

# Rideshare Currents

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## WSF's Rideshare Website Gets Waves of Good Reviews

Earlier this year, Washington State Ferries surfed into the 21st century, unveiling a new rideshare website, [www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/rideshare](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/rideshare). Ferry customers who have used the site found it incredibly user-friendly. They can visit the site, create an account, and register, renew or update vanpool, carpool, and bicycle permits.

"The system is looking better all the time, and if annual renewal is as simple as an Internet request, I'm all for it," said Dina Madson, who takes a vanpool between Seattle and Bainbridge Island.

Another vanpooler, Bob O'Brien, who commutes from Mukilteo to Clinton, shared similar experiences. "The site looks great and I will definitely use it again to take care of my renewals. I don't generally have time to hassle with 'snail mail' any more," he said. "So, I was pleased to see [the state's] quick and efficient method for renewing our vanpool online. Thanks for raising the service bar to a whole new level!"

Visit WSF's Rideshare website to:

- Register or renew vanpool, carpool, and bicycle permits
- Add or delete riders from your group

- Update addresses and phone numbers
- Update vehicle information (add a vehicle, change a license plate)
- Browse the vanpool list to find an existing group.



Check the new WSF rideshare website: [www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/rideshare](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/rideshare)

Customers can create an online account at any time. Member information will be stored, so renewing your permit each February will be a simple three-steps!

- (1) Log on.
- (2) Verify or Update the information.
- (3) Submit!

The site also enables members to receive informative emails concerning service information, changes to the program, and new programs and incentives. It's an invaluable way to ensure you stay updated on important rideshare information and the options available to you.

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## Commuters Win Prizes During Rideshare Week

Want to win prizes just for commuting to work? Each year, during the third week of October, Washington State Ridesharing Organization (WSRO) holds Washington State Rideshare Week to encourage commuters to find an alternative to driving alone.

Participants are asked to carpool, vanpool, ride the bus, bicycle or walk at least once during the annual campaign. They are then eligible for a drawing to win great prizes, including round-trip airline and rail tickets, dinner cruises, opera and theater tickets, autographed sports memorabilia, and more.

Rideshare Week first started in 1988 as Rideshare Day. WSRO expanded it to Rideshare Week in 1991, which included a statewide campaign, Governor's proclamation, and grade-school poster coloring contest. Fast forwarding ahead to 2001, 44 organizations donated many different prizes and 23,428 people participated statewide.

Want more information? Call Megan Roberts at 253-591-5380, or send her an e-mail at [mroberts@ci.tacoma.wa.us](mailto:mroberts@ci.tacoma.wa.us).

## Ferry Riders Get Personalized Commute Help

Ferry commuters can get personalized help in finding others who would like to share a ride through a new program, Rideshare Plus. Rideshare Plus is a partnership among Washington State Ferries, Kitsap Transit, and King County Metro to promote ridesharing on the following ferry routes: Bainbridge Island to Seattle, Bremerton to Seattle, and the Fauntleroy/Vashon/Southworth sailings.

Rideshare Plus offers a personalized vanpool, carpool, VanShare and ridematching service to help make sharing a ride easier. Vanpools are formed for groups of five or more people who share a similar commute. They pay a low monthly fare that covers the cost of the van, gas, insurance, and maintenance. Currently, new vanpoolers get up to \$260 in vouchers to spend at local businesses such as REI. Other perks include

the driver riding for free, free use of the van for personal errands, and free vehicle loading on the ferries.

VanShare provides vans at either end of your ferry commute to get you to the dock, or from the dock to your workplace, available only in Kitsap and King counties. New VanShare groups can enjoy their first month free for parking and fares.

When you rideshare, you can save more time with preferential loading on the Washington State Ferries for registered carpools and vanpools.

Julie Paone coordinates both programs and can help you find a better way to get to and from work. Call 206-263-6088 or email to [Julie.paone@metrokc.gov](mailto:Julie.paone@metrokc.gov).

## Hey, Commuters! Are You Still Paying With Tickets?

Washington State Ferries recently lowered the cost of the ferry-only monthly pass for passengers. Monthly passes provide a discount for customers traveling 16 or more round trips in a month. If you are in this category, consider buying this pass.

Customers can purchase the pass online from the 15th through the 26th of the preceding month, and

at certain retail locations through the fourth of the current pass month.

For a list of participating retailers, visit WSF's website, [www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries) or call 1-888-808-7977. WSF currently does not sell the ferry-only monthly pass at ferry terminals because of the congestion it would create as a result of the high sales volume.

To submit story ideas or comments, please send them:

**RIDESHARE CURRENTS**  
2911 Second Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98121-1012  
(206) 515-3771  
[cavanmi@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:cavanmi@wsdot.wa.gov)

*Produced by the partnerships of Washington State Ferries, King County Metro, and Kitsap Transit. Photos by Stephen J. Brown*

This information is available in accessible formats on request at 206-684-2046 or TTY 206-689-3413.

## Ferry FAQ's

### What is the minimum age requirement for carpools and vanpools?

With WSF, there is no minimum age requirement. However, public transit vans do have certain restrictions. Check with your local agency.

### What happens if a rider in my carpool is sick or on vacation. Are we still considered a carpool?

Unfortunately, no. Carpools must have at least three people in the vehicle to be considered a valid carpool, and therefore given preferential loading.

### I've seen vanpools with only one person receive preferential loading. Why is that?

Part of the benefit of being in a vanpool is that there is no minimum passenger requirement to board the ferry. However, regardless of the number of people in the van, Vanpools are always required to pay for a minimum of four passengers.

### What happens if I can't make my designated sailing time?

Under the rules of the program, all members are allowed preferential loading on the sailing immediately following their designated sailing, provided they are in line at least 10 minutes before departure.

### My company works in alternating locations. Can I have a permit for several routes?

Currently, WSF restricts all customers to a specific route and sailing time. In the future, we hope to provide a way for customers to have this flexibility for employment purposes.

### I've heard there are a few sailings that are unavailable. Is this true?

Right now, all sailings are available. However, due to terminal constraints, WSF must limit the number of preferential loads for each sailing. Because there is a finite amount of space on the vessels and at our terminal lots, WSF limits the number of vanpools and carpools that may sign up for a certain sailing. Vessels with lesser vehicle capacity, and terminals with less dock space cannot accommodate as many vanpools and carpools as others may.

### How do monthly passes work with vanpools and carpools?

Passengers may use monthly passes as ferry fare payment. This is an especially good way for vanpools to pay, as there is never a vehicle fare with WSF. Carpools are required to also pay a vehicle and driver fare. However, photocopies of passes are not acceptable for fare payment.

## Cruise Through These Tips For A Smoother Ride

Sharing the ride has many benefits, but even the easiest of riding companions can benefit from following some simple guidelines. Here are some suggestions to ensure a pleasant commute:

1. Work out some rules in advance.
2. Decide how to handle issues like smoking, eating and drinking in the car, radio playing, waiting times for tardy riders, seating arrangements, and driving rotation.
3. You may want to talk about talking in the car. Some people enjoy it, others don't—especially in traffic.
4. Agree on how to handle vacations and bad weather. And don't forget to give everyone a list with each member's home and work phone numbers, in case of illness or emergency.
5. For those who share a vehicle, determine a maintenance schedule and stick to it.



**Do you have questions about ridesharing on the ferries?**

Send your questions to Rideshare Currents. Deadline for the next publication is December 1st. Look forward to hearing from our readers.



## Currents Trivia

Courtesy of Seattle Weekly's  
August 29, 2002 issue.

- 76 Percent of U.S. workers who drove alone to their jobs in 2000, up from 64 percent two decades earlier.
- 48 Number of states in which the percentage of solo commuters increased over the last 10 years. (Washington and Oregon are the other two.)
- 25.5 Average one-way commute, in minutes, of U.S. workers.
- 5 Percentage of U.S. workers who utilized public transit in 2000.

## Enter Vanpool Variety Contest!

## Give Your Vehicle A Rest ... Use A Public Van!

Groups of five to fifteen people all over the Puget Sound region are choosing to vanpool. The choice of using your own vehicle or a public van is up to you. Here's some things to consider before making your decisions.

Public vanpool providers supply the van and everything else for successful ridesharing, such as:

- Rider support services
- Maintenance, fuel and tires
- Insurance
- Training

In Bremerton, Kitsap Transit offers free parking for their vans right below the Bremerton Transportation Center (WSF ferry terminal). For those commuters who do not need to drive aboard the ferry, and don't travel a great distance, VanShare provides this same service for considerably less out-of-pocket expense.

Add up all these incentives and amenities, and it all adds up to savings for you. For a list of public vanpool providers, visit [www.rideshareonline.com](http://www.rideshareonline.com), or call Julie Paone at 206-263-6088.

## WSF's Rideshare Program—A Brief History

Washington State Ferries' Rideshare Program was founded in 1987 to provide incentives for high occupancy vehicles (HOVs). In April 1996, we upgraded the rules to comply with revised Legislative codes that merged vanpools and carpools into one category, referred to as "Rideshare Vehicles." Three Rideshare Vehicle categories were established as follows:

1. Rideshare vehicles for institutionally based persons with special transportation needs.
2. Rideshare vehicles owned and leased out by transit agencies to the public.
3. Privately owned commuter ridesharing vehicles.

Since then, we have made refinements to the program, which includes offering the program 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. And, we've retained some of the alluring perks, such as waiving the vehicle fare for vanpools. WSF hopes that solo drivers will note all the benefits of the rideshare program and be encouraged to convert to the HOV program.

WSF is continuing to make improvements to the program by facilitating customer service, minimizing logistical impacts to our members, and increasing understanding of the program by both customers and staff.

## Ahoy Vanpoolers! Enter the Vanpool Variety Contest!

Rideshare vans may look the same, but what's inside can be quite different. Nominate your vanpool to be featured in the next edition of **Rideshare Currents**.

Tell us about your vanpool experience, and what things you do to make commuting fun, fulfilling, or fruitful (in less than 500 words, please). Here's some ideas to write about: Do you have potluck breakfasts? Read books aloud? Do you have crazy hat day? Do you decorate your van interiors?

Send in your stories by Dec. 1 to Rideshare Currents at 2911 Second Avenue, Seattle, WA 98121-1012. Or email us at: [cavanmi@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:cavanmi@wsdot.wa.gov).

Be sure to include contact information. Feel free to include a photo. Otherwise, we'll contact the winners to give them an opportunity to pose for us. We will feature one vanpool in each quarterly edition.

