminder, contact the Rideshare Office at 714.834.7600.

Are You Paying Too Much Income Tax?

A tax season reminder from the Rideshare Office: If you vanpool or ride the bus/Metrolink to work and you aren't signed up for the Commuter Choice program, you could be paying more income tax than you need to.

Commuter Choice allows you to purchase your fares through a convenient monthly payroll deduction using pre-tax dollars. By doing so, you can reduce your taxable income—up to the IRS limit of \$315 each month.

For details, contact the Rideshare Office, or fill out and submit the [Voluntary Payroll Deduction Authorization form](#).



Get in Gear for Bike Month

May is Bike Month, and Southern California transportation agencies are gearing up to offer special events for bicyclists all month long.

Here, we offer some tips to get ready to participate in the big event:

- If it's been a while since you've rolled out your bike, consider taking it for a tune-up to make sure it's road ready.
- Visit OCTA online for tips [on bike safety](#). If you're thinking of using an electric bicycle for the commute, [OCTA's E-Bike Guide](#) can help you navigate the different resources available, as well as the rules of the road.
- Find a route. You can use the [OC Bikeways map](#) or an app such as [MapMyRide](#), which identifies routes with bike lanes or fewer hills.



- Live too far from the office to bike the whole way? Metrolink allows you to bring your bike onboard. OC Bus (and most transit agencies) have front-end bike racks where you can stow your bike before you board.

Here's What's Happening...

- Bike Week is May 13-17.
- Bike to Work Day is Thursday, May 16.
- OCTA will hold a bike rally on May 16, 7:30 to 9 a.m. at the Orange Metrolink Station. Get pumped up about Bike Month with speakers, snacks, prizes and giveaways. Then enjoy a group ride to the OCTA Administrative Headquarters in Orange.
- Look for information about Bike Month contests, prizes and promotions to be posted at [octa.net/bike](#) and on [Facebook](#) and [X](#) (formerly Twitter). You can also look for Bike Month events at [metrolinktrains.com](#).

The Rideshare Office Can Help You Get Into Vanpooling

A vanpool is five or more people who commute together regularly in a leased van, splitting expenses. It's a bargain, low-stress way to commute. But is it for you? It could be if you live 15+ miles from work and have fairly consistent work hours.

There are plenty of good reasons to vanpool, and the Rideshare Office can help you get started.

To find if there's an open seat on a vanpool, log into ridematch.info. Enter information about your commute such as where you live and work and your schedule. You'll get an instant list of any vanpools on your route.

If there's no vanpool serving your commute, why not start one of your own?

Starting One Is as Easy as 1-2-3

- 1) Find other riders at your worksite. Call the OC Rideshare office at 714.834.7600. They'll prepare a RideGuide for you to help locate riders who live near you with similar schedules. They can also set up a "meet and greet" of your potential vanpool riders to get it off the ground.
- 2) Decide on your route and common pick-up location for riders.
- 3) Contact an approved vanpool leasing vendor to let them know you are ready to start a new vanpool. They'll walk you through the steps and provide any required forms.

OCTA can also answer your questions about starting a vanpool. Contact OCTA Vanpool Program Specialist Kristopher Hewkin at 714.560.5331, khewkin@octa.net.



Vanpool Perks & Subsidies

- If you start a new vanpool, you could be eligible for a **\$300 start-up bonus**.
- OCTA offers a **\$400 monthly subsidy** toward vanpool lease costs for qualifying vanpools, lowering fares on average 25%.
- Sign up to pay for vanpool fares through the Rideshare Office using pre-tax dollars to **save money by reducing your overall taxable income**.
- Vanpooling will allow you to join Club Rideshare, **earning a \$40 bonus**, plus being eligible for \$25 gift card prize drawings throughout the year.



Ride Metrolink to the Swallows Day Parade

The 64th annual Swallows Day Parade and Mercado Street Fair is March 23 in San Juan Capistrano. To make it easier for people to attend the family-friendly event, OCTA is teaming up with Metrolink to offer a sweepstakes for free Metrolink tickets to get there.

Sweepstakes details will be posted at octa.net.



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Email: rideshare@ocgov.com
Phone: 714.834.7600
Web: <https://hrs.ocgov.com/hr-resources/rideshare>

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Human Resource Services
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Santa Ana, CA 92701





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Join Club Rideshare, Earn \$40

If you carpool, vanpool, take the train or bus, drive an EV/PHEV, bicycle or walk to work or telework just 20 times in a 90-day period, you can [join Club Rideshare](#).

New members can earn a \$40 sign-up incentive, plus are eligible for monthly drawings for a \$25 bonus (paid via payroll), special perks and more.

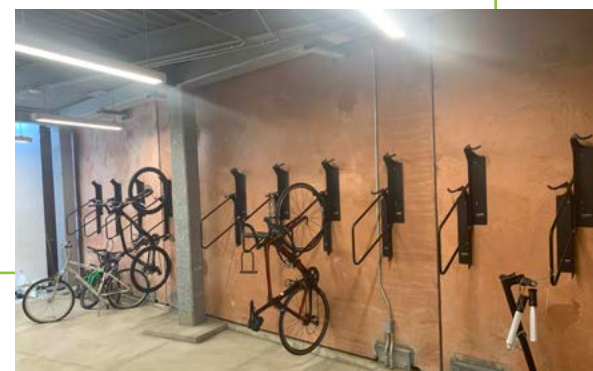
Each year you renew, you get a \$15 bonus.

New Day Storage Facilities for Bike Commuters

If you bike to work—or would like to give it a try—there is now a safe, convenient place to stow your bike. The County recently installed bike storage facilities that feature secure bike racks. Air compressors are available onsite for flat or deflated tires.

The facilities are located in front of the Central Administration Building North (CAN) and the Central Administration Building South (CAS) near the multi-purpose rooms.

If you have trouble locating them, call the Rideshare Office or ask the lobby personnel for assistance.



What You Need to Know About Carpooling in Orange County...

If you've been thinking of carpooling to work—or even if you just occasionally share a ride with friends and family—here are some things you need to know:

- Using carpool lanes typically saves a minute per mile over driving alone.
- Carpools with three or more people can ride free or at a discount in Orange County's express toll lanes on the 91 and 405 freeways. You must have a FasTrak account and a transponder.

On the **91 Express Lanes**, carpools are required to drive through the HOV3+ Carpool Lane at each toll point to receive the carpool discount.

On the **405 Express Lanes**, carpools must have a working transponder set to the number of people in the vehicle.

- All regular carpool lanes in Orange County are free and open to carpools with a minimum of two occupants. No transponder is required.
- Yes, kids count as carpool passengers. *(Continued on page 2)*

"All regular carpool lanes in Orange County are free and open to carpools with a minimum of two occupants. No transponder is required."



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...Carpooling in Orange County... (Continued from page 1)

- Orange County changed from double yellow lines to double white lines to indicate where you cannot cross into a carpool lane. If you see a single solid white line, you can enter/exit the carpool lane, but only if it's safe to do so. Stretches of carpool lane with dashed white lines are the preferred entry/exit points.
- You don't have to worry about getting stuck at work in an emergency or work unexpected overtime on a day you carpooled to work. You can be **reimbursed for the cost of a taxi, rental car or Uber/Lyft** (up to two times a year) through the County's Guaranteed Ride Home program.
- The Rideshare Office can help you find a carpool partner—someone who works and lives near you and has a similar schedule. You can also get a list of potential carpool partners at ridematch.info or by calling 511.



Free Summer Trolleys

Skip the drive and hop on free summer trolleys that take you to destinations around Orange County:

- **The San Clemente Trolley** operates daily until Sept. 30. The system is made up of two routes: a Downtown Red Line and a North San Clemente Blue Line.
- **The Laguna Niguel Trolley** will take riders "from the hill to the sea" all summer long, and at Stop #3 (in front of the Ritz-Carlton Resort), riders can connect with the free trolleys operated by Dana Point and Laguna Beach. The trolley runs Thursday through Sunday every 20 minutes until Sept. 2.
- **The Dana Point Trolley** runs daily through Sept. 5 with two loops that give riders access to coastal cities and allow them to easily transfer between other city-run trolleys.
- **The Balboa Peninsula Trolley** runs Saturdays and Sundays through Sept. 2, providing service around the peninsula. It also offers service on Independence Day and Labor Day.

Free shuttles are also available serving routes in **Laguna Beach** and **San Juan Capistrano**.

Lunch and Learn About an Affordable, Less Stressful Commute Option

The next Lunch and Learn is June 19, 12 to 1 p.m. Tune in to find out if vanpooling might be a less stressful, more affordable way to get to work.

Lunch and Learn virtual workshops are offered every other month by the Rideshare Office.

You don't need to pre-register to attend the Lunch and Learn. Just [click on this link](#) at the start of the workshop to participate.

If you have questions, or to sign up for an email reminder, contact the Rideshare Office at 714.834.7600.

Did You Know...?

Last year, Orange County vanpools...

- Reduced vehicle miles traveled on Southern California roads and freeways by more than 9.8 million
- Reduced fuel consumption by more than 300,000 gallons (equal to the annual energy use of about 1,044 average U.S. homes)
- Reduced emissions by 3,881 tons (equal to the load of 324 garbage trucks)!

Get E-Bike Safety Tips at a Bike Rodeo

Orange County Transportation Authority is holding **e-bike rodeos** to teach commuters, kids and families safety tips and the rules of the road for riding an e-bike. Bike repairs and maintenance will also be available.

The next rodeo is June 1 in Huntington Beach, along with virtual workshops June 4 and 13.



Are You Paying Too Much to Board OC Bus?

The most recent Lunch and Learn workshop was all about **the Perk Pass, a way to save money on OC Bus fares.**

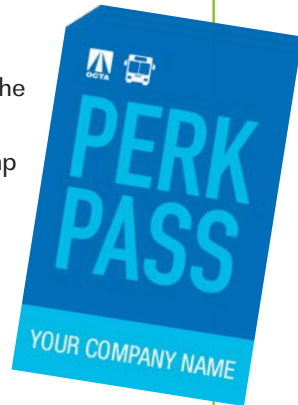
In case you missed the news...

An annual Perk Pass allows you to board OC Bus at the lowest available fare. Each ride costs only \$1.25 per boarding (versus the standard \$2 fare) with a monthly cap of \$69—no matter how many bus trips you take. With a Perk Pass, there's no need to buy monthly passes or daily passes.

To use it, simply swipe your Perk Pass upon boarding. Fares are compiled monthly, and you'll pay your monthly fares automatically via payroll deduction.

The bonus: This also allows you to pay for transit fares using pre-tax dollars, reducing your overall taxable income.

Contact the Rideshare Office for more information or to **sign up.** They'll then mail you an annual Perk Pass and set you up for payroll deduction. You pay nothing upfront.



BRAVO! Buses Are Now OC Bus Rapid—Fewer Stops for a Faster Ride

OC Bus is changing the name of its BRAVO! limited-stop service. It's now **OC Bus Rapid**, and new buses and signage have been rolling out.

OC Bus Rapid makes a third of the stops of regular bus service, getting riders to their destinations faster.



Buses travel:

Route 529: Fullerton to Huntington Beach via Beach Boulevard

Route 543: Fullerton Transportation Center to Costa Mesa via Harbor Boulevard

Route 553: Anaheim to Costa Mesa via Main Street

Route 560: Santa Ana to Long Beach via Westminster Avenue
Fares for OC Bus Rapid are the same as other OC Bus routes.

You may benefit from riding OC Bus Rapid if you work at one of these County locations:

- Child Support Services, 1055 N. Main St., Santa Ana
- Social Service Agency, 888 N. Main St., Santa Ana
- Clerk-Recorder North County Branch Office, 201 N. Harbor Blvd., Fullerton
- West Court, 8141 13th St., Westminster
- Vector Control, 13001 Garden Grove Blvd., Garden Grove
- Probation (Administrative Office) 1535 E. Orangewood Ave., Anaheim



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New Fiscal Year, New GRH Rides

County of Orange and Superior Court employees can be reimbursed for a ride if they need to get home due to an emergency on a day they got to work by ridesharing—up to two rides per fiscal year. Emergency ride options include rental car, taxi, Uber/Lyft, transit or approved car-sharing companies.

Since a new fiscal begins on July 1, if you've claimed the maximum number of rides home this fiscal year, your total number of rides will then reset to zero.

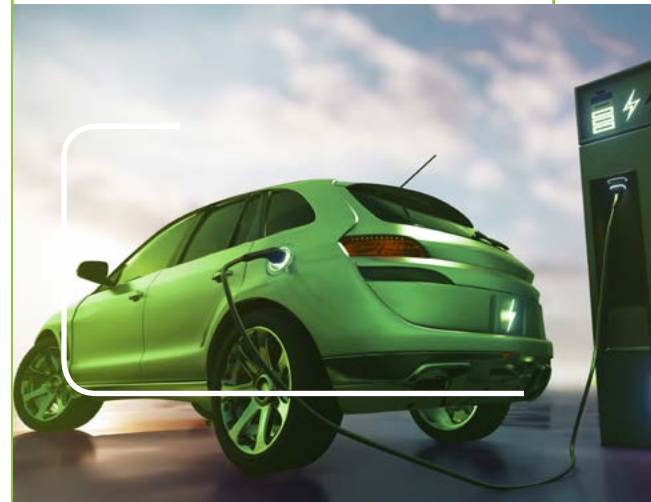
To find out more about the Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program or to claim a reimbursement, [click here](#).

OC Green Expo

Find out more about electric vehicles—and maybe even test drive one—at the OC Green Expo and EV Test Drive, June 8, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. in downtown Anaheim.

The free, family-friendly event features interactive activities, booths with EV information, raffles and prizes.

For details, visit anaheim.net/greenexpo.



Metrolink Brings Back the \$15 Day Pass

Metrolink will again offer a hot deal with its special Summer Day Pass—just \$15 for unlimited systemwide travel any day Monday through Friday*.

It's a great way to give commuting by Metrolink a try at a bargain price.

The Summer Day Pass will be available May 28 through Aug.30 via the [Metrolink mobile app](#) and at ticket machines.

Riders can also purchase a \$10 Holiday Pass for unlimited rides on the Fourth of July.

Look for details at metrolinktrains.com.

**The \$15 Summer Day Pass cannot be purchased via payroll deduction.*



How to Park an EV at County Worksites

Electric vehicle (EV) charging stations are located at the following lots: Manchester Lot, P7 Twin Towers lot, and the County Administration South Building parking structure. Additional EV charging stations are planned in the Civic Center area as County Budget and Energy rebate incentive programs allow.

To use the charging stations, you must set up an account with the ChargePoint vendor and pay for the electricity (per kWh) and any additional charges if they exceed the time limit while charging your EV.

For more information, visit the [OC Public Works Department](#).



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Phone: 714.834.7600

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Transportation Survey Is Due Sept. 13

All County of Orange and Superior Court employees recently received the annual transportation survey via email. This survey collects information on how you commuted the week of Aug. 12-16.

Please take a few minutes to complete the survey by the Friday, Sept. 13 deadline.

As a thank you for participating, you'll be entered into a drawing to win a \$100 Amazon gift card.

Can't find your emailed survey? You can also download it [here](#).

It Is Mandatory to Participate in the Survey

The County is required to conduct this survey annually to meet Southern California clean air mandates.

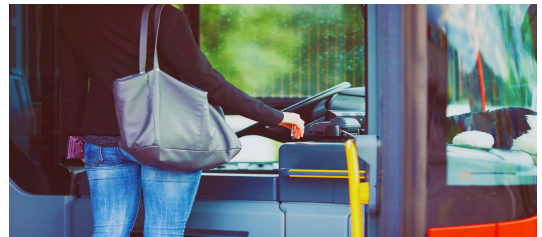
The survey measures the average number of employees working on a particular day compared to the number of vehicles coming to the worksite.

The data collected is used to evaluate how the County is providing commute services to employees and to identify areas for improvement.

(Continued on page 2)

Drive Less, Save More

Join in on Rideshare Week for a Chance to Win Great Prizes!



Rideshare Week is Oct. 7-11, offering a chance to have a more affordable and less stressful commute.

Here's what's happening:

Orange County

Rideshare at least one day during Rideshare Week to be entered into a drawing for a "commuter necessities" which includes a set of AirPods Pro, battery charger, water bottle, Kindle, and a computer backpack.

For details and to make the pledge to participate, visit octa.net/rideshareweek.

Riverside/San Bernardino Counties

Attention Inland Empire residents! Throughout the entire month of October, you have the chance to win prizes by signing up and logging your rideshare activity on IECommuter.org. The more you rideshare, the greater your chances of winning.

You may also be eligible for IE Commuter's **\$5/Day program** if you're new to ridesharing.



OC Commuter

Important Deadline: Transportation Survey

Due Sept. 13... (Continued from page 1)

Get Help with Completing the Survey

You need to submit a survey whether you commute daily, work a hybrid schedule, or telework.

The Rideshare Office offers this [short, helpful video on how to complete the transportation survey](#). It answers the most often asked questions, including how to indicate that you work a flex schedule, work a hybrid schedule, or vary the way you commute throughout the week.

Be Sure to Say “Yes” to a RideGuide

When you fill out the annual transportation survey, you have the option to receive a free RideGuide commute planner—which you can get by checking “yes” to the last question in the survey.

A few reasons to request a RideGuide:

- It gives you commute options based on where you live, work and your work schedule—everything from bus/rail routing to carpools to where to find a convenient Park & Ride.
- Even if you’re not ready to rideshare now, it might come in handy if you find yourself in need of a way to get to work.
- Transit options change all the time. The RideGuide will give you the most up-to-date options.
- You don’t have to use it, but it’ll be there if you need it.

For More Information:

Contact OC Rideshare at 714.834.7600 or rideshare@ocgov.com.



Ride Free on California Clean Air Day

California Clean Air Day is Oct. 2.

Metrolink will offer free rides to encourage Southern Californians to leave their vehicles at home and opt for a more sustainable alternative.

Rides will also be free on OC Bus, Metro Bus and Rail and all San Bernardino County transit agencies for the day.

Visit cleanairday.org to find out more and take the Clean Air Pledge.

Try Transit, Save Up to 75%

If you’re new to riding the bus or train, you could **be reimbursed up to 75% of the cost of fares** when you give it a try.

This special start-up incentive for County employees reimburses a portion of fares for three months: 75% for the first month, 50% for the second month and 25% for the third.

To claim a reimbursement, you must not have commuted by train or bus in the past 90 days and not have previously claimed the start-up incentive.

To get a bargain rate after the incentive, the Rideshare Office can sign you up for a Perk Pass—a swipe-card that offers the lowest available price OC Bus offers (and can be purchased using pre-tax dollars via payroll deduction).



Tips for Commuting in a Quake

Last month's series of earthquakes may have shaken up your worries about when "the big one" might hit. Many Southern Californians have a plan and stock of supplies at home to be prepared, but what do you do if an earthquake happens while you're on the road?

Here, we offer some tips to be earthquake ready if it happens.

"Do you have an alternate way home from work if your usual way is disrupted?"

1. Make an Emergency Plan

Just as you should plan for an earthquake in your home, you should also make an emergency plan for your commute.

Do you have an alternate way home from work if your usual way is disrupted?

A RideGuide can be a helpful tool so that you have options on hand including potential carpool

partners and bus/rail routes. Download one now at ridematch.info or ask the Rideshare Office so you have options on hand if you need them.

2. Know What to Do If an Earthquake Hits on Your Commute

If you're driving or carpooling...

- Pull over to the side of the road, stop, and set the parking brake.
- Avoid overpasses, bridges, power lines, signs and other hazards.
- Stay inside the vehicle until the shaking stops, then proceed carefully by avoiding fallen debris, cracked or shifted pavement, and emergency vehicles.
- If a power line falls on the car, stay inside until a trained person removes the wire.

If onboard a bus...

- Stay onboard unless instructed otherwise by the bus driver.
- When the shaking has stopped, the bus will stop at the first available safe area away from overpasses, tall buildings, electrical wires or other hazards.
- If evacuation from the bus is necessary, the driver will first survey outside for any unsafe conditions and direct bus passengers to a safe area.
- Otherwise, the driver will await instructions to proceed when it is safe to do so.

If onboard Metrolink...

All Metrolink trains are equipped with ShakeAlert an early earthquake warning system. This cutting-edge technology automatically slows or stops trains in the event of an earthquake. Within seconds, ShakeAlert provides data to help operational staff evaluate the rail network and when it is safe to resume service.

Metrolink train operators are trained to keep riders informed and how to proceed if evacuation is necessary.

Get more earthquake safety tips at ready.gov/earthquakes.

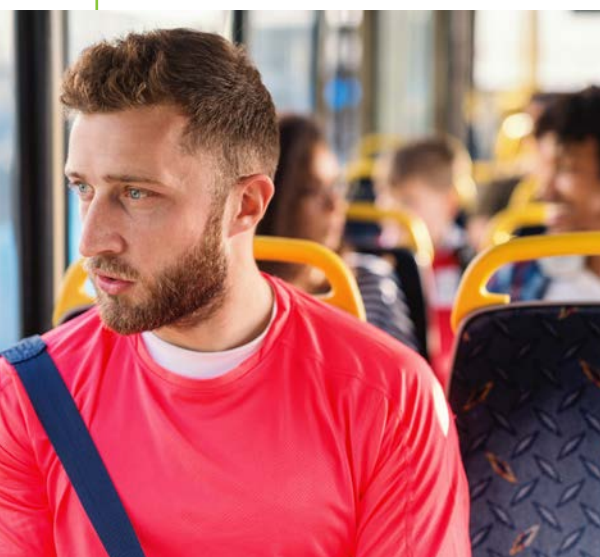


Join in the Great California ShakeOut

You can join millions of people across California practicing earthquake safety on ShakeOut Day, Oct. 17 at 10:17 a.m.

Every year, Metrolink participates in ShakeOut Day, running a test drill during its normal service.

Get details at shakeout.org/California.



"Just as you should plan for an earthquake in your home, you should also make an emergency plan for your commute."

It's Back-to-School Time & Youth and Students Ride Free

This year, your family's back-to-school shopping budget won't need to include paying for bus and rail. Here's how youth and students can ride free:

OC Bus

Youth ages 6-18 can ride free throughout Orange County on OC Bus with a Youth Ride Free pass. Participating schools are distributing the passes to students, or parents can **request one directly** from Orange County Transportation Authority.

Find out more at octa.net.

Metrolink

Metrolink is extending its Student Adventure Pass program through June 30, 2025.

The pass allows anyone with a valid student ID—including K-12, trade school, college students and student interns—to travel anywhere on the Metrolink system free of charge.

For details on how to download the pass via Metrolink mobile app and register for an account, visit metrolinktrains.com.



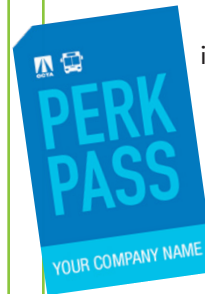
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You don't need to pre-register to attend the Lunch and Learn. Just **click on this link** at the start of the workshop to participate.

If you have questions, or to sign up for an email reminder, contact the Rideshare Office at 714.834.7600.



Thinking of Getting an EV?

National Drive Electric Week is Sept. 27-Oct. 6. Find events and networking opportunities (many are online) to learn more about electric vehicles—especially helpful if you're thinking of buying or leasing an EV.

Find details and a frequently updated list of events at driveelectricweek.org.

Then If You Lease or Buy an EV...

You may qualify for a \$100 incentive from the County. Just complete and turn in **Sign-Up Application Form** within 60 days along with proof of purchase or lease.

Qualifying vehicles include both fully electric and hybrid cars and trucks.



If You Receive a Text About a Toll...

California Toll Operators are advising drivers to disregard phishing texts being sent to their phones that detail a specific outstanding toll amount. If you receive a text and are unsure, please contact the tolling agency in your region.

If you receive a phishing text, please file a complaint at www.ic3.gov. This is a site dedicated to sharing information on Internet crimes across law enforcement agencies.



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Web: <https://hrs.ocgov.com/rideshare>

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Santa Ana, CA 92701





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How Do County Employees Get to Work?

The Survey Results Are In...

Remember that survey you filled out back in August that asked how you commute during the week? Well, the results are in.

It turns out—even though driving alone is still the most common way people are getting into the office—it isn't the only way.

The survey measures “average vehicle ridership,” or AVR, which is how many people on average are in each vehicle arriving at the worksite.

For the 2024 survey year, the County's AVR is 1.39 (up from 1.38 in 2023). “It's good news that we continue to hold steady in our AVR, and even get a small bump this year,” says



Did You Know...?

This year, 1,327 employees requested RideGuides—350 more than last year. RideGuides provide a personalized list of rideshare options, including potential carpool partners, transit routing and more.

Didn't ask for a RideGuide but want one now? Contact the Rideshare Office!

Get a Vanpool Subsidy of Up to \$800 a Month



Thinking about joining or starting a vanpool? Good news: OCTA now offers vanpool subsidies of up to \$800 monthly toward vanpool lease costs (up from \$400 a month).

The standard subsidy is \$600 a month. Two additional \$100 subsidies are available:

- Vanpools that seat eight or more people with an 85% occupancy rate
- Vanpools that are zero-emissions vehicles

The vanpool must be leased through a vanpool provider contracted with OCTA and maintain at least 50% ridership.

For more information, visit octa.net/vanpool. To see if there's a vanpool that's right for you, register or log in at ridematch.info.

Want to vanpool but there's not one currently available? Start one of your own! The Rideshare Office can help you find other people who live near you and work a similar schedule.

Free Rides on New Year's Eve

OC bus will offer free rides on New Year's Eve. Details will be posted at octa.net.

Rides are also free on **Metro Bus and Rail**

on New Year's Eve as well as Christmas Eve.



(Continued on page 2)



OC Commuter

How Do County Employees Get to Work?...

(Continued from page 1)

Thomas McCaughey, rideshare program consultant. “Fewer cars commuting into the office contributes to less traffic and cleaner air.”

The top alternative to driving solo among employees continues to be teleworking.

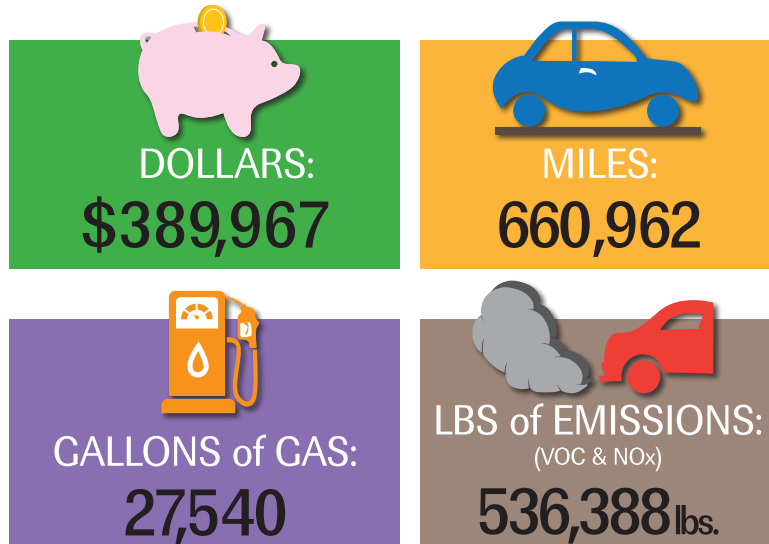
Carpooling was a close second, with about 5% getting to work sharing the ride with a friend or coworker.

“Fewer cars commuting into the office contributes to less traffic and cleaner air.”



Flexible work schedules also helped keep cars off the road. During the survey week, nearly 14,000 round-trip commutes were eliminated thanks to days off from people working flex schedules.

By Choosing Alternatives to Driving Alone Daily, Employees This Year Saved:

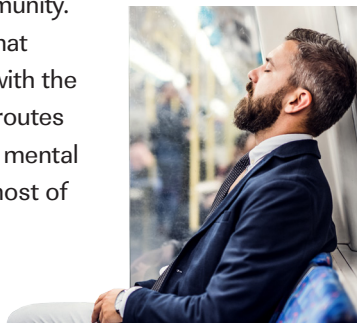


OC Bus Can Be Your Route to Well-Being

OC Bus wants you to know that it isn't just a ride – it's “your ticket to a healthier you.” By choosing public transit, you get more exercise, reduce stress and connect with your community.

They recently launched an online site that features ways you can combine wellness with the commute. It includes information such as routes to wellness destinations, free meditations, mental health resources and tips for making the most of your time on the bus.

Check out at [octa.net/wellness](https://www.octa.net/wellness).



Metrolink Rolls Out the Holiday Fun

Holiday Express Trains

Festively decorated **Holiday Express Trains** will continue to bring holiday cheer to Metrolink stations on weekends until Dec. 21.

The trains feature carolers, treats, children's activities—and maybe even a visit from Santa.

They'll also be collecting donations of new, unwrapped toys and socks for those in need.

Enter to Win Free Tickets and a \$100 Gift Card

Enter the Metrolink Holiday Sweepstakes by Dec. 22 for a chance to win four round-trip Metrolink tickets and a \$100 gift card.

To enter the sweepstakes, visit [octa.net](https://www.octa.net).

While you're there, you can find great ideas for special holiday events and destinations accessible by Metrolink.

Holiday Discount

On Christmas and New Year's Day, Metrolink will run on its weekend schedule and price—so it's only \$10 to travel all day, anywhere Metrolink goes.

Headed to the Rose Parade?

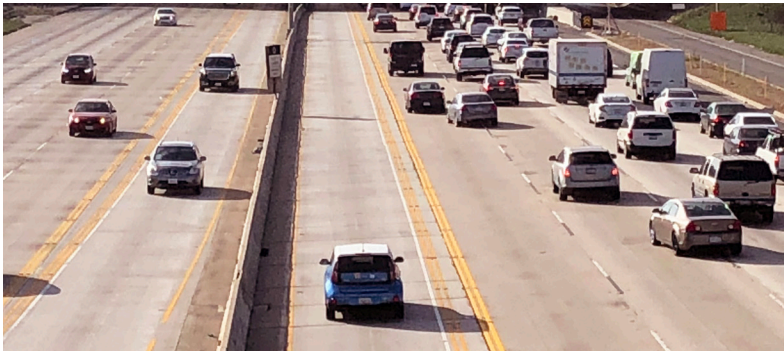
Metrolink will offer special early morning train service for people traveling to the Rose Parade in Pasadena. Details will be posted at [metrolinktrains.com](https://www.metrolinktrains.com).



Congratulations Transportation Survey Raffle Winners

The County of Orange is required to conduct a transportation survey each year. As a “thank you” for turning in the recent survey, all participants were entered into a raffle for \$100 Amazon gift cards.

Winners are: Tina Lee, District Attorney • Stephanie Link, Probation • Denise Rodriguez, Assessor • Constance Simoni, Health Care Agency • Andrea Simon, Social Services Agency • Andre Munoz, OC Public Works • Monica McCoy, Auditor-Controller • Eric Castaneda, Sheriff-Coroner • Jorge Lopez, OC Community Resources • Renee Rangel, Child Support Services.



IRS Cap Up \$10

For the 2025 tax year, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) maximum if you pay for transit and vanpool fares using pre-tax dollars gets a slight bump—from \$315 to \$325 per month.

The County allows employees to **pay for fares using pre-tax dollars**, thus lowering overall income and potentially saving on income tax.

For more information, consult your tax professional or the IRS.

Is Commuting by Transit an Option for You?

See if there’s a bus route that fits your schedule at ridematch.info. Train schedule and fare information can be found at metrolinktrains.com/schedules.

If you’re new to riding transit, you can give it a try at up to 75% off fares with an incentive offered through the County. It reimburses employees 75% of fare costs the first month, 50% the second and 25% the third.

Transit riders can also sign up to get lower fares through the County’s **payroll deduction** program.



Departments That Went “the Extra Mile”

To collect the best data possible and meet clean air mandates, it’s vital that the County gets a high participation for the transportation survey. Thank you to everyone who turned in a survey—and a special thanks to departments with a 90% or higher response rate:

- Auditor-Controller
- Child Support Services (100%)
- Clerk of the Board
- Clerk-Recorder
- County Counsel
- John Wayne Airport (100%)
- OC Public Works
- Public Defender
- Registrar of Voters (100%)
- Social Services Agency
- Superior Court



Ride Free on Transit Equity Day

Feb. 4 is Transit Equity Day. In honor of Rosa Parks’ birthday, it’s a day that promotes making transit affordable and accessible to people in all communities.

Fares will be free all day on Metrolink trains throughout Southern California. Just arrive at the station and board the train (no ticket required).

A Year in Review – 5 Big Changes You May Have Missed

From new express lanes to more rail connections and more, here are five happenings in transportation in the past year that could affect how you get to work...

1. 405 Express Lanes opened. A year ago on Dec. 1, Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) opened the **405 Express Lanes**. Running between SR-73 in Costa Mesa and I-605 at border of Los Angeles County, the lanes allow motorists to travel faster for a toll.

Vehicles with three or more people can use the lanes for free.

All vehicles—including carpools—must have a **FasTrak transponder**.



2. Metrolink added more trains and more connections. Metrolink added 32 weekday trains—a **nearly 23% increase in service**. With the new schedule, riders can enjoy more choices for when they travel as well as faster transfers.

The changes also impacted several connecting bus routes. On Nov. 10, **OC Bus adjusted its schedule** so affected bus lines are better timed to meet Metrolink trains.

3. County cyclists get a safe, convenient place to stow bikes. If you bike to work (or you'd like to), good news: The County last year added bike storage facilities. Now you can commute by bike without worrying what to do with it once you get to the office.

The facilities are located in front of the Central Administration Building North (CAN) and the Central Administration Building South (CAS) near the multi-purpose rooms.

They include secure bike racks, as well as air compressors for flat or deflated tires.



4. BRAVO! buses are now OC Bus Rapid. OC Bus changed the name of its BRAVO! limited-stop service. It's now OC Bus Rapid, and it makes a third of the stops of regular bus service—getting riders to their destinations faster.

OC Bus Rapid routes serve several County worksites. Fares are the same as other OC Bus routes. [Click here](#) for route information.

5. The opening of the Los Aliso's Boulevard bridge brings the I-5 construction closer to completion. The bridge is part of **improvements in a 6.5-mile widening project on the I-5 Freeway between SR-73 and El Toro Road**.

OCTA expanded sidewalks and bike lanes on the bridge, making it more accessible for people to walk or bike.

Construction on the I-5 project began in mid-2019 and includes extending carpool lanes and converting them to continuous access. The project is expected to be completed in early 2025.



OC Commuter

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Web: <https://hrs.ocgov.com/rideshare>

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