

# ON THE GO

## News for Your Employees

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## Answers to Employees' Most Often-Asked Questions About Carpool Lanes



Saving time on the commute by being able to hop in the carpool lane can be a big incentive for employees to give ridesharing a try. One study showed that commuters save about a minute-per-mile using these lanes.

To help your employees who want to carpool take the fast lane with confidence, we offer these answers to the questions they're most likely to ask...

### “How do I know if a freeway has a carpool lane?”

The 5-county Southern California region boasts more than 700 miles of carpool lanes on stretches of many major freeways.



These lanes are designated by posted signage identifying them as High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes—but most people still call them carpool lanes.

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

Carpool lanes in Southern California typically require that at least two people be in the vehicle, though always check posted signage. And yes, kids count as passengers.

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## Get the Free *Commuter Benefits Guide*

Every year, the Best Workplaces for Commuters recognizes companies that have outstanding commute benefits programs. Now, they're sharing their expertise in an online guide that offers tips to help your organization set up or troubleshoot a program at your worksite.

Commuter benefits programs allow employees who pay for transit,

vanpooling or parking to do so using pre-tax dollars, lowering their overall taxable income. Employers that subsidize these costs can save on taxes, too.



Included in this guide:

- Eight steps to starting a commuter benefits program as a pre-tax payroll deduction
- Tax-saving benefits for both commuters and employers
- How these benefits can increase your rideshare rate, reduce employees stress and increase productivity
- Profiles of companies with successful programs
- Resources, helpful links & more

For a limited time, you can **download it free.**



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## “Is My Bus or Train Coming Soon?”

Like many organizations throughout the U.S., Southern California’s transit agencies have been facing staffing shortages since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, bus and rail service has been impacted in many areas.

Here are some updates to help your employees who ride transit:

- **Metrolink has been gradually restoring service** on its routes and recently partnered with **the Moovit app** so riders can get real-time train arrival times.
- On Feb. 20, **Metro made service adjustments** on dozens of its bus and rail lines.

In an effort to provide more reliable and predictable service, Metro is addressing staffing shortages by keeping buses and rail running, but on average running five to 10 minutes less frequently than usual.

The agency has spread the service adjustments out widely to lessen the impact on any particular bus line or service area.

- OC Bus riders can get real-time bus arrival information and cancellations using its **mobile app** or by calling 714.636.7433. **OC Flex on-demand, micro transit service**—available in specific areas of Orange County—may be an alternative for employees whose usual bus service is interrupted.

- **Follow Omnitrans on Twitter** to get the latest service alerts and updates. For RTA buses, you can call 951.565.5002 to check the status of your bus.

- Call 511 to be connected to your county transportation agency’s customer service line.

## Answers to Employees’ Most Often-Asked Questions About Carpool Lanes

*continued from page 1*

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

If you’re in a regular car driving solo and think it might be worth taking the risk to jump into the carpool lane, be warned: The minimum violation fine is \$490.



### “What’s the difference between a carpool lane and an express toll lane?”

Express toll lanes allow people to drive alone for a fee (which varies based on levels of traffic congestion). They do, however, let carpools ride free or at a discount (with restrictions).

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 to 6 p.m. (when they get 50% off the posted toll).

On **Metro ExpressLanes** on the I-10 Freeway, vehicles with three or more people can use the lanes toll-free at all hours. Vehicles with two occupants pay a toll during peak hours (5-9 a.m., 4-7 p.m.) but ride toll-free the rest of the time.

On the I-110 express lanes, you can ride toll-free at all hours with two or more people in the car.

All vehicles must drive in the designated carpool lane with a transponder set to “3+” to receive the discount. If you enter without a transponder, even if you’re a carpool, you can be fined.

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

Look at the lane striping. A double yellow or white stripe means you can’t legally enter or exit. A white dashed line means you can.

Southern California’s carpool lanes used to only offer access at limited points. Now some freeways (mostly in Orange County but also on portions of the 14 Freeway in Los Angeles County) offer what’s known as “continuous access.” These carpool lanes have mostly dashed white striping so drivers can enter and exit more freely.

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**Answers** *continued from previous page*

**“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. Plus, you'll save money on gas and wear and tear on your vehicle.

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 for COVID safety, visit the CDC at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

**“I'd like to use a carpool lane, but I don't have anyone to carpool with.”**

Check with the rideshare department at your worksite—they may be able to match you with a coworker for the commute. (As mentioned above, always take into consideration COVID safety guidelines.)

You can also get a free, instant list of potential carpool partners at [ridematch.info](https://ridematch.info) or [IECommuter.org](https://IECommuter.org), or by calling 511. You'll be matched with people who live near you, work near you and may want to share the ride. ■



## New So Cal Best Workplaces for Commuters



Best Workplaces for Commuters recently released its annual list of U.S.-based employers who provide exceptional commuter benefits such as telework, discounted transit passes, bicycle-friendly amenities and rideshare solutions.

Congratulations to the Southern California worksites that made the list:

- California State University, Fullerton, Los Angeles and Northridge
- City of Anaheim, City Hall and the Utilities Service Yard
- Intuit, Los Angeles
- Kite, A Gilead Company, El Segundo, Santa Monica
- Los Angeles World Airports
- University of California, Los Angeles

For more information, visit [bestworkplaces.org](https://bestworkplaces.org).

## 52 Ways to Celebrate Earth Day



Earth Day is April 22, and it's a great time to remind employees about how ridesharing can help reduce the emissions that cause smog. On average, you can prevent about a pound of pollutants for every mile you *don't* drive.

Earth Day organizers offer a fun 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](https://earthday.org) to find out about virtual and in-person Earth Day events.

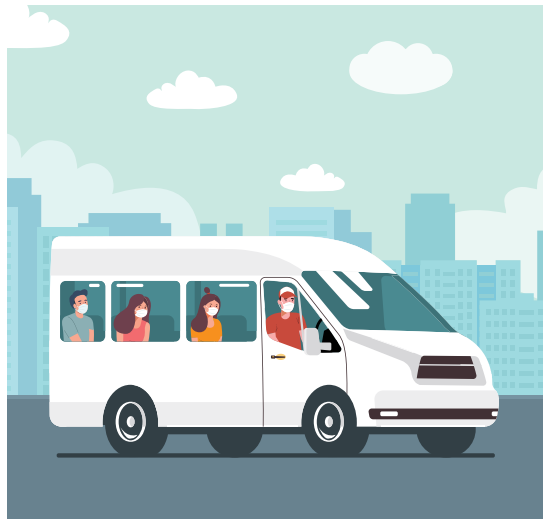




# LOS ANGELES COUNTY



## New Subsidies for Metro Vanpools



Metro is offering special incentives to commuters working in Los Angeles County who'd like to return to or try vanpooling.

"As we're moving forward with the recovery effort, Metro Vanpool wants to encourage riders who stopped vanpooling due to the pandemic to come back and feel safe doing so," says Neha Chawla, manager of transportation planning at Metro. "We are also providing flexibility on the number of people needed in the vehicle to qualify. We continue to monitor CDC recommendations and will update the program's guidelines

in accordance. We expect to return to normal operations by fall 2022."

Metro vanpools can now receive a monthly subsidy toward the lease price of up to \$600 (from the previous \$500).

There's a \$200 sign-up bonus for new vanpools, plus an extra \$100 monthly for those vanpools that operate at a minimum of 70% capacity.

For details, email [vanpool@metro.net](mailto:vanpool@metro.net), call 213.922.7003 or visit [metro.net/vanpool](https://metro.net/vanpool).

## Get the Latest from Metro's The Source

Catch these highlights from Metro's blog, [The Source](#):

### Virtual Community Meetings about the L (Gold) Line Extension

Metro continues its study of plans to extend the L (Gold) line from its current end point in East Los Angeles to Whittier.

The agency will be **holding a series of virtual community meetings in March** to discuss the project design and construction with the public.

For project details, visit [metro.net/eastsidephase2](https://metro.net/eastsidephase2) or call 213.922.3012.

### Weekend Closures on Metro Rail

Metro will be connecting the A Line (Blue) and E Line (Expo) to the Regional Connector project, **and rail service will be temporarily suspended** at 7th St/Metro Center and Pico Station on Friday 9 p.m. through close of service Sunday March 4-6 and March 11-13.

Free bus shuttles will replace rail service in affected areas.





# ORANGE COUNTY

## Profile:

### OC Flex, Orange County's On-Demand Ride Service

OC Flex offers shared, on-demand service in parts of **Aliso Viejo, Laguna Nigel and Mission Viejo**. Unlimited rides all day are \$4.50 (when paid on the OC Flex mobile app), or \$5 cash onboard.

Since launching in 2018, OC Flex has made improvements based on customer feedback. OCTA updated the service hours and allows riders to transfer free between OC Flex and OC Bus if they have a valid, regular 1-Day or 30-Day transit pass.

Find out more and download the app at [octa.net/ocflex](https://octa.net/ocflex).



## Get Help for Your Telework Program— See the Free Webinar

Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) recently hosted a webinar on telework resources for worksites. If you missed out, [you can see it here](#).

OCTA provides ongoing assistance to employers to help them manage their employees working remotely, including how-to guides, webinars, case studies and links to other helpful resources. Find it at [octa.net](https://octa.net).





# RIVERSIDE/SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

## Your Teleworkers Get Their Time in the Spotlight

IE Commuter is highlighting and rewarding employees who work from home or on a hybrid schedule with its new Monthly Telework Spotlight.

Each month, two Inland Empire teleworkers will be featured on the IE Commuter website and will win a \$100 gift card.

Commuters are automatically entered in the monthly drawing after logging as little as one telework day each month in their Commute Log on [IECommuter.org](https://IECommuter.org).

For commuters to qualify, their employer must have a signed Telework Employee Assistance agreement with IE Commuter. Call 1.866.RIDESHARE (866.743.3742) if you're not sure if you've signed one, or if you'd like to sign up.

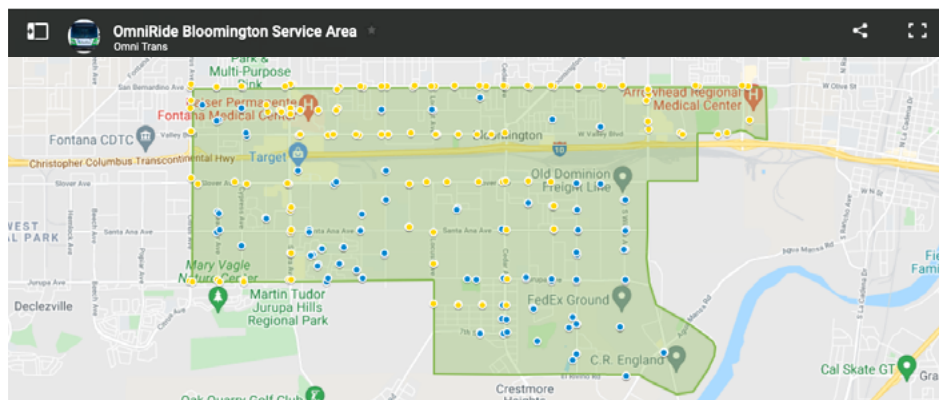


## OmniRide Adds Service in Bloomington

OmniRide is shared, on-demand micro transit service, operated by Omnitrans. It's now available in portions of Bloomington, joining existing zones in Colton, Rialto and south Fontana.

For the first six months, OmniRide Bloomington trips will be half-off – \$2 for each trip (regularly \$4).

Find out more at [omnitrans.org](https://omnitrans.org).



## And the Winner Is...

Congratulations to Ashley with the Riverside Superior Court, who won one of the grand prizes in IE Commuter's Rideshare Week drawing.

She recently picked out her prize Electra, Townie Original, 7D bike (valued at more than \$600). This is her first bike since childhood, and she says she's excited to start going on bike rides with her fiancé.

Although Rideshare Week 2021 is over, ridesharers can still qualify to win \$100 gift card prizes in the Monthly Rideshare Spotlight drawing by logging their commutes at [IECommuter.org](https://IECommuter.org).



*IE Commuter's lucky prize winner with her new bike, courtesy of Cyclery USA, Redlands*



# VENTURA COUNTY



## VCTC Buses Now Feature Contactless Payment

Now Riders on Ventura County buses can buy fares and use the mobile device to board the bus using a new app. It is available for download at [goventura.org/vcbuspass](https://goventura.org/vcbuspass).

Physical passes and cash are still being accepted as well.

Through June 30, per-trip fares are half price. Trips within Ventura County are 80 cents (vs. \$1.75). Out of county fares are \$2 (vs. \$4).



## Bike Safety Tips from VCTC



To get ready for Bike Month in May, Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) published an on-line resource with bike safety tips.

It includes some bike basics, rules of the road, and bike safety reminders for biking with kids.

Find it at [goventura.org](https://goventura.org).

## New Ventura County Bus Maps Now Available

VCTC has updated its [online bus maps](#), both for regional and intercity bus travel. You'll get an at-a-glance picture of the transit system.

Then use the Trip Planner to find the best route for you.

# CALENDAR

## Events

**Nominations for an Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) award** are due April 11. Winners will be honored at ACT National Awards Ceremony Breakfast in Chicago, IL on August 3. For details on ACT awards and the 2022 conference, visit [conference.actweb.org/awards](https://conference.actweb.org/awards).

**IE Commuter's Spring Marketing Workshop** is April 20, 9:30 a.m. – 12 Noon via Zoom. This South Coast AQMD certification workshop will include core marketing strategies and offer turnkey ideas to help employers grow their rideshare programs. To sign up and get the Zoom link, email [info@iecommuter.org](mailto:info@iecommuter.org).

**Earth Day** is April 22, a day to address climate issues and ways ridesharing can contribute to cleaner air. Look for events at [earthday.org](https://earthday.org).

**May is Bike Month.** Look for details on events and special promotions in May issue of *On the Go*.

## Network Opportunities

*Please note: Due to COVID-19 concerns, network meetings may be canceled or conducted via online platform—please contact organizers for more information.*

**Burbank TMO** serves businesses in Downtown and Media District areas; call 818.953.7788, [bronwen@btmo.org](mailto:bronwen@btmo.org).

**Compass at Playa Vista** meets regularly; call Aaron Gaul, 310.929.5946, [aaron@playavistacompass.com](mailto:aaron@playavistacompass.com).

**Go Glendale** meets regularly; call 818.543.7641.

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**IE Commuter** offers bi-annual marketing workshops for ETCs in the Inland Empire; call 1.866.RIDESHARE (866.743.3742).

**Irvine Spectrum TMA** meets regularly; call 949.727.4273, email [steve@spectrumotion.com](mailto:steve@spectrumotion.com).

**Orange County Network** meets regularly; email [sharetheride@octa.net](mailto:sharetheride@octa.net).

**Pasadena TMA** meets regularly; contact Talin Shahbazian at [tshahbazian@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:tshahbazian@cityofpasadena.net).

**Santa Monica TMO** meets regularly; contact Puja Thomas Patel, 424.330.4298.

**Torrance Transportation Network** meets regularly; call Kim Fuentes at 310.784.7902.

## Training

**IE Commuter Office Hours** — monthly online, interactive workshops on topics of interest to ETCs in Riverside and San Bernardino counties—are March 9 and April 13, 10-11 a.m. To sign up, email [info@iecommuter.org](mailto:info@iecommuter.org).

**Metro Rideshare/Shared Mobility offers free ETC Briefings** where Los Angeles area employers can learn about the transportation survey process. Until further notice, briefings are being offered online only. To sign up, send an email to [SharedMobility@metro.net](mailto:SharedMobility@metro.net); you will be sent a link with a password to log into the meeting. If you can't make that meeting, email Metro to set up a one-on-one virtual meeting. Upcoming ETC Briefings are March 9, April 13, and May 11, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

**South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) offers two-day ETC training** via Zoom for \$198.27. For more information, contact the South Coast AQMD's training program at [etctraining@aqmd.gov](mailto:etctraining@aqmd.gov) or visit [aqmd.gov](http://aqmd.gov).



## ON THE GO

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For subscription information or to change your **ON THE GO** e-mail address, contact your representative at the rideshare office nearest you.

### Riverside/San Bernardino Rideshare Program

IE Commuter Business: 1.866.RIDESHARE (866.743.3742)

Twitter: [@IECommuter](https://twitter.com/IECommuter), [@TheRCTC](https://twitter.com/TheRCTC), [@goSBCTA](https://twitter.com/goSBCTA)  
Facebook: [@IECommuter](https://facebook.com/IECommuter), [@TheRCTC](https://facebook.com/TheRCTC), [@goSBCTA](https://facebook.com/goSBCTA)  
Instagram: [@iecommuter](https://instagram.com/iecommuter), [@therctc](https://instagram.com/therctc), [@gosbcta](https://instagram.com/gosbcta)  
Blog: <http://www.rctc.org/the-point/>

### Metro Regional Rideshare/Shared Mobility

One Gateway Plaza  
MS 99-19-06

Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

Business: 213.922.2811

[SharedMobility@metro.net](mailto:SharedMobility@metro.net)

<http://thesource.metro.net/>

Twitter: [@MetroLosAngeles](https://twitter.com/MetroLosAngeles)

Facebook: [LosAngelesMetro](https://facebook.com/LosAngelesMetro)

### Ventura County Transportation Commission Commuter Services

751 E. Daily Dr., Ste. 420

Camarillo, CA 93010

Business: 951.352.8006

[goventura.org/rideshare](http://goventura.org/rideshare)

Twitter: [@GoVCTC](https://twitter.com/GoVCTC)

Facebook: [GoVCTC](https://facebook.com/GoVCTC)

Instagram: [@goVCTC](https://instagram.com/goVCTC)

### OCTA Share the Ride Programs

550 S. Main St., Orange, CA 92868

Mailing address:

PO Box 14184, Orange, CA 92863

Business: 714.636.RIDE option 4

Twitter: [@GoOCTA](https://twitter.com/GoOCTA)

Facebook: [OCTASharetheRide](https://facebook.com/OCTASharetheRide)

### Commuter Information 511

[Go511.com](http://Go511.com)

Los Angeles/Orange/Ventura counties

[IE511.org](http://IE511.org)

Riverside/San Bernardino counties



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