



Vanpool Fact Sheet and FAQs

Employees find their commute is less stressful and less costly by forming or joining a vanpool.

VPSI, Inc., the nation's largest vanpool provider, offers a comprehensive, turnkey vanpool program in collaboration with public, private and nonprofit employers. This document summarizes both the initial requirements and subsequent operating procedures associated with participating in a new or existing vanpool.

The Most Frequently Asked Questions about Vanpools

What is a vanpool?

A vanpool is a group of nine to fifteen people who commute to and from work together in a van. Members of the vanpool group share the same commute and similar work hours.

How much does it cost?

The cost of a vanpool varies depending on the length of your commute and the number of riders in your vanpool. When you vanpool you will save significantly when compared to the cost of driving alone! Passengers pay a monthly fee to reserve their seats. Passenger fees are a pro-rata share of the operating costs of the van (i.e. the total monthly costs are shared equally among the passengers) and are calculated as follows:

For example, if the total monthly operating cost of the vanpool is \$1,400 (including gas and tolls) and there are 10 registered vanpool riders on the van, the cost per person would be \$140/month. The group may determine for themselves if the Primary Driver will be exempt from paying his/her share of the monthly vanpool costs. In that case, the cost per rider for a 10-person vanpool would be \$1400 divided by 9, or 155.56/rider/month.

If an employer subsidy (up to a max. of \$230.00 per employee per month) is offered either as a tax-free benefit or as a pre-tax benefit, each qualified rider would then be able to deduct the subsidy from the seat cost.

How are the fares collected?

Billing for vanpool costs varies from group to group. On some vans, the Primary Driver/Coordinator collects monthly fees in advance for the coming month. Payment can be in the form of a check, money order, or approved voucher. VPSI payments can also be

made on-line via credit or debit card. Passengers can pay VPSI directly or the Driver/Coordinator can collect all rider payments and pay VPSI.

The Primary Driver receives an invoice every month detailing any balance due for the period and communicates to the group what the passengers' share will be. Many vanpool groups open a "vanpool checking account" and set up on-line transfers to pay the monthly fees. It is important that each passenger understand that his/her payment is due regardless of whether they are on the van or not. Riders must remember to make arrangements to pay their fees if they have plans for vacation, travel, TDY, etc. The monthly payment is critical to the operation of the van.

Who does the driving?

One member of the vanpool group elects to be the Primary Driver. The Primary Driver may drive most days or share the driving with one or more Alternate Drivers.

How are occasional riders accommodated?

Some employees may want to vanpool on an occasional basis, instead of having a reserved seat for the month. If the vanpool has open seats, it can accommodate occasional riders (referred to as "Day Riders"). The vanpool group can determine the fee for a Day Rider. The Day Rider's fee is applied to the overall monthly vanpool costs, thus reducing each regular rider's share. Day Riders pay a slightly higher rate than the equivalent daily rate for full time riders; however Day Riders may not benefit from employer subsidies.

Could my fare change?

Changes in the price of gasoline could change your fare. The number of regular passengers also affects vanpool fares. The more vanpool passengers there are, the lower the cost.

How is the van insured?

VPSI vans and approved drivers are covered by an insurance program that includes liability and property damage protection. Whether the van is driven for commute or personal use, VPSI's zero deductible Insurance coverage is included in the monthly lease fee.

If I am a regular vanpool rider, can I get an insurance discount on my personal vehicle?

Vanpool passengers who are Massachusetts residents are eligible to receive a discount on their personal auto insurance. Contact your insurance provider for details.

Are there any other financial incentives to participate in a new vanpool?

MassRIDES, the Massachusetts statewide travel options agency, may offer additional incentives. For more information, contact your VPSI representative.

Who maintains the vans?

The Primary Driver/Coordinator accepts responsibility for fueling and coordinating maintenance for the van. All maintenance costs are covered by VPSI, Inc. and included in the monthly lease fee.

Where is the van maintenance done?

The van can be serviced at designated convenient locations near the vanpool destination or the vanpool driver's home. VPSI provides bumper-to-bumper maintenance. All charges are billed directly to VPSI. Each vehicle has a preventive maintenance coupon book. Vans may be serviced at any VPSI approved national account such as Sears, Jiffy Lube, Kmart, Goodyear, Firestone, Penske, Pep Boys, and Dodge or Ford Dealers. Loaner vans and pick-up & delivery are available in some areas.

How long is the vanpool agreement?

Vanpool agreements automatically renew every 30 days until written notification is given - 30 days in advance - stating that the Primary Driver would like to terminate the agreement. Individual riders must also give 30 days notice to their primary driver should they choose to leave the vanpool.

What qualifications does a vanpool driver need to have?

- Has a valid license
- Has five years licensed driving experience
- Minimum age of 25 years
- Has been approved, in writing, by VPSI to operate vehicles provided by VPSI

What responsibilities does the vanpool Primary Driver have?

The Primary Driver arranges maintenance for the van, collects fares from the riders, and pays the monthly bill. The Primary Driver must also be punctual and drive safely. Safety belt use is required of all riders in all vanpools. Typically the Primary Driver is exempt from his or her share of the monthly commuting costs.

What happens when the Primary Driver is ill or on vacation?

Each vanpool is required to have at least one approved Alternate Driver. It is recommended that the vanpool group have two or three approved Alternate Drivers to fill in when the Primary Driver is unavailable.

What responsibilities do the vanpool riders have?

Vanpool riders must be punctual with their arrival at agreed-upon pick-up locations and with their monthly payments. Alternate Drivers and riders are also expected to cooperate with the Primary Driver as needed, including assistance with fueling and cleaning the van.

Does the van provide door-to-door service?

Each group sets its own route and schedule. Most vans have one or two common meeting points to reduce overall travel time.

What rules govern the vanpool?

Each vanpool makes its own rules regarding music, pick-up points, length of wait at pick-up points, and other issues important to the group.

What if I have to work late or have a personal emergency and need to get home?

Each vanpool rider is allotted a certain number of emergency rides home (ERH) per year if his/her employer is a member of a Transportation Management Association or Organization (TMA or TMO). In order to be eligible for an ERH voucher, an employee must register in advance.

What happens if I'm sick or oversleep?

Call the driver or the person at the first stop ahead of time. Most groups set a time limit on how long they will wait for a person before leaving without them--usually 5 minutes.

What happens when I go on vacation?

Vanpool riders reserve their seats by paying a monthly fare; if you're not going to be using your seat, notify your vanpool driver/coordinator. However, similar to paying rent on an apartment when you're on vacation, you are responsible for the payment for your seat. In some cases, however (when a vanpool is fully subscribed for a van's capacity, i.e. the total number of passengers, including driver), occasional riders (those who do not participate on a full-time basis) may be interested in riding. Generally, daily rider fees are contributed to the overall operating cost of the van.

Contact: Melissa Zampitella, VPSI, 781-937-0071, Melissa.zampitella@vpsiinc.com.