

## Frequently Asked Questions

### ***What is the CommuteInfo program?***

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission operates the region's carpool and vanpool program under the name CommuteInfo. The goal is for commuters living, working or attending school within the [10-county Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission region](#) to choose ridesharing, instead of driving alone, at least twice a week.

To support the carpool and vanpool program CommuteInfo also offers ridematching services, an emergency ride home service, and provides information for commuters and employers about the benefits of ridesharing and how the program works.

Commuters can register with CommuteInfo to request a [commuting options report](#) which includes contact information for the [regional fixed route transit operators](#), regional [park-n-ride facilities](#) and a list of other individuals making a similar commute who are interested in [vanpooling](#), [carpooling](#), and/or [bikepooling](#). Commuters can request their [commuting options report](#) on-line or by calling toll-free: 1-888-819-6110.

Employers can access technical assistance, [articles](#), posters, and surveys to use during employee recruitment, with job applicants or with existing employees. Employers can contact CommuteInfo staff toll-free at: 1-888-819-6110.

SPC delivers the CommuteInfo program with the support, cooperation, and collaboration of [many agencies and organizations in the region including transportation management associations, transit operators, employers, job training agencies, and non-profit service organizations.](#)

### ***What is CommuteInfo's service area?***

CommuteInfo serves employers and employees working, living or attending school within the 10 counties in Southwestern PA (including [Allegheny](#), [Armstrong](#), [Beaver](#), [Butler](#), [Fayette](#), [Greene](#), [Indiana](#), [Lawrence](#), [Washington](#), and [Westmoreland](#) counties).

### ***What is the address for the CommuteInfo website?***

[www.CommuteInfo.org](http://www.CommuteInfo.org) (not case sensitive)

### ***How can I reach a CommuteInfo staff person by phone?***

You can call the toll-free number, 1-888-819-6110.

### ***What will it cost me to register with the CommuteInfo program?***

There is absolutely no cost to register.

### ***Why should commuters register with the CommuteInfo program?***

By registering with CommuteInfo, commuters will receive a commute options report, informational updates and may be eligible for other discounts as well as participation in the [Emergency Ride Home service](#).

***Why do you need my address and phone number [for other personal information when requesting a commuting options report]?***

In order to find the best match for commuters, CommuteInfo staff will need to know where commuters begin and end their commute as well as how they can be contacted. For more information, refer to the [CommuteInfo Terms of Use and Privacy policy](#) on the program's website.

***Where can commuters get bus information/schedules for [my area]?***

A list of all the public fixed route transit operators within the region is available on-line at [www.CommuteInfo.org](http://www.CommuteInfo.org). Since updates to scheduling, fares, etc. are made regularly, CommuteInfo staff recommends commuters check with the transit operators directly for the most up-to-date schedule and fare information.

***What is a vanpool?***

A vanpool is a group of 7 to 15 people who commute to and from work together but do not necessarily work in the same location.

***What is a vanpool like?***

Each vanpool group decides together on things such as seating arrangements and type of music. The vans used for vanpooling are specially customized for the riders' comfort and seat 7 to 15 passengers.

***Who drives the vanpool vehicle?***

**The vanpool drivers are all volunteers.** At least two volunteers from each group serve as drivers, and one signs the lease for the van. All drivers are provided with training and a review of the safety systems before they start driving. Each vanpool group decides seating arrangements, pick up points, route, schedule and how to share costs. Anyone who is interested in becoming a driver of a vanpool group, must first submit an application and have a satisfactory review of their driving history. In the case of volunteer who will serve as the lease holder, they also must have a credit check run if they are responsible for the monthly payment of the vanpool's monthly invoice.

***Will the vanpool pick me up at my house?***

Vanpool groups generally have a set number of pick-up stops where riders gather to get on the van. The pick-up and drop-off locations are in conveniently located areas where the riders can meet to board the van and may even be within walking distance of your home.

***What does it cost to ride in a vanpool?***

Vanpool costs vary based on the length of the commute, the number of people riding on the van, whether the group pays for parking as well as many other factors. In general most of our vanpool participants pay an average of \$90 to \$110 per rider per month. Remember this is an average. Once you complete the Commuter Profile, we can help determine whether there is a vanpool option available to you, and put you in touch directly with that vanpool coordinator who can give you many more details about their group, including cost.

***What is a carpool?***

A carpool is a group of 2 or more people who commute to and from work together but do not necessarily work in the same location.

***What is a carpool like?***

Each carpool group decides together on things such as seating arrangements and type of music.

***Who drives the carpool?***

The carpool drivers are all volunteers. The members of the group decide who will drive and whether the members will take turns driving.

***Will the carpool pick me up at my house?***

Carpool groups generally have a set number of pick-up stops where riders gather. The pick-up and drop-off locations are in conveniently located areas where the riders can meet and may even be within walking distance of your home.

***What does it cost to ride in a carpool?***

Carpool costs are decided by the members of the carpool group. Some carpools encourage each member to take a turn driving and no actual “costs” are shared. In other cases, one member of the carpool drives all the time and the members help pay toward the cost of the ride. Since the way costs are shared vary group to group, it is important to discuss cost-sharing with the other members of the carpool BEFORE deciding to ride.

***What about insurance for the carpool?***

The CommuteInfo staff encourages all members of the carpool group to check with their insurance agent BEFORE they begin carpooling to determine their coverage needs.

***Is there “vanpool” or “carpool” etiquette?***

Deciding to share a ride is an important decision—and if you decide to join, it could mean involvement with the group for 30, 60 or even 90+ minutes every workday. CommuteInfo staff suggests you take some time to meet your potential ridesharing buddies BEFORE making the decision to join a ridesharing arrangement. Contact the driver and/or other riders and set up time for a phone call, coffee or lunch. We have included some questions below which you might include in this conversation.

- Where will you need to meet?
- How flexible are the pickup times?
- What type of vehicle is used?
- How many riders are there?
- What costs are shared? (Maintenance, Fuel, Parking)
- Are riders allowed to smoke during the commute?
- Is music played during the commute? If yes, what type?
- Are eating and drinking permitted in the vehicle?
- Do I need to be prepared to drive sometimes?
- What is the back-up plan in case of an emergency?

***Where can commuters find information on biking to work [bike trails]?***

The CommuteInfo website includes information about [biking](#) to work or school. If commuters do not have access to the internet, CommuteInfo can send information through the mail.

***What is the CommuteInfo Emergency Ride Home service?***

The [ERH service](#) provides reimbursement for commuters participating in a registered CommuteInfo vanpool, carpool, bikepool, or who are eligible transit riders, to get home in the event of an unexpected personal or family emergency, personal illness, unscheduled overtime, or other covered event. Program guidelines and forms are available on the program's website.

In the event of an emergency, the commuter simply arranges for the ride home, pays, and obtains a receipt. Then a [refund application](#) and copy of the receipt are submitted to CommuteInfo for processing and reimbursement.

For more information:

**[www.CommuteInfo.org](http://www.CommuteInfo.org)**

**1-888-819-6110**