



VOLUNTEER VANPOOL FAQs

Q. If I join the vanpool, what is my commitment?

A. You only make a month-to-month commitment. You may leave the van at any time with five days' written notice, allowing the group to recruit a new rider and keep fares stable.

Q. Do I get picked up at my front door?

A. Not usually. The group determines its route and schedule, and most groups choose convenient park and ride lots or other meeting points to keep mileage and commute times at a minimum. Pierce Transit must approve the route and schedule, which cannot be changed without our approval. The origin *or* destination of each vanpool's route must be in Pierce County.

Q. What happens when I'm sick or on vacation?

A. Your monthly fare reserves your seat whether you ride or not. Refunds are not permitted. You can arrange to sublet your seat to a temporary rider while you're away. Typically, individuals will sublet their seat for two or more weeks; no minimum is required. However, subletting is limited to 90 calendar days. Just be sure to let your volunteer bookkeeper know and complete the Sublet Seat form. This rider will also need to complete and submit a Volunteer Vanpool Participant Agreement Acceptance form.

Q. How do we pay for gas?

A. Each vehicle is issued a Voyager Fleet Card to be used by approved volunteer drivers for fueling the van.

Q. How are monthly fares determined?

A. Monthly fares are based on the number of average daily roundtrip miles traveled and the number of monthly passengers in the vanpool at the beginning of each month. Fares cover expenses associated with all operating and administrative costs, including fuel, maintenance, and insurance.

Q. What happens if the vanpool group gains or loses a rider?

A. Passenger fares are charged each month according to the current ridership level. So, fares may increase or decrease as your group changes riders.

Q. How do we find more riders?

A. Our Vanpool Recruitment Coordinators can work directly with you and your company to help recruit riders. And, our staff offer computerized ridematching services through the statewide RideshareOnline.com service to provide you with names of potential vanpoolers. Just call 253.581.8000 or 1.888.814.1300 to request a ridematch. Or you can logon to RideshareOnline.com and find your own matches. You may be able to recruit new riders through your company newsletter, posting signs around your worksite, or using your worksite's Intranet services – just be sure to gain your employer's approval first. Pierce Transit can supply you with Riders Wanted posters.

Q. What are the volunteer bookkeeper's responsibilities?

A. Volunteer bookkeepers are responsible for collecting the appropriate fares from each rider before the first day of each month and for completing and submitting monthly reports. Reports and fares must arrive at Pierce Transit no later than the 10th of each month.

Q. Is smoking allowed in the vanpool vehicle?

A. No. By State law, Pierce Transit does not allow smoking in or within 25 feet of any of its vehicles or facilities.

Q. What about insurance coverage?

A. Pierce Transit is self-insured, providing coverage for the van and for all its authorized occupants. In addition, we purchase uninsured motorist coverage. Volunteer vanpool drivers should discuss their personal medical insurance needs with their insurance agent to ensure adequate personal insurance should they be injured in an at-fault accident. As a public agency, we cannot obtain Personal Injury Protection (PIP) insurance. If the vanpool is involved in an accident in which our volunteer driver is not at fault, all claims will be directed to the other driver's insurance. Pierce Transit cannot provide assistance to you for personal claims in these instances. We will not assume any liability or provide any coverage in these instances. Think of it as similar to renting a car or driving your own car.

Q. Are there special criteria for volunteer driver selection?

A. Absolutely! Your safety comes first. To help ensure that we have the best volunteer drivers available, they must be at least 25 years old with five years of recent driving history, have a valid Washington State driver's license, a safe driving record, and proof of insurability. All potential volunteer drivers must also attend our Defensive Driving Orientation. Applying volunteer drivers will only be insured once all requirements are met.

Q. What are the volunteer primary driver's basic responsibilities?

A. The primary volunteer driver is responsible for picking up and delivering passengers, arranging for van maintenance, van cleaning, and fueling. On days that the primary volunteer driver won't be driving, s/he is also responsible for ensuring that an approved backup volunteer driver is available.

Q. Sounds like a lot of work. How does the primary volunteer driver benefit?

A. Pierce Transit allows one free monthly fare to each van. The primary volunteer driver usually gets this benefit and doesn't pay a fare, provided there are at least five paying riders. All approved volunteer drivers are entitled to personal use of the van (with some restrictions) at Pierce Transit's current mileage rate, not to exceed monthly mileage limits.

Q. What happens if the primary volunteer driver is sick or on vacation?

A. Every vanpool must have at least one approved backup volunteer driver who can drive the van on those days that the volunteer primary driver isn't available. If, for some reason, no approved volunteer driver is available, the vanpool group should follow its predetermined carpool plan. No fare refunds will be provided.

Q. What happens if the van needs service or breaks down?

A. To help avoid breakdowns, we make every effort to schedule vans for regular routine servicing. We will provide the group with a spare van for any routine servicing. The primary volunteer driver must bring the van in for servicing within 48 hours after notification by Pierce Transit. If the primary volunteer driver is unavailable to make the swap, one of the backup volunteer drivers must perform that duty. In the rare event that your van breaks down and is inoperable, the vanpool group should follow its predetermined carpool plan and call Pierce Transit as soon as possible. And we'll get a spare vanpool van to you as quickly as possible.