

Carpooling guidelines

Looking for a cheaper, stress-free and more environmentally friendly way to get to work?





NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY
WAKA KOTAHI

Carpooling guidelines

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For more information...

National Office
NZTA
Private Bag 6995
Wellington 6141
New Zealand

T 64 4 894 5400
F 64 4 894 6100

This document is available at www.nzta.govt.nz

Carpooling
THE SMARTER COMMUTE

Introduction



Travelling together is travelling smarter! Carpooling, also known as car-sharing, ride-sharing or lift-sharing, is cheaper, easier and more environmentally friendly than driving alone to and from work.

Putting in place a workplace carpool scheme can benefit both your organisation and your staff. Such schemes also have positive spin-offs for New Zealand by contributing to the government's national transport targets. These include:

- a 10 percent reduction in single occupancy vehicle trips, in major urban areas on weekdays, by 2015, and
- a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions to 170 grams per kilometre by 2015, with a corresponding reduction in average fuel used per kilometre.

Carpooling also aligns with the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority's strategic aims of maximising energy efficiency and creating a more sustainable transport network.

The bottom line is that we can ill afford to have single-occupancy vehicles making journeys to the same destination – it's not sustainable and it doesn't benefit the environment, traffic congestion or, ultimately, people's wallets.

Carpooling is the way of the future. Congratulations for implementing a carpool scheme in your workplace, school or community. These guidelines outline what you'll need to operate and maintain such a scheme, and provide advice on how you and your staff can make the smarter commute.

These guidelines are based on *Car share guide*, by Lynsey Harris and Jon Parker. Transport for London, 2007.

<http://www.liftshare.com/download/TfLCarShareGuideLOWRES.pdf>

Who are these guidelines for?

These guidelines are for any organisation looking to set up and operate a carpool scheme. It is predominantly aimed at workplaces, but also applies to schools and communities, where local governments may incorporate carpool schemes as a key initiative of their neighbourhood accessibility planning process (see the Carpooling in your community section).

Various carpool schemes operate around New Zealand and the world and there is no one template for success. Hence, this guide is designed to offer practical advice that can be adapted to suit the needs of your workplace, school or community.



What is a carpool?

A carpool is when two or more people share the ride to a similar or nearby destination.

The number of passengers may vary, drivers and vehicles can rotate, and a carpool might operate every day or only when it's convenient. While petrol and parking expenses might be shared, the driver isn't paid for their time. It's also legally possible to use a van as a carpool vehicle, as long as it carries less than 12 people.

When walking, cycling or using public transport isn't possible, carpooling is the smarter commute.



Carpooling

Why should I encourage my staff to carpool?

Carpooling has clear benefits for both you and your staff, and can provide wider benefits to the surrounding community.

Organisational benefits

- Reduces costs and car parking problems.
- The need for fewer parks means more space that can be used for other purposes.
- Increases staff productivity and retention.
- Widens potential staff recruitment market.
- Promotes internal social networks.
- Improves company image.

Staff benefits

- Reduces travel costs by sharing expenses.
- Saves time and reduces stress.
- Less vehicle wear and tear.
- Reduces the need for a second car.
- Provides alternative travel options.
- Provides the opportunity to make new friends.

Community benefits

- Reduces vehicle emissions.
- Reduces traffic volumes and congestion.
- Is kinder to the planet.

Establishing a carpool scheme

Where do I start?

First of all, you'll need to determine if carpooling will work for your particular organisation. Carpooling generally suits locations where:

- public transport, walking and cycling options are limited
- parking is hard to find and/or staff travel long distances
- a number of staff travel similar routes at similar times.

If you don't already hold such information in your organisation's travel plan, talking to staff about how they get to work and their travel preferences can be an effective way of gauging if carpooling is an option – and what incentives, if any, may be required.



But I live in a rural area...

Rural carpools have been shown to reduce car dependence and social exclusion. Such rural schemes are usually managed by local community groups or via transport partnerships.

If you're establishing a rural carpool scheme, you might like to consider the following factors:

- Are there enough people within a closely defined geographic area to support a carpool scheme?
- Do local journeys cover a range of trips across the entire day and evening?
- Is the local authority supportive?
- Will the scheme be utilised?

But my staff work shifts...

There's no reason why you can't operate a carpool scheme if your staff work different shifts. It might mean some staff who wish to travel together may need to change their shifts, and it's important that they have this option. But carpooling has actually been proven to work particularly well for staff who work shifts, as they generally have clearly defined start and finish times.

Implementing a carpool scheme

Setting it up

The critical component in any carpool scheme is matching commuters. There are many different ways of doing this, depending on the size of the organisation and its budget, as well as available human resource and IT capability. Tools range from informal arrangements, such as notice boards and registers, to computer software packages that use spreadsheets and databases to match individuals.

But no matter which system you choose, all require the following basic information from your staff:

- Home location (ie street address, nearest intersection).
- Work location.
- Work schedule (ie days, times and flexibility).
- Driving preference (ie driver, passenger or both).
- Other preferences (ie gender, non-smoker).

Coordinating your carpool scheme

A critical part of any workplace carpool is a coordinator who is responsible for its day-to-day administration.

This includes answering staff questions, managing the matching tool, maintaining data and keeping records up to date, ensuring data protection issues are sufficiently covered and promoting the scheme to staff.

The coordinator's role also includes monitoring the effectiveness of the scheme, producing activity and usage reports and being a physical point of contact for both management and staff.

The carpool coordinator is usually a member of staff and the amount of time they spend on the scheme depends on the size of your organisation and the particular matching tool you use.

Matching potential carpoolers

The most common types of matching tools include:

Bulletin boards

This is a simple system that can be implemented immediately, has low set-up and administration costs, and is effective in a smaller workplace. It's a self-service method, whereby prospective carpoolers place notices on a bulletin board seeking others in their area. Interested parties then contact each other to discuss arrangements.

A key advantage of the bulletin board is that potential drivers, who might have reservations about carpooling, can watch for potential passengers without feeling a sense of 'commitment' that often comes from a more formal registration process. The downside is often limited opportunity to find a suitable match due to low numbers, and a possible lack of credibility, because there is no automated way to monitor the performance or effectiveness of the scheme.

Morning tea

Another simple method is to hold a morning tea and divide staff into neighbourhood groups so that they can meet potential carpoolers. Several nearby workplaces may also wish to hold a joint morning tea to increase the likelihood of commuters finding a suitable match. This approach is easy to do and can be effective in smaller workplaces.

The key advantage is that prospective carpoolers meet 'face to face', allowing them to address concerns about security, confidentiality of personal information, reliability, or if they'll get on with their fellow carpoolers. The downside is again a possible lack of credibility because the performance and effectiveness of the scheme cannot be automatically monitored.

Implementing a carpool scheme CONTINUED

Corporate intranet

As with the above tools, this is a simple system that can be implemented immediately, has low set-up and administration costs and is effective in any workplace. Potential carpoolers place 'classified' type notices on the company intranet and interested parties then contact each other to discuss possible arrangements. This is generally seen as more credible than a bulletin board, as intranet activity is monitored and certain rules govern the use of an organisation's intranet. Again, a downside to this method is that there is no automated way to monitor its performance or effectiveness.

Spreadsheets and databases

This approach is a more formal alternative to the above methods and provides greater control while being relatively low cost to run. Prospective carpoolers record key information on either a paper or online registration form. The carpool coordinator then identifies potential matches manually and distributes 'matchlists' of potential carpool partners.

This manual method can be labour-intensive – especially if a number of people register or multiple matching criteria is required. One way to reduce this is for staff to form carpools either through informal networks or at morning teas and then submit one form per carpool which entitles them to incentives such as priority parks. The coordinator keeps a list of each carpool, which also assists in monitoring purposes.

Carpool software

A popular method of matching participants is software that is usually installed on the organisation's computer network or accessed online through the internet or company intranet. When staff register, their information is recorded and potential matches are automatically generated based on such criteria as location, work schedule and preferences. Staff then decide who to contact.

This automated method generally provides greater security, ensuring privacy for participants and enhanced matching facilities. It does, however, have higher costs than other schemes and is more appropriate for larger organisations with more than 1,000 employees or high density areas where several organisations may decide to share a carpool scheme.

National carpool schemes

If you don't want to, or aren't able to manage a carpool scheme at your workplace, there are now public carpool schemes operating within New Zealand that people are able to join. These nationwide schemes could be an easy way for smaller companies, who may have staff spread across a wide area, to effectively utilise a carpool.

For further details about these schemes, visit: www.carpoolnz.org or www.rideinfo.co.nz



Incentives

So now you're clear about the logistics of running a carpool scheme. But how do you encourage staff to participate – particularly those who may be reluctant to commit to a carpool?

Offering your staff incentives is an effective way to increase membership and remove any preconceived barriers they may have. Incentives include:

Priority parking

By proactively managing the supply and demand of your organisation's parking spaces, you can create an effective incentive to carpool. Priority parks are usually the parking spaces closest to your building or in the nearest parking building, and are a huge incentive where the parking supply is limited or where drivers have to walk long distances between the car park and their workplace. Signage, such as the NZ Transport Agency's carpool parking permit, should be used to identify the priority spaces, which also helps to raise the visibility of your carpool scheme.

Financial incentives

These can include cash rewards for carpooling, such as a daily payment, or rewards in the form of free or discounted parking fees for carpoolers.

Setting up a carpool 'miles scheme' can also be effective, which awards participants with gift vouchers or discounts at local restaurants or shops for the number of miles they travel in a carpool.

Flexible working hours

Policies allowing flexi-time can help remove barriers to carpooling and other commuter options such as walking, cycling and using public transport.

This approach gives staff the flexibility as to when they arrive at work, take a lunch break and leave work, all while still working the number of required hours each day. This allows staff to:

- travel outside peak congestion hours
- have more flexibility for personal and work time
- increase the number of potential carpool matches with others from different departments or locations.

It also means managers can support participants' need to 'leave on time' to honour their carpool commitments.

Guaranteed ride home

Also referred to as an 'emergency ride home', this is a key tool for promoting carpooling as a sustainable commuter option.

The guaranteed ride home scheme acts as an insurance policy for carpoolers by reassuring them they have a timely and inexpensive way to get home if their carpool partner needs to leave early. Most guaranteed ride home schemes offer a taxi ride home and have agreements with taxi or rental car companies or passenger transport services, if there is a quick and direct public transport service to the destination.

The guaranteed ride home is a relatively low-cost service to implement, but is generally regarded favourably by staff.

Marketing and promotion

Raising awareness of your scheme and generating membership are essential to the success of any carpool scheme.

The NZTA has developed a number of resources to assist you with promotion. Artwork for the following resources can be downloaded from the NZTA website:

- An A4 poster.
- Brochure for employers.
- Brochure for employees.
- Parking permit.
- Parking signage.
- Stencil for parking space marking.

It's usually the role of the carpool coordinator to ensure staff know about the scheme and encourage their participation. There are a number of ways to do this:

- Endorsement from the top is essential. Get your CEO or key manager to encourage staff participation via an email, in the staff newsletter or at a staff meeting.
- Hold a morning tea launch/information session at which the CEO reinforces the benefits of the scheme and management's support for it.
- Advertise your scheme using both hard-copy (eg posters, flyers) and electronic material and in the staff newsletter (specific examples are set out in the 'General promotion' section).

- Create a carpool support network where ideas and thoughts can be shared .
- Use raffles and giveaways to encourage participation.
- Incorporate carpool information in your recruitment and induction material.
- Develop a carpool 'pack' to give to all new participants which incorporates a welcome letter from the CEO, a staff brochure on how carpooling works, and other relevant information.
- Celebrate successes with social events, awards and promotions.
- Display a large map showing where staff live to highlight the possibilities for carpooling.

An effective marketing and communications campaign should include positive messages about the policies and incentives of your organisation's carpool scheme. It should also focus clearly on the benefits to the employee, such as cost and time savings, reduced stress, congestion and pollution, a more sociable commute and increased travel options.



General promotion

The following are some of the specific marketing and promotion tools that can be used to promote your carpool scheme:

- Posters that contain general information about your scheme can be displayed on staff notice boards and in common areas. You can also develop one-off posters to inform staff of specific events and promotions.
- Leaflets/brochures are similar to posters but usually contain more detailed information. They can be distributed in reception and staff rooms, on notice boards, included with recruitment/induction packs, or in pay slips.
- Newsletters are a popular way of reporting progress and feedback to staff and can be either in paper or electronic form. It's also a good idea to regularly include positive testimonials from carpoolers so that other staff can be encouraged to adopt the scheme.
- Corporate websites can provide or link to information specific to your travel plan and carpool scheme.
- Roadshows and morning teas are good venues for promoting your scheme, because they provide informal opportunities for staff to assess the scheme and potential carpool partners without obligation.
- Carpool permits/stickers can be used to identify vehicles that are eligible for priority parking and are also a good visible promotion tool for your scheme among other carpark users.



Overcoming barriers to carpooling

Staff who are used to the freedom and flexibility of travelling alone may be reluctant to sign up to a carpool scheme. Below are some of the most common objections and questions asked about carpools – and their solutions.

Will staff be able to pick their fellow carpoolers?

Yes, most schemes provide the opportunity for staff to meet potential carpoolers and to select partners based on certain criteria. All of this information is sought upfront in the registration process and should include the ability to share with partners of the same sex, non-smokers or even those who like the same type of music. Some organisations develop their own ‘pledge’ that commits all members to abide by common rules.

Will it affect participants’ car insurance?

No, it shouldn’t affect a staff member’s insurance, provided they aren’t making a financial gain from the carpool. If staff are concerned about this issue, they should contact their insurance company.

Can people who don’t drive still carpool?

Yes, they can share as passengers. Carpooling gives non-drivers or those who don’t own cars access to vehicles and therefore provides greater mobility to locations that may only be accessible by car.

My staff do shiftwork. How will carpooling work for them?

Carpooling has actually proven to work particularly well for staff who work shifts, as they generally have clearly defined start and finish times. In some instances, staff who live near one another and who wish to carpool may need to change shifts to align with other participants; in such cases, management support is needed for this to occur.

Not all staff have access to the internet

In this case, the carpool coordinator should ensure that as well as communicating electronically, staff should also have access to hard-copy information. Registration and matching of commuters should also be done via hard copy formats.

We have plenty of parking

But how much is it costing you? Encouraging your staff to share the ride can reduce your need to provide so many parking spaces, which can save you money and free up the space for other uses such as the lease or sale of parks to other organisations or an extension to your premises.

Most of my staff don’t drive to work

Your staff should be encouraged to walk, cycle or use public transport to get to and from work. But if these options are not possible, then carpooling makes good sense. If your staff ‘park and ride’ then carpooling can also save money, time, stress and the environment.

Monitoring and review

Once you've implemented your carpool scheme, it's important to continually monitor and review its effectiveness, particularly as it relates to your travel plan objectives and the national target of reducing the impact of single occupancy vehicle use.

This means it's important to keep records on participation, costs and frequently asked questions to help you determine what works and what doesn't. Monitoring progress is also important in increasing staff participation, meeting objectives and gauging how much staff save.



There are several tools that can be used to evaluate the success of your particular scheme:

- Participation rate – constantly communicate individual and scheme achievements to increase awareness and involvement.
- Staff concerns/queries – compile and review staff feedback to highlight issues or successes.
- Costs of the scheme – keep records that identify staff and overhead administration costs, marketing and promotion costs (eg materials and events), items or benefits provided as incentives, and capital and miscellaneous costs, such as one-off expenditures and improvements.
- Periodic reviews – snap-shot surveys can be a quick and easy way to assess the achievements of your carpool scheme, and identify where improvements can be made.

Having monitored the scheme's performance, it's a good idea to let staff know these results and to continually repeat the positive messages about the benefits of carpooling for staff, the organisation and the environment.

Further information

Costs

It's recommended that individual carpoolers come to their own arrangements about sharing costs and driving responsibilities. These could include:

- Taking turns driving - no money changes hands
- Sharing costs - passengers contribute to fuel costs and the reasonable wear and tear of the vehicle. This may suit staff who prefer to drive or have to drop off children, etc. The driver cannot, however, be paid for their time or for any fines incurred during the journey unless they are a licensed operator.

For a general idea of vehicle running costs, below is an excerpt from the Automobile Association's *Petrol car costs 2008* report on the current running costs of petrol driven vehicles in New Zealand. Note, it doesn't include the fixed costs of owning a vehicle.

Running costs for petrol driven vehicles in 2008

From the Automobile Association's *Petrol car costs 2008* report.

Engine capacity	Up to 1500cc	1500-2000cc	2000-3500cc	Over 3500cc
Petrol - litres used per 100km	6.48	7.57	9.68	11.90
Litres used over 14,000km	906.5	1,059.3	1,355.2	1,666
Cost of fuel annually at \$2.15 per litre	\$1,948.98	\$2,277.50	\$2,913.68	\$3,581.90
Cost of oil	\$55.77	\$55.77	\$55.77	\$55.77
Tyres cost per year	\$197.18	\$245.49	\$378.68	\$430.73
Repairs and maintenance	\$473.15	\$474.82	\$524.69	\$506.43
Total running costs	\$2,675.07	\$3,053.57	\$3,872.82	\$4,574.83
Running cost per kilometre	19.1 cents	21.8 cents	27.7 cents	32.7 cents

Carpooling in your community

Carpools are not just confined to workplaces – they can also work for school staff and in various community settings.

A school travel plan should be able to help you identify how a carpool could operate for staff at your particular school.

For communities, a neighbourhood accessibility plan can be helpful in determining how residents can access such active and shared transport modes as walking, cycling and public transport. Where walking, cycling or public transport are not possible, carpooling can be a positive and workable addition to a neighbourhood accessibility plan.

If your school or community doesn't have a travel plan or a neighbourhood accessibility plan, it might be a good time to develop one now. Visit www.nzta.govt.nz for more details.

Case studies

Successful carpooling schemes operate in workplaces, schools and communities all over New Zealand and overseas. What follows are examples of several schemes and their positive results.

- **Auckland Airport:** Auckland Airport has been running a successful carpool scheme since February 2006. As of October 2008, there were more than 600 airport staff registered for the scheme. Initially, six of the airport's main employers were involved, but that has been expanded to include staff from 20 different companies. The carpool scheme is part of a branded travel plan called Lift, which has its own website – www.liftataucklandairport.co.nz. Participation rates show that the number of staff carpooling has doubled in just 18 months.
- **British Gas:** In 2001, British Gas relocated to a purpose-built office, where 2000 staff were provided with only 380 car parking spaces – a drop from their previous 2000 spaces. Car parking was, understandably, a major issue for staff but by introducing a comprehensive carpool scheme, 70 percent of staff were able to share a vehicle daily. Staff feedback included comments that the scheme had improved their finances and quality of life and thanked management for introducing it.
- **Rodney District Council:** The Council launched its 'Take a mate' community carpooling initiative in October 2007 with initial results showing people have taken to it. The Council recognise, however, the initiative is dependent on ongoing staff time being made available in order to gain new members and retain existing ones through promotion and marketing. The personal contact with people to encourage them is critical.
- **Tesco:** The UK supermarket launched a carpool scheme at its two head offices in Hertfordshire in 2005. A year later and almost 10 percent of staff had registered. Together, they cut the number of daily journeys by 100, resulting in an overall employee saving of around NZ\$450,000.

References and acknowledgements

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- Transport for London, *Car share guide*, March 2007
- Greater Wellington Regional Council, *How to set up a carpooling scheme at your workplace*, updated August 2008
- *Government policy statement on land transport funding 2009/10-2018/19*
- *New Zealand transport strategy 2008*

Our contact details

For general enquiries and contact information for the NZ Transport Agency please check our website www.nzta.govt.nz or email us at info@nzta.govt.nz

NATIONAL OFFICE
Victoria Arcade, 44 Victoria Street
Private Bag 6995, Wellington 6141
New Zealand
Telephone: +64 4 894 5400
Fax: +64 4 894 6100

TRANSPORT REGISTRY CENTRE
Private Bag 11777, Palmerston North 4412
New Zealand
Telephone: 0800 108 809
(motor vehicle registrations)
Telephone: 0800 822 422
(driver licensing)
Fax: +64 6 953 6406



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