

Vanpool Tips and Etiquette

Changing from a solo commute to a ridesharing arrangement may require some adjustment and compromise. These are some good tips to help you create and maintain a successful vanpool.

Get acquainted with your fellow vanpoolers.

Vanpoolers sometimes feel more comfortable meeting potential vanpool partners in a neutral public place before driving together for the first time. Meet for lunch, coffee, or talk on the phone.

Scheduling and route. Determine the basic vanpool route and meeting places, as well as pick-up and drop-off times. Successful vanpools typically use no more than four pick-up points. Make certain you have maps, schedules, vehicle maintenance schedule, and proof of insurance.

Vanpool dynamics. Organizational and communication skills come in handy when working with a group of individuals. Establish general vanpool guidelines and put them in writing. Establish a vanpool policy agreement between riders — the last page of this tip sheet is a sample.

Have back-up drivers. Enlist at least two other commuters in the vanpool willing to share driving duties to cover absences for vacations, illness, family emergencies, overtime, car repairs, and so on.

Communicate. Maintain a vanpool participant contact list, including employers. Tell your vanpool driver or coordinator about vacations and days off well in advance. If you will be out due to a sick day or personal emergency, notify your vanpool right away so the group will know not to wait for you. Discuss any concerns or grievances you may have with your coordinator.

Maintain the van. Vanpool vehicles must be maintained for road safety, reliability, and cleanliness. As a courtesy to your driver and fellow passengers, keep the van neat. Pick up newspapers, coffee cups, etc.

Sign up for Guaranteed Ride Home. Be sure to sign up all your vanpoolers for the SANDAG Guaranteed Ride Home program before you start ridesharing. In case of an emergency or unscheduled overtime, you or your fellow vanpoolers can always get home — for just a \$3 co-pay! (<http://www.icommutesd.com/Commuters/GuaranteedRideHome.aspx>)

Drive safely. In a vanpool, a lot of people are depending on one driver. If you are behind the wheel, always make your passengers feel they are in good hands. Drive safely at all times.

Enlist help from your employer. Your company can add to the success of your program by offering tax benefits, and considering you and your fellow vanpoolers when making schedule changes.

Keep your vanpool's occupancy up. If ridership is low, ask riders to help recruit new members. Use iCommute's RideMatcher system to look for potential vanpooler online. <http://www.icommutesd.com/Commuters/RideMatcher.aspx>. Contact the SANDAG iCommute coordinator for help finding possible riders from our vanpool waitlist. Contact your workplace rideshare coordinator to post flyers around your work site and to advertise within your company.

Know where your pick-up point is and always meet the van on time. Remember, there are many people counting on you to be punctual. Most vanpool groups set a time limit on how long they will wait.

Know who to contact, when to contact, and how to contact the designated individual if you won't be riding on any given trip. Make sure you have the appropriate phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

Be prompt with your prorated share of the total monthly vanpool payment. Make sure you know the preferred form of payment and whom to pay.

Know your group's vanpool rules and abide by them. **Refrain from making extra stops** along the way so you can take care of personal errands. The vanpool is meant to help everyone with their commute.

Follow the golden rule and treat your fellow passengers as you yourself would like to be treated.

Sample Individual Carpool or Vanpool Policy

Here are suggested items to negotiate up front. Please include the items you decide are important to your participants.

Meeting place(s) and time(s): _____

Route: _____

Driver schedule (For example, will you switch drivers weekly? Monthly?):

- Smoking? Yes No
- Food allowed? Yes No
- Drinks allowed? Yes No
- Perfume and cologne? Yes No
- Laptops, DVDs, or video games? Yes No
- Electronic games allowed? Yes No
- Cell phone conversations? Yes No Time Limit?
- Cursing? Occasional Never

We have discussed:

- Payment arrangements
- Temperature in the car, a/c, and windows
- Preferred or assigned seating
- Quiet time and talking
- Absences
- How long to wait at a meeting point
- Music preferences, volume, who adjusts
- Shared costs: Gasoline, parking, car wash, etc.
- Side trips such as a coffee stop in the morning
- Car maintenance
- Other items agreed upon include: _____

Driver(s) shows proof of automobile insurance, as required by California law?

Yes _____ initial

Be willing to make an exception. For example, even if you have agreed to listen to the news on the ride home, if someone has a headache and asks for quiet time please respect his or her needs.

I acknowledge that I have read and agreed to these policies.

Name _____ **Date** _____

Organizational and communication skills come in handy when working with a group of individuals. Set ground rules.