

Frequently Asked Questions About Carpooling



What is carpooling?

Carpooling is two or more people riding together who usually taking turns driving their own vehicles.

Why carpool?

Carpoolers spend less time and money at the gas pump, have less wear and tear on their vehicles, can drive in the time-saving carpool lines, experience less commuter stress and they are helping the environment. And it is so much better than driving alone.

How do I find someone to carpool with?

Start with a list of fellow employees that are also interested in carpooling. Contact the local transit agency for information about [carpool matching programs](#) in the region. Many areas now have **511** systems for connecting to traffic and commute option information. Post a sign on a bulletin board inviting other interested commuters to contact you about sharing the ride – one day a week is a good start!

What do I say when I call the people listed as potential carpool partners?

Simply explain why you are calling and ask to meet the other person for coffee or lunch to discuss the details.

A co-worker and I have agreed to carpool. Now what do we do?

Before starting any carpooling arrangement, it's a good idea to meet and work out the particulars. Most carpoolers agree that the good company of their fellow carpoolers is a benefit that they really enjoy and hadn't anticipated. So, agreement on a few simple points will ensure your carpool stays a happy one.

Some of the points you may wish to cover:

- Who drives, and when
- How often you'll carpool
- Pick-up and drop-off arrangements
- Shared expenses
- What happens if someone is late
- Arranging a back-up plan
- Driver duties
- Smoking rules
- Any other questions or concerns you may have

Consider establishing a carpool trial period of a week or two. This will allow you to give carpooling a try and determine if you are suited to carpool together, if adjustments will need to be made, or if you will need to find a different carpool partner.

What is a Park & Ride lot?

A Park & Ride lot is simply a parking lot or a portion of one with parking spaces designated specifically for commuters to park so they can meet up with their carpool or vanpool partners, catch a bus or a train. A Park & Ride lot can be as big as hundreds of parking spaces or as small as a designated area at a church or shopping center parking lot. Many [Park & Ride lots](#) are designated by signs on freeways and streets. Most Park & Ride lots are free, although occasionally permits or fees may be required.

What if I need to leave work early or stay late or if I am stranded at work without a ride home on a day that I carpool?

A Guaranteed Ride Home reimbursement program is available for rideshare participants so that they can get reimbursed for the ride home or to their vehicle under certain emergency situations.

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My commute already takes long enough—won't carpooling make it longer?

Often, the result is quite the opposite; teaming up with someone else may give you access to time-saving carpool lanes. On average, commuters using carpool lanes shave 30 minutes a day from their drive. That usually more than makes up for the few minutes it might take to meet with your fellow passengers. The farther your commute, the more time you'll tend to save.

What if I can't carpool every day?

Some people like the regularity and cost-savings of carpooling on a daily basis, but that doesn't mean it's the only way to go. You can set up a carpool to operate any way that works for you and your carpool partners. Perhaps you'll carpool Monday through Thursday and leave Fridays open. Even setting up a once-or-twice-a-week carpool is better than driving solo all the time.

How many people should be in the carpool?

The more people in your carpool, the less you'll pay for gas and the less often you'll have to drive. It also means a bit more coordination, making sure everyone arrives at their pick up spot on time. People with consistent schedules do very well with three or four-person carpools. If you need more flexibility, a carpool with one other person may work better for you.

I don't have a car—can I still carpool?

While the typical carpool involves people with their own vehicles taking turns driving, you may be able to carpool with someone who does all the driving while you pitch in for gas and other car expenses.

What should I know about carpool lanes?

Southern California has more than 700 miles of carpool lanes, helping you and your passengers save time and money, as well as avoid traffic hassles. Using carpool lanes typically saves a minute per mile over driving alone, so grab a friend and get moving.

What should I know about carpool lane fines?

To avoid a \$341 fine, be familiar with Southern California's carpool lane laws:

- Carpool lanes in Southern California require two or more people per vehicle, except the El Monte Busway, which requires three people during peak hours (6am to 9am and 4pm to 7pm).
- Only enter and exit a carpool lane at areas designated with signs and a broken double yellow or white line. It's against the law to cross the double yellow lines of a carpool lane.
- Children count as carpool partners.
- Motorcyclists can ride alone in carpool lanes.
- Zero-emission vehicles don't need to meet minimum passenger requirements; however, proper identification in the form of a [sticker](#) or decal from the Department of Motor Vehicles is required. Green stickers are available for [qualifying](#) plug-in hybrid electric vehicles up to the first 40,000 applicants.
- Passenger requirements are in effect for Southern California's carpool lanes 24 hours a day except on SR-14, which is open to solo drivers in off-peak hours.