



Vanpool Coordination Handbook

Tips for starting, joining, and managing a successful vanpool

Contents

Welcome	3
Who’s Who in Vanpools	5
Get There Connect Can Help!	6
Setting Up a Successful Vanpool	10
What are Best Practices in Vanpooling?	18
Additional Vanpool Support	20



Welcome

Welcome to Get There's Vanpool Coordination Handbook. Whether you are a current coordinator or have interest in becoming one, this handbook provides you with helpful information and tips to get started or keep a vanpool rolling smoothly down the road. With input from current long-term vanpool coordinators, you'll learn about the roles and responsibilities of vanpoolers, the key steps to starting a vanpool, what successful vanpools have in common, and keep your vanpool going the distance.



“Just because you are the coordinator with your name on the rental agreement, it doesn’t mean you have to do it all. Delegate, delegate, delegate.”

— Tip from a Coordinator



Who's Who in Vanpools

Here are the basic roles and responsibilities that every vanpool needs.

VANPOOL COORDINATORS

Vanpool coordinators play an important role in starting a vanpool and keeping it running smoothly.

Vanpool Coordinator Responsibilities

While responsibilities may vary, coordinators typically:

- Sign the vehicle rental agreement* with an authorized vanpool vendor.
- Report monthly ridership and fuel expenses. This information is required for the vendor's billing process and for the vanpool to receive any eligible subsidies. Some vanpools track daily riders using a simple sign-in sheet, while vendors like Commute with Enterprise offer mobile apps and other tools to make reporting easier.
- Establish a monthly payment process for riders.
- Keep the vanpool rider roster up to date.
- Help ensure the vehicle receives scheduled maintenance according to the rental agreement.
- Serve as the primary point of contact for current riders and people interested in joining the vanpool.

Some coordinators take the lead on communications, including scheduling riders and drivers, collecting monthly payments, and developing rules and expectations. Other coordinators share these duties with fellow van riders.

**Generally, van rental agreements are month to month and can be terminated with 30 days' notice.*

Get There Connect Can Help!

Get There Connect is Oregon's free trip planning and ride matching platform, designed to make vanpooling easier for both coordinators and riders.

FOR VANPOOL COORDINATORS

Use Get There Connect to:

- Support rider recruitment and fill open seats.
- Track your vanpool's impact, including miles traveled, money saved, and CO₂ emissions reduced.

Contact info@getthereoregon.org to establish your vanpool in Get There Connect.

FOR VANPOOL RIDERS

Use Get There Connect to:

- Find available vanpools in your area.
- Log your vanpool trips.
- Track your personal savings and environmental impact.
- Join challenges and earn local rewards, as available.

DOWNLOAD THE FREE **GET THERE CONNECT** APP:

Apple App Store



Google Play





VANPOOL RIDERS

A vanpool can include between 5 and 14 riders, depending on the size of the vehicle. The more riders in the van, the lower the monthly rider fare, and the easier it is to establish multiple driver options.

Rider Responsibilities

To help keep the vanpool running smoothly, riders should:

- Review and sign the vanpool's guidelines and expectations established by the coordinator and/or group.
- Complete monthly riding and driving schedules, if applicable.
- Submit monthly payments on time using the vanpool's agreed-upon payment method, even during planned absences such as vacations.
- Provide at least 30 days' notice before leaving the vanpool whenever possible.



VANPOOL DRIVERS

Drivers are vanpool riders who volunteer to drive on assigned days—they are not paid staff. Having multiple approved drivers helps ensure the vanpool can continue operating when someone is sick, on vacation, or otherwise unavailable.

Driver Responsibilities

Drivers are expected to:

- Be at least 25 years old, hold a valid O.U.S. driver's license, and have at least five years of driving history.
- Be approved by the vanpool vendor (such as Commute with Enterprise) before driving.
- Follow the agreed-upon driving schedule.
- Operate the vehicle safely and obey all traffic laws.
- Fuel and keep the vehicle clean.
- Coordinate routine maintenance according to the vendor's maintenance schedule.

VANPOOL VENDORS

Vanpool coordinators often lease vanpool vehicles through authorized vanpool vendors, such as Commute with Enterprise. The vanpool vendor is your primary resource for vehicle rental agreement, maintenance, billing, and day-to-day operational support. They work closely with vanpool coordinators to help keep your vanpool running safely and efficiently.

Vanpool vendors can help you by:

- Setting up a new vanpool rental agreement and selecting the right vehicle.
- Enrolling approved drivers and completing required paperwork.
- Explaining pricing, subsidies, and payment options.
- Coordinating routine maintenance and vehicle repairs.
- Providing roadside assistance and support during emergencies.
- Managing fuel cards, insurance, and billing.
- Assisting with rider recruitment and filling open seats.
- Answering questions about vanpool policies and program requirements.

"We have a logbook in the glove compartment to check off the daily riders. It's very important to do this every day so when the time comes to report for the month, it's all there in one place."

— Tip from a Coordinator

Setting Up a Successful Vanpool

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

One of the first decisions your group will make is where to meet each day and where the vehicle will be stored when it's not in use.

Consider the following:

- Where will riders meet before traveling to and from work?
- Will the driver take the vehicle home, or will it be parked at a convenient location such as a Park & Ride?
- Are there nearby Park & Ride locations that could serve as a central meeting point?

Tip: Use **Get There Connect** to plan your route and locate Park & Ride facilities along your commute.

If the van is stored overnight, review your rental agreement to understand where the vehicle may be parked and what is covered in the event of theft or damage.

COMMUNICATION

Clear communication helps keep your vanpool running smoothly. Decide early on how riders will communicate with one another and use that method consistently.

- Common communication tools include:
- Group text messages
- Email
- Messaging apps
- Phone calls (for urgent situations)

Use your chosen communication channel to share schedule changes, delays, absences, and important updates.

“Have an active riders’ contact list (email, cell and work phone numbers) in the van at all times. Use group texts to alert people when someone is sick or unable to ride or drive. You don’t want to wait for someone who isn’t riding or worse, leave him or her behind.”

— Tip from a Coordinator



SCHEDULING

A reliable schedule helps everyone know when and where to be each day. In addition to setting departure times, determine who will be driving and how schedule changes will be handled. Discuss questions such as:

- Should drivers have set days they are assigned to drive all the time, or will it vary by week?
- Will the same driver handle both the morning and afternoon commute, or will driving responsibilities be split?
- How long will the vanpool wait for a rider in the morning or evening before it leaves?
- Who will serve as backup drivers when someone is unavailable due to illness, vacation, or other circumstances?

Tip: Consider using a shared online calendar so riders can easily view driving assignments, planned absences, and schedule updates.

FARES AND PAYMENT

Monthly vanpool fares are typically calculated by dividing the total operating costs—including vehicle rental, fuel, and parking expenses, minus any applicable subsidies—among the riders. Because costs and ridership can change over time, it's important to establish a payment structure that works for your group.

Consider the following when setting fares:

- **Shared responsibilities:** Will riders who serve as drivers or coordinators receive a reduced fare in recognition of their additional responsibilities?
- **Payment method:** If fares remain consistent each month, consider setting up automatic payments to reduce late or missed payments. Depending on your vanpool vendor, riders may be able to pay through an online portal, directly to the coordinator, or into a dedicated vanpool account.
- **Flexible ridership:** Consider how your vanpool will accommodate part-time or occasional riders. Many vanpools offer prorated fares or charge a nominal fee for one-time trips.

Tip: Review your fare structure periodically to ensure it continues to reflect current operating costs and the needs of your vanpool.



MAINTAIN RIDERSHIP

If ridership is low, you can:

- Ask riders to help recruit new members.
- Contact your vanpool vendor for help in finding possible riders.
- Ask the Human Resources Representative or Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) at your worksite for a list of co-workers who may live in your area, to post flyers at your worksite, and to advertise within your company.
- If your vanpool is funded with a federal, state, or local subsidy, it is considered “public transit” and will be listed in Get There Connect if there are seats available. If a potential rider reaches out with interest, your vanpool vendor will connect them to you to determine if it is a good fit.

EXTRAS

Do you want extra items for your vanpool like a wheelchair lift, Wi-Fi, satellite radio, or bike racks? These can often be added to agreements with vanpool vendors.

VANPOOLS IN ACTION

No two vanpools are alike. They can vary in a number of ways, including the coordinator's role, the level of responsibility for drivers and riders, whether discounts are offered for vanpool coordination and driving, how rosters are updated, payment collection, and overall vanpool road culture. Below are examples of three common vanpool operation models, with roles/responsibilities shown in Table 1. You could use one of these operation models or create or customize one that best works for your van.

Coordinator-led: The vanpool coordinator takes full responsibility for the vanpool's functioning. This model could leave the vanpool operation vulnerable if the coordinator chooses to leave, as other riders wouldn't have the knowledge or experience to take up leadership.

Cooperative-based: Allows for all riders to have ownership of the vanpool's functioning.

60/40 Coordinator Shared: Allows for shared leadership of the vanpool's functioning.

"Have riders set up individual monthly direct pay accounts with the vanpool provider to avoid having to collect checks from everyone."

— Tip from a Coordinator

Table 1: Sample Vanpool Operation Models

MODEL	ROLE	RENTAL HOLDER	PAYMENT COLLECTION	VAN ROSTER	VAN SCHEDULE	MAINTENANCE	DRIVE	DISCOUNT*	
Coordinator-led	Coordinator	X	X	X	X	X	X	Y	
	Riders							N	
	Riders/ Drivers						X	Y	
Cooperative-based	Coordinator	X		X			X	Y	
	Riders		X		X	X		Y	
	Riders/ Drivers					X	X	Y	
60 / 40 Coordinator Shared	Coordinator	X		X			X	Y	
	Rider		X		X	X		N	
	Riders/ Drivers						X	Y	

* Should your vanpool offer discounts for various duties, remaining riders will need to be charged more to meet the monthly operating expense

	NOTES
	Rides for free
	\$15/month discount. Van has a different driver for each day with one back up driver.
	\$25/month discount for coordinator. If coordinator also drives, no fee for monthly seat. All riders pay a base \$25 membership fee.
	\$15 off to riders who help clean and maintain van.
	\$5 off every day you drive
	\$10/month discount
	\$2.50 off every day you drive

What are Best Practices in Vanpooling?

It is essential to start off with an agreed upon list of your vanpool's rules and expectations with signatures from all riders.

Your vanpool vendor can assist with creating a list of rules and expectations for your van. Once created, make sure all riders sign it.

Some common rules and expectations include:

- Use agreed upon communications channels. Be clear on how the riders will communicate with one another. Group texts work well for many vanpools.
- Be on time. Set a time frame of how long the van will wait for a rider.
- Pay on time. Be clear about when payment is due, how much it is, when and what notification will happen (e.g., email), and how to pay (individual Enterprise accounts, direct pay to the Coordinator, or by check).
- Try to keep schedule changes to a minimum. Use online calendars and email or print at the beginning of the month and share them with everyone. It's important to make sure you know who is driving and riding each day.



"Make sure your vanpool stays fiscally healthy and create a rainy day fund by agreeing on a slight increase (7-10%) to each seat's monthly cost. It's a good idea to have at least one month's rental fee in the bank to cover costs should ridership be low or the vanpool ceases."

— Tip from a Coordinator

Additional Vanpool Support

AVAILABLE SUBSIDIES

Vanpool subsidies are funds that directly offset the individual cost for commuters to participate in a vanpool program. Learn more about available vanpool subsidies in Oregon at getthereoregon.org/for-employers/benefits-program-solutions.

EMERGENCY RIDE HOME (ERH) PROGRAM

Emergencies can happen. Emergency Ride Home (ERH), sometimes called Guaranteed Ride Home, is a program that provides reimbursement or a voucher for a free ride home, often through a taxi service or ride share provider, in the event of a qualifying emergency that prevents you from using your planned commute option. Check with your vanpool vendor to confirm if an ERH program is part of your rental agreement. In many regions of Oregon, you can qualify for ERH when you regularly log your commute trips in Get There Connect.

To see if a public program is available in your region, email info@getthereoregon.org.

Qualifying emergencies typically include:

- Personal or family illness or emergency
- Vanpool ride home is suddenly unavailable due to driver illness or emergency
- Unscheduled overtime

Non-qualifying emergencies typically include:

- Planned overtime, personal errands, or scheduled appointments
- Business related travel
- Regional disasters, such as earthquake or flood
- Inclement weather

“We charge \$5 extra every month to cover us in lean summer months when students leave the van before they return in fall. If our fund gets too big, Enterprise sends us a check and our van decides how to use it.”

— Tip from a Coordinator



"Have two online calendars: one for riders and one for drivers. Agree to fill them in at the beginning of the month to avoid the scheduling frenzies and headaches."

— Tip from a Coordinator

FLEXIBLE COMMUTER BENEFITS

Check with your employer to see if they can help pay your vanpool costs or provide pre-tax benefits.

Section 132F of the Federal tax code enables employers to provide pre-tax payment options for transit and parking, which can apply to vanpools in two ways:

Direct subsidies: Employers can receive a tax deduction for the money they contribute each month to your vanpool fare, up to a certain amount.

Pre-tax benefits: Employees can save on vanpooling as part of the commuter tax benefits available in Oregon.

Learn more at GetThereOregon.org/Benefits.

CONTACT

To set up or join a vanpool, inquire about vanpool subsidies and requirements, or recruit riders, contact:



GetThereOregon.org

info@getthereoregon.org



GetThereOregon.org



971-202-9758



info@GetThereOregon.org

 **get there**
oregon