

# Vantage Point

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2009



## Flooding, Congestion and Detours – Oh My!

### Are you ready to deal with a major emergency in the Puget Sound area?

In the event of a public emergency such as a natural disaster or Homeland Security alert, Pierce Transit reserves the right to recall, restrict or reassign all Pierce Transit vehicles, including commuter vanpool vans. Any such decision will be dictated by the situation, but the priority will always be safe commuter van operations. If Pierce Transit decides to recall, restrict, or reassign your vanpool vehicle, operational costs related to that decision will not be charged to your group.

In the event Pierce Transit restricts usage of its vanpool vehicles and a group fails to adhere to the restriction, any costs incurred are the volunteer driver's responsibility. Pierce Transit may apply a fare reduction due to restricted vanpool vehicle use. The restriction must reduce possible commuting days to 80% or less of the individual vanpool group's average commute, based on average number of days listed on the fare sheet.

Every vanpool group should have an alternate route plan in place should road/weather conditions warrant a detour. Pierce Transit does not allow free miles due to a route deviation. Route deviation miles, regardless of the reason, are reported as personal mileage on the Ridership and Mileage Calculation report and paid for using the current mileage rate current at the time the deviation applies. All vanpool participants riding at the time of detour share the cost of these miles, so the majority of the riders participating on a route deviation day must agree to the deviation before it is made.



### Get updates on weather, traffic, flooding and emergencies:

The following links may help you plan your route amidst the obstacles:

Regional Public Information Network: [www.rpin.org](http://www.rpin.org)

Green River Valley Flood Safety: [www.kingcounty.gov/floodplans](http://www.kingcounty.gov/floodplans)

Howard Hanson Dam Fact Sheet: [www.nws.usace.army.mil/](http://www.nws.usace.army.mil/)

WSDOT: [https://service.govdelivery.com/service/multi\\_subscribe.html?code=WSDOT](https://service.govdelivery.com/service/multi_subscribe.html?code=WSDOT)

Vantage Point is a publication of Pierce Transit.

Editors: Heidi Hunter [hhunter@piercetransit.org](mailto:hhunter@piercetransit.org) & Kim Pontsler [kpontsler@piercetransit.org](mailto:kpontsler@piercetransit.org)

Please consider the environment before printing this email and if you must print, print duplex and save paper!



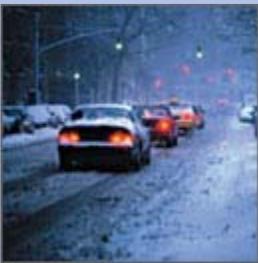
## WINTER DRIVING TIPS



### DRIVE SAFELY

### ARRIVE ALIVE

Always wear your seatbelt



Stay alert, slow down and stay in control.

### STEER CLEAR OF PLOWS



### Some tried-and-true winter driving tips to ensure you arrive safely:

- **Get a grip.** Make sure you have good tires with at least 6/32-inch tread depth. Carry chains in case conditions worsen suddenly.
- **Change wiper blades.** Fill up your windshield washer reservoir. It's also a good idea to have some de-icer on board.
- **Stomp, stay, and steer.** Remember that "pumping" the brake is not necessary with antilock brakes, which all of our vans are equipped with. For maximum control, step on the brake firmly, then ease up until you feel the brakes pulse. Don't over-steer on ice.
- **Check your lights.** Please clear headlights and taillights of snow so that your lights are visible to others on the road.
- **Pack a winter travel safety kit.** It's a good idea to have a cell phone, ice scraper, tow rope, bag of sand (for traction), small ground tarp (for installing chains), blankets, flashlights, non-perishable snacks and water.
- **Slow down.** Reduce your speed. Posted speed limits are meant for dry pavement.
- **Increase your following distance.** When driving in less than ideal conditions, increase your following distance to more than four seconds.
- **If you get stuck in the snow,** straighten your wheel and accelerate slowly.
- **If your tires lose traction,** steer in the direction you want to go and ease off the accelerator if your wheels start to spin while going uphill.
- **Watch for icy surfaces.** Winter weather means black ice. Be especially cautious when driving over bridges and overpasses.
- **Skip cruise control when it's freezing.** You should never use cruise control in inclement weather, which includes rain and snow.
- **Keep your gas tank at least half-full.** If you do get stuck, make sure you have plenty of fuel since your vehicle's engine will be your only source of heat. Keeping the tank at least half-full also prevents moisture from building up in the tank.
- **If you get stuck, stay in your vehicle.** Unless you know you can walk to safety without risk, stay warm inside your car and wait for help. Keep your exhaust pipe clear of snow and ice so carbon monoxide won't build up inside the car.

### PLAY IT SAFE!

Severe winter driving conditions may make you nervous, uncomfortable, or fearful. Stay off the road if you're not comfortable driving in inclement weather, and implement the group's Alternate Transportation Plan or stay home. Proper preparation and the right skills will help you face the challenge of winter driving.



# What's Happening



## Vanpool Facts

### WPC (Washington Policy Center) supports vanpooling.

Do you know what the most efficient mode of public transit is? It's not light rail or fixed-route buses; it's vanpools. In the Puget Sound region there are more than 1,700 vanpools that carry more than 5 million passenger trips per year. WPC recently released a new video that includes interviews of vanpool users and talks about the program's benefits and stability. With more than 20 programs statewide, Washington has the largest public vanpool fleet in the country. For more information use link below.

<http://www.congestionrelief.org/>

Additionally, the WPC launched the Center for Transportation in 2006, an organization that researches and analyzes best practices for relieving traffic congestion in the Puget Sound region and around the state. The organization provides a wealth of information focusing on traffic congestion relief, and works with the Department of Transportation and other local, state and federal transportation agencies.

Check out their website! We're sure you'll find some interesting trivia to discuss on your vanpool. In October they posted Vanpool Facts of the Day, which are still listed in the left column of the link below.

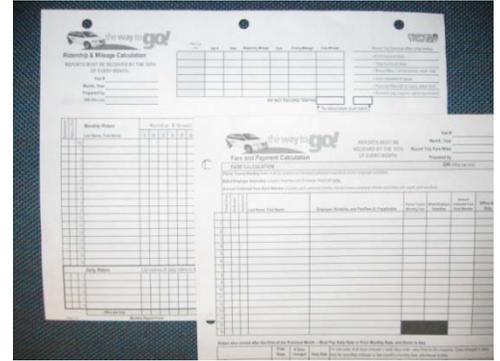
<http://www.washingtonpolicy.org/Centers/transportation/index.html>

## Bookkeeper Brief's

### Keep copies of your Vanpool monthly reports.

Have you ever had your vanpool coordinator call asking for a copy of your monthly reports?

Occasionally we do need to make this request. Please keep the pink copy for your records if you handwrite the reports, or keep a copy available electronically in case we need your assistance. Thanks.



## Who's on your list?

### Keeping a wait list? Please refer them to us.

Got folks interested in joining your van, but your van is currently full? It's okay to make a wait list to keep track of wannabe riders. Please also refer those people to us, so we can help them find a van that currently has room. If your group does keep a wait list, please be sure to follow it in order. A rider on a wait list cannot be skipped because they paid on or are currently riding another van.

Remember, Pierce Transit is a public agency, and as such, cannot turn away riders unless a van is full. Vans can be considered full when they have two fewer riders than the maximum published capacity for that van. For example, a 12-passenger van may be considered full with ten total riders.

Thanks for helping us make the best use of our resources and helping fellow commuters enjoy a vanpool.



# REMINDERS



## VANPOOL

24/7 Emergency  
253.381.3762

Direct Line  
253.983.3377  
7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Fleet Maintenance  
235.905.5306  
7 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Fax  
253.984.8227

## RIDESHARE

1.888.814.1300

[RideshareOnline.com](http://RideshareOnline.com)

## PIERCE TRANSIT

Customer Services  
253.581.8000

Toll Free  
1.800.562.8109

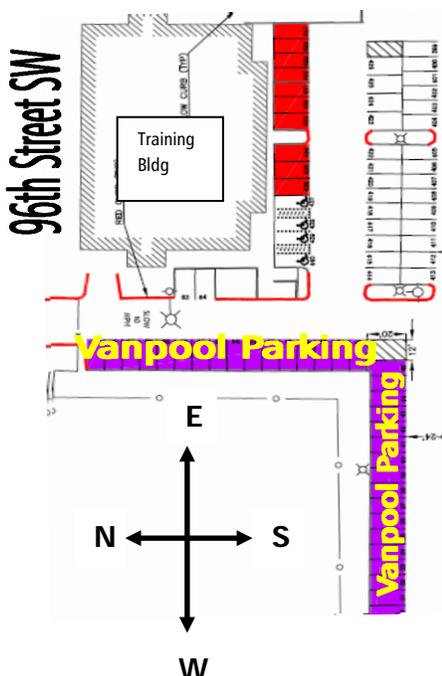
TDD Customer Services  
253.582.7951

[piercetransit.org](http://piercetransit.org)

Next issue when? In 2010.

## Swapping Vans for Service

Where should you park the van?



**Bringing your van in for service:** Find your spare van and back your regular van into an available vanpool parking stall in the designated areas only (see purple area of diagram marked "Vanpool parking"). Be aware of van overhang and surroundings.

Even though you see vans parked in other areas, please park in designated vanpool parking stalls only. Thanks!



## Holiday Parking

**If you park overnight at a location other than home – please move your van.**

If your van is not in operation during the holidays due to time off and/or a plant closure, please make sure your van is parked in an approved overnight location. Vans not currently parked at a volunteer vanpool driver's home must relocate to a volunteer vanpool driver's home during the holiday period. Please let us know where the van will be parked if your overnight parking location changes. Note: Vanpools currently approved to park at Tacoma Dome Station (TDS) may remain at TDS. We will provide those van numbers to TDS Security so they do not issue parking citations.



The Pierce Transit Vanpool team wishes you and yours a safe and happy holiday!