



OC Commuter

News for a better commute from the OC Rideshare Office



Whether You're Heading to Work or Working at Home...



...the Rideshare Office Is Here to Help

It's not business as usual these days, and that may have affected your commute. Did your work hours change? Are you teleworking? Have you moved? Has your usual bus or train route changed? Or do you need a cheaper or less stressful way to get to the office?

The Rideshare Office can help you find a commute option that best suits your needs. We can give you a personalized RideGuide, a list of potential carpools, bus/rail routes, nearby Park & Ride lots and more.

Here's some of what's available to you as a County of Orange employee...

If You're New to Ridesharing...

Ride the train or bus for 3 months and you'll be reimbursed 75% of your fares for the first month, 50% for the second month and 25% for the third month.

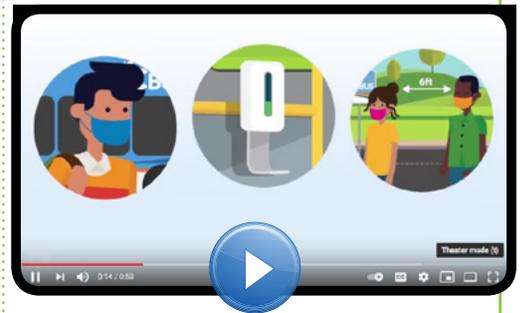
Join Club Rideshare and you'll get a \$40 incentive. To qualify as a member, you need to get to work by carpooling, vanpooling, bus, train, bicycle, walking or driving an EV/PHEV in the last 90 days. Due to the COVID pandemic, working at home can also qualify you to join Club Rideshare.

[\(More\)](#)

Commuting During COVID

Here are some important resources to get the latest information on changes in transportation and tips for commuting during the pandemic:

- Orange County Transportation Authority answers your most-often asked questions about changes to transit and freeways in Orange County at octa.net.
- Have a minute? Here's a quick video from OC Bus on steps it is taking (and what you can do) to protect riders.



- The Centers for Disease Control recently updated its [guidelines for traveling safely](#) on transit, shared rides such as taxi, Lyft and Uber, carpooling and more.



- The 511 transportation network is posting daily updates on any service or policy changes on Southern California freeways, express lanes, bus and rail at go511.com.



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As a member, you'll qualify for monthly \$25 gift card drawings, a cash incentive each year when you renew and bonuses for referrals. Plus our monthly newsletter will keep you up to date on any new deals and promotions.



Freebies, Deals & Discounts

- If you ride Metrolink, [the 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.



- If in the past 90 days you've leased or purchased an electric vehicle or plug-in EV, you may be able to [earn a \\$100 bonus](#).



- [Get a free ride](#) if you have to get home quickly due to emergency on a day you shared the ride to work (up to two times per calendar year). You can choose your preference of taxi, rental car, Uber/Lyft or transit.

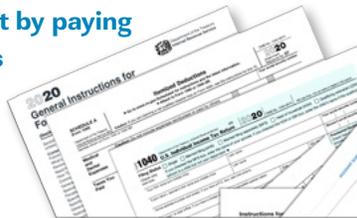
- If you live in the Inland Empire and rideshare to work, you may qualify to earn up to \$120 in gift cards and [get discounts at more](#)



[than 500,000 retailers](#) as part of Rideshare Plus.

- [Save money on taxes you ride transit by paying for bus or train fares using pre-tax dollars](#)

through the Rideshare Office. Doing so will allow you reduce your overall taxable income by up to \$270 per month.



- Close and convenient parking may be available if you register your carpool through your department or building's parking facility's office.

Meet the Rideshare Department



Denise Van Stratten, employee transportation coordinator—oversees program incentives, questions about ridesharing, newsletters and general rideshare program inquiries.

Claire Franco—responsible for monthly Metrolink passes, coordinating and mailing OC Bus Perk Passes and working on the monthly payroll deductions of transit passes for all employees.



Contact Us

Email: rideshare@ocgov.com • Phone: 714.834.7600



Easier Construction Alerts on the 405

OCTA, in cooperation with Caltrans, is widening the I-405 between SR-73 and I-605. Find out about construction that could impact your commute at the [project's portal](#), which was recently updated to make it easier to navigate.



Metrolink Installs New Air Filters

Metrolink recently installed state-of-the-art antimicrobial air filters on all its train cars. The filters capture and destroy 99.9% of impurities and coordinate with Metrolink's ventilation system as another layer to screen out viral bacterial particles.

It's the latest in a series of steps Metrolink has taken to protect the health and safety of customers. The agency has also doubled its hand sanitizing stations, expanded its cleaning protocols and increased the number of trains on busy lines to allow for social distancing, among other efforts.

Read about it at metrolinktrains.com.

5 Things (Maybe) You Didn't Know About the 91 Express Lanes



The 91 Express Lanes recently celebrated 25 years of offering an alternative for people for their daily trips between the Inland Empire and Orange County. A few fun facts:

1. The 91 Express Lanes launched as one of the world's first fully automated facilities with demand-based pricing.
2. Although they were originally privately held lanes, OCTA purchased them in 2003.
3. OCTA reinvests excess toll revenue in projects that benefit not only the SR-91 Corridor, but the entire region.
4. Originally only in Orange County, the lanes have since extended 10 miles into Riverside County.
5. 3-plus carpools ride free or at a discount (a transponder indicating number of passengers is required).



OC Streetcar Project Chugging Along



After nearly two years of construction, the OC Streetcar recently celebrated a milestone with the first rail being laid into place.

The OC Streetcar will be Orange County's first modern streetcar. When complete, it will run more than four miles in each

direction— from the Santa Ana Regional Transportation Center to a new transit stop at Harbor Boulevard in Garden Grove. In addition to serving major shopping, school and business destinations, it will connect to OC Bus, Amtrak and Metrolink.

OCTA held a **virtual open house** to educate the public about the project.

To get construction updates, timelines and details about OCTA's Eat, Play, Shop program that supports businesses affected by construction, visit octa.net.

OC Streetcar Fast Facts

- Will make its debut in 2022
- Runs 4.15 miles in each direction
- 10 stops
- 22-minute trip end-to-end
- Arrivals every 10-15 minutes
- Each streetcar carries up to 220 passengers





Coming Up...

Metrolink's Customer Appreciation Week kicks off

Feb. 14. Ride the train that week and you'll **earn bonus points** that can be cashed in for free rides as part of the So Cal Explorer loyalty program. (Must join the loyalty program before ticket purchase to earn the bonus points.)



Earth Day is April 22. Find out about events (virtual or otherwise) at earthday.org.

Go Electric and Save \$1,500

You can save \$1,500 off the purchase or lease of any eligible new Battery Electric or Plug-in Hybrid vehicle from a participating automotive retailer, thanks to the California Clean Fuel Reward (CCFR) program that started in November.

The CCFR aims to accelerate the number of electric vehicles on California's roads and highways by making them more affordable.

It will also help support Governor Newsom's executive order phasing out gasoline-powered cars and requiring 100% sales of zero-emission cars in 2035.

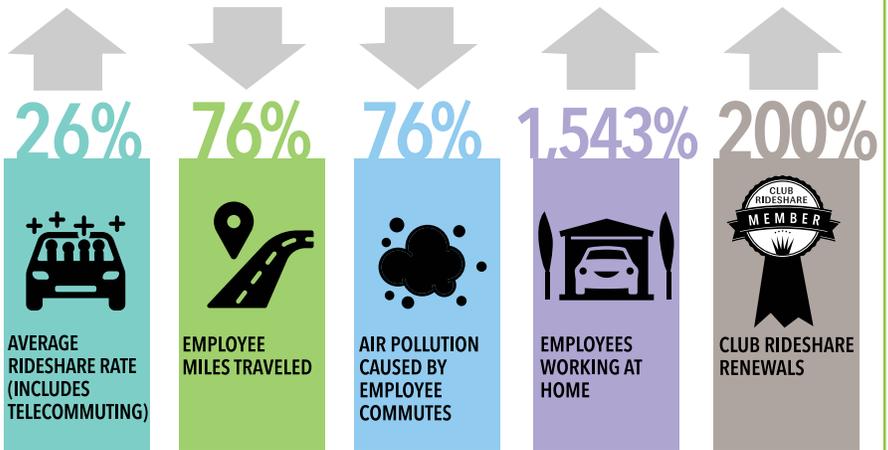
Find out more and get a list of eligible vehicles and participating retailers at cleanfuelreward.com.



We've Got Your Number

Every year with the transportation survey, we track how County of Orange employees commute and the impact that has on traffic and air quality in the region. Since last year was a year like no other, it's probably not surprising there was a big change in how you commuted—particularly with so many employees working at home instead of driving in.

Here's what changed from 2019 to 2020:



OC Flex – Where Can You Still Ride?

OC Flex in South Orange County has been approved to remain in service through December 2021.

The micro-transit service allows passengers to request a ride on demand through a mobile app within the service area, currently in portions of Mission Viejo, Aliso Viejo and Laguna Niguel.



Masks are required for both drivers and passengers, and the number of riders per vehicle will be limited due to COVID concerns.

The service in Huntington Beach and Westminster is temporarily suspended because of low ridership since the onset of the pandemic.

Get details on pricing and download the mobile app at OC Flex, visit octa.net/ocflex.



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