

## March 2022 Commuter Van Bulletin



Dear Commuter Van Customer,

We are hearing from more and more customers that they are returning to work. Please review some important reminders below about restarting your commute in a Metro van as well as other program updates and resources.

### Included in this bulletin:

- [Mask Requirement Extension](#)
- [Restarting Your Parked Van](#)
- [HOV and Toll Lanes Reminder](#)
- [School Zones](#)
- [Driving Downtown Seattle](#)
- [Vehicle Fuel & Equipment Theft](#)
- [New & Improved Online Resources](#)

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**MASK REQUIREMENT EXTENSION TO APRIL 18th** – Per the CDC’s recommendation, the mask mandate for public transportation, which includes the Metro Vanpool and Vanshare programs, has been extended through April 18th. King County Metro Vanpool and Vanshare participants are instructed to adhere to public health guidance by wearing a mask in the van, washing or sanitizing hands before entering, wiping down high touch surfaces in the van frequently, covering coughs and sneezes, and staying home when sick.

**RESTARTING YOUR PARKED VAN** – When your group is considering a return to commuting to the worksite, please complete and [submit the Vanpool or Vanshare group update form](#) at least two weeks before getting back on the road. Your cooperation will help make your switch back into your vanpool or vanshare a smooth transition for your commuter group.

**Questions?** Bookkeepers may contact their accounting services representative for reporting questions. Contact [vanpool@kingcounty.gov](mailto:vanpool@kingcounty.gov) with any other questions.

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In addition, please remember these important points when preparing to operate your vehicle:

1. **Vanpool or Vanshare must be a shared ride** and meet current minimum ridership requirements based on vehicle size—**at least two passengers for a minivan or Nissan Leaf and at least three for larger vans**. Existing and new groups may commute with more riders-if desired. 2+ is a temporary exception for commuting; Metro will communicate to groups and provide recruiting support when we return to 5+ ridership requirements.
2. **Only approved Bookkeepers may complete the monthly report**—Please complete all sections of the Monthly report starting the month you resume commuting. Monthly reports and fares must be received by the 10th of each month. If you resume after the 1st of a month contact your accounting rep for prorated fares. Report any schedule changes in Section 4. We offer many [flexible work schedule](#) options.
3. **In Section 5 - Rider Roster**, only list members actively riding in the van. Members who continue to telework 100% should not be listed- these riders will need to re-apply to the vanpool program when restarting their commute. Active riders riding less than 50% of the commute should be marked as parttime and their fare and payment amounts should reflect as part-time. The 2nd tab Fare Calculator on the Monthly Report may be utilized to calculate parttime fares.
4. **Drivers, ensure your van is in proper working order:** thoroughly inspect the vehicle, check the fluids, tire pressure, clean all windows and wipe off wiper blades, and make sure the van starts and that there are no warning lights displayed on the instrument panel. Check for and report any damage to your Maintenance Representative.

**HIGH OCCUPANCY VEHICLE (HOV) AND TOLL (HOT) LANES** – As a reminder, Vanpools may always utilize both the HOV and HOT lanes toll-free. These lanes save Vanpool groups money, travel time, reduce commute stress, and are an overall more convenient way to travel for HOVs. In addition, the HOV and HOT lanes help reduce the number of single-occupancy car trips on the overall transportation system and help reduce the area's contribution to greenhouse gasses, global warming, and environmental health issues. With that said, **Vanpools must meet the HOV and HOT occupancy requirements to utilize the lanes** and realize these savings and benefits.

**SCHOOL ZONES** – Please remember school is still in session, with most students traveling to and from most schools in the area. As a result, please remember the following driving safety tips to help ensure the safety of all traveling in a school zone.

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- Please don't block the crosswalk when stopped at a red light or waiting to make a turn, forcing pedestrians to go around you; this could put them in the path of moving traffic
- In a school zone when flashers are blinking, stop and yield to pedestrians crossing the crosswalk or intersection
- Always stop for a school patrol officer or crossing guard holding up a stop sign
- Take extra care to look out for children in school zones, near playgrounds and parks, and in all residential areas
- Never pass a vehicle stopped for pedestrians
- Always use extreme caution to avoid striking pedestrians wherever they may be, no matter who has the right of way.

**DRIVING DOWNTOWN SEATTLE** – The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) recently announced enhanced traffic law enforcement through cameras at several key intersections in the city. The cameras look for vehicles illegally driving in bus lanes or blocking crosswalks and intersections. Please remember, Vanpool and Vanshare traffic law violation fines are the responsibility of the Vanpool or Vanshare driver/group operating the vehicle at the time of the violation.

**VEHICLE FUEL AND EQUIPMENT THEFT** – Our region is experiencing increased vehicle fuel and catalytic converter thefts. Please be sure to always park your Vanpool or Vanshare in a safe, secure, and program-approved location off-street at an authorized driver's residence. If you have a parking exception in place, please remember to follow all parking exception rules and directions provided at the time of approval. Also, please ensure drivers complete their daily vehicle walk-around inspection looking for any damage or fuel leaks before beginning your commute. Finally, please remember to report any vehicle damage within two business days.

**NEW & IMPROVED ONLINE RESOURCES** – Last year our IT Department took a deep dive into our Metro Rideshare web pages data to better understand which pages and what information are visited and accessed most. We learned a lot and have redesigned [our Metro vanpool page](#) to help you find what you need more quickly. If you haven't checked us out in a while, take a look!

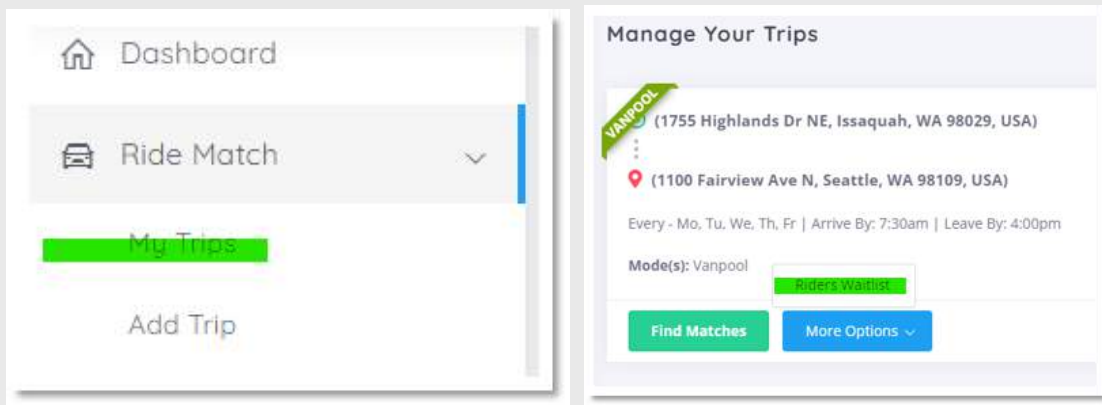
[RideshareOnline.com](#) has also been updated significantly. This mobile-friendly site is provided free-of-charge Statewide by WSDOT and is the largest single source of potential riders for carpools and vanpools. Here in the Puget Sound area, all public agency vanpools are stored in the system making it one of the easiest ways for people to find a van to join.

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If your group is looking for riders, send an email to [vanpool@kingcounty.gov](mailto:vanpool@kingcounty.gov) with the subject line "Riders Wanted" and we will flag your group in the system so that it stands out when people are looking for a vanpool to join.

There is also now a feature that allows people to add their name and contact information to a "riders waitlist" for your group, making it even easier to get in touch with potential riders!

Drivers can access this feature in their RideshareOnline.com account under Ridematch > My Trips and then the 'More Options' button of their vanpool trip.



**Archived Bulletins** - If you have missed any bulletins, we have archived them [here](#).

Thank you and Happy Vanpooling!

Get the latest! Like us on [Facebook](#) to stay up to date on incentives, contests and everything else that's hip about Metro Vanpool.

Send us an [e-mail](#).

Or give us a call at 206-625-4500 during business hours (8-5, M-F).



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[www.kingcounty.gov/metrovans](http://www.kingcounty.gov/metrovans)