



**RideOn**  
**4th Edition 2009**  
**Vanpool Newsletter**

## Vanpool – I'll Miss You . . .

The following is an excerpt from one of our long-time volunteer vanpool drivers. "I wanted to let everyone know that I am moving on to greener pastures on 1 June. That will bring to an end over 12 years of working for the City of Tacoma. Certainly, a big plus for me over this 12-year period has been vanpooling. I have gotten to know a lot of super people who have shared the vanpool experience with me. Some have been talkative, some quiet, some friendlier than others. But I have often reflected that I may spend more time talking with my vanpool cohorts during our one hour drive than with most other people I have interacted with daily around the City. A very special thanks to all of you vanpoolers!!" ~ ~ John M.

## Welcome Aboard

Pierce Transit vanpools now serve these employers. Welcome!

Mt. Rainier National Park, Ashford  
Saint-Gobain PPL, Puyallup  
True Blue Inc., Tacoma  
Wilson Construction, Tacoma  
WA State Liquor Control Board, Olympia

Microsoft Corp. Bravern, Bellevue  
Talyt, Bellevue  
Zetron Inc., Redmond  
Pemco Mutual Insurance, Seattle  
US Environmental Protection Agency, Seattle

## Names, Please

Does your vanpool group have a wait list because you have no available seats? Please provide those names and contact information to your vanpool coordinator. We will help those folks find another van to join or form a new group. Thanks!



## Know Before You Go

Major construction on Puget Sound roadways is now underway. Check your route to avoid travel delays. Go to [Puget Sound 2009 Construction Season Web page](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/construction/2009) or [www.wsdot.wa.gov/construction/2009](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/construction/2009).

## SR 16 – Westbound Nalley Valley

The ramp from Sprague Avenue to westbound State Route 16 (Nalley Valley Viaduct) is closed, with completion targeted for Fall 2011. Expect traffic volumes to increase on Tacoma's South 19th Street and at the Union Avenue on-ramp to westbound SR 16. Drivers, please find alternate routes, stay alert in the construction zone, and stay informed about the project and its traffic impacts at [www.tacomatraffic.com](http://www.tacomatraffic.com).



## Multi-tasking and Driving Don't Mix



A new study by the National Safety Council's Journal of Safety Research suggests drivers tend to overestimate their driving skills and underestimate their distraction caused by other activities while they drive. The study suggests that drivers may engage in other distracting activities while they drive and don't perceive the danger of doing so.

A study by Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety suggests that drivers are not aware of their own performance loss due to distraction. "Today it is important to understand how new in-vehicle tasks affect drivers' performance as well as how they affect drivers' perceptions of their own performance," the study concludes. National Safety Council (NSC) President & CEO Janet Froetscher identified cell phone use while driving as one of America's most urgent traffic safety issues. In January, the NSC became the first national organization to call for a total ban on that activity, based on scientific estimates that cell phone use while driving contributes to six percent of crashes — or 636,000 crashes, 330,000 injuries, 12,000 serious injuries, and 2,600 deaths each year. The same research put the annual financial toll of cell phone-related crashes at \$43 billion. "Our nation has reached a point where we estimate more than 100 million people are engaging in this dangerous behavior daily," Froetscher said. She added that the issue is not the type of phone a driver uses; rather it is the distraction caused by the conversation.

We do not allow any cell phone usage, including hands-free devices, while operating any Pierce Transit vanpool vehicle.

## Maintenance Keeps Things Movin'



Volunteer backup drivers: Please assist your volunteer primary driver with van swaps for maintenance when needed. Please swap vans within 48 hours of our request, to help ensure the timely maintenance of our fleet. When you don't arrive within that timeframe, it causes a domino effect by tying up spare vans. Thank you for being prompt.

The vanpool lockbox code will change July 1. We will provide you with the new code when we notify you that your van is due for service (via phone or email).



## Emergency Ride Home

Afraid that leaving your car at home means you won't get home quickly if an emergency arises? Emergency Ride Home provides transportation when you have a personal or family illness, family emergency or unexpected overtime. If you use a commute alternative to get to work and have an emergency, you may qualify for Emergency Ride Home if offered by your employer. Contact your Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) or Human Resources department to see if this benefit is available to you.



## Tailgater Troubles



As traffic gets heavier every day, we share the road with an increased number of vehicles. This often means some motorists travel closer to one another more than ever before. Anyone who follows at an unsafe distance behind another vehicle is a tailgater. Please remember the four-second following distance is the recommendation in ideal conditions. If you have a tailgater, increase your own following distance. If you are driving a vehicle (such as our vans) that doesn't stop as quickly as most vehicles, or if weather conditions are not ideal (rainy, snowy, foggy, etc.), give yourself more room. To drive defensively, keep your distance so you can see what's going on ahead of the car in front of you. Many people drive with their eyes fixed on the rear of the vehicle directly in front of them. If you find yourself doing this, back off a little and look beyond the vehicle in front of you. Following too closely will not speed up the traffic flow. Very rarely, if ever, does riding someone's rear bumper force them to speed up. Most times, it does the opposite. Never assume you can stop in time. Use the four-second rule at a minimum in ideal conditions, to give yourself enough room to react to the vehicle in front, and avoid a collision.

## Drive Green

Did you know that transportation consumes about 25 percent of the total energy used in the United States? Most of you know that driving releases harmful chemicals and other air pollutants into the air. Perhaps that is one of the more important reasons you ride in a vanpool. When, where, how, why and what you drive all play an important role in affecting air pollution. Obviously, we are not able to provide you with a hybrid vehicle for your commute, nor can we suggest you not drive during peak times and hot days. We have little control over some things. You make an excellent contribution to cleaner air by choosing vanpool. A recent market study conducted by WSDOT found that vanpools eliminate more than 11,000 vehicles from the roadways each day in the Puget Sound region. The Puget Sound region leads the nation in vanpooling with over 2,000 "public" vanpools. You are definitely part of the solution to our traffic problem in the Puget Sound region – thank you!



Here are some suggestions on how to make your vanpool commute even **more** environmentally friendly.

- Avoid revving or idling engine over 30 seconds.
- Accelerate gradually, maintain speed limit and use cruise control on the highway, when safe to do so.
- Minimize use of air conditioning when possible.
- Fill gas tank during the cooler early morning or evening hours to cut down on evaporation.
- Avoid spilling gas and don't "top off" the tank. Replace gas tank cap tightly.
- Keep tires properly inflated and aligned.
- Call us to coordinate the repair of all vehicle leaks promptly.
- Keep the van in tip-top shape by bringing the van in for preventive maintenance within 48 hours of notification by a Pierce Transit fleet coordinator.

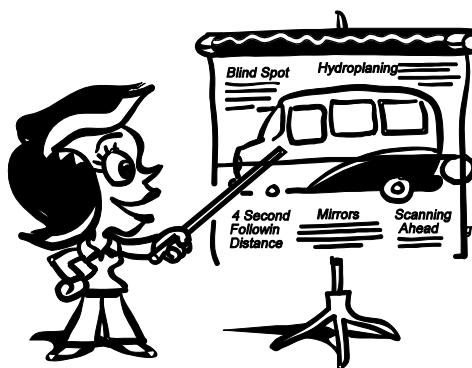
Visit [http://www.epa.gov/air/actions/drive\\_wise.html](http://www.epa.gov/air/actions/drive_wise.html) for more environmental ideas.

## Upcoming Defensive Driving Orientation and Bookkeeping Classes

July 1	Wednesday	4 p.m. – 8 p.m.
July 18	Saturday	8 a.m. – Noon
August 5	Wednesday	4 p.m. – 8 p.m.
August 22	Saturday	8 a.m. – Noon

Defensive Driving/Orientation classes are listed above. Each class must have a minimum of five Pierce Transit volunteer applicants registered. We generally hold Bookkeeper classes from 3 p.m. – 4 p.m. on these Wednesdays and from 7 a.m. – 8 a.m. on these Saturdays.

**We must receive all applications at least one week prior to the date of the class in order to pre-approve and schedule you for that training.**



An optional online vanpool defensive driving refresher course sponsored by the Washington State Transit Insurance Pool (WSTIP) is available to all active volunteer vanpool drivers. Please contact your Pierce Transit Vanpool Coordinator if you are interested.

## Vanpool Operations Staff

### Fleet Supervision

Vanpool Fleet (Maintenance) 253.905.5306

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### Other Contact Information

Vanpool Emergency (24/7) 253.381.3762  
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 Pierce Transit toll-free 800.562.8109  
 TDD/Customer Service 253.582.7951  
 Pierce Transit Web site [Piercetransit.org](http://Piercetransit.org)  
 Rideshare hotline toll-free 888.814.1300  
 Online Ridematch [RideshareOnline.com](http://RideshareOnline.com)

**Heidi Hunter and Kim Pontsler, Editors:** We distribute our newsletter bi-monthly with several issues retained on our web site at [piercetransit.org](http://piercetransit.org). Thanks for article suggestions and letters to the editor.