



UPCOMING ENROLLMENT DEADLINES:

Next:
Thursday, February 16, 2012

Future:
Monday, March 19, 2012
Thursday, April 19, 2012



QUESTION OF THE MONTH:

Can non-Federal vanpool riders pay a different rate?

All vanpool participants, whether Federal or Non-Federal employees must pay the same rate for the same vanpool service.

VANPOOL POLICY CLARIFIED

The Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Financial Operations recently signed a memorandum revising some of the Transportation Incentive Program (TIP) for Outside the National Capital Region (ONCR) vanpool policy. The memorandum is available on the TIP website (http://www.fmo.navy.mil/Divisions/FMO3/tip_doclinks.html). It is important for all vanpool participants and Points of Contact (POC) to carefully review these new guidelines to ensure that participants remain eligible for the TIP benefit. The main issues that the memorandum clarifies are as follows:

Qualified Means of Transportation (QMOT): To be considered a QMOT vanpools must have a seating capacity of at least six adults, not including the driver, and meet the 80/50 rule. The 80/50 rule is defined as at least eighty percent (80%) of the mileage use of the vehicle must be for:

1. the purpose of transporting personnel in their local commute to and from their residence to their place of employment/duty station and
2. on trips during which the number of riders is at least one-half the adult seating capacity (not including the driver).

Vanpool participants whose vanpool fails to meet the 80/50 rule in any given month may receive one warning per calendar year before being required to repay the Federal government. After the second month of not meeting the minimum requirement, repayment is required, and ultimately the participant will be withdrawn after the third month in a calendar year in which they ride in a vanpool that fails to meet the 80/50 rule.

Invoice/Receipt Required: A vanpool invoice or receipt is required to document the actual commuting cost for vanpool participants. For vanpools that issue one invoice for the entire vanpool, the actual commuting cost is the cost of the van divided by the number of seats. For example, if a seven passenger van costs \$700 then the actual commuting cost for the participants is \$100 regardless of how many people are in the

van. For vanpools that issue individual receipts for each participant, the actual commuting cost for each individual should equal the amount on the invoice or receipt. However, the local POC has the authority and responsibility to determine the reasonableness of commuting cost.

Holding Seats: Vanpool participants may not use the TIP benefit to "hold" their space in a vanpool during an extended absence or part-time work schedule. The cost of holding a seat is considered an out-of-pocket expense.

Minimum Riding Requirements: Vanpool participants must ride in the vanpool at least fifty percent (50%) of the eligible working days each month in order to receive the monthly benefit. Generally participants are responsible to return TIP benefits for any day in which they did not use mass transit. However, since vanpools typically operate with a monthly invoice, the DON policy allows for some flexibility. The fifty percent of the working days in a month that participants are not "required" to ride is a grace period for participants and is intended to accommodate for TDY, leave, and unforeseen extenuating circumstances. Vanpool participants that exhaust this grace period are responsible to repay the federal government the pro-rated amount for the entire number of working days that the QMOT was not used.



For example, if a participant has a normal schedule with twenty-one working days in the month, the participant would be required to ride at least ten and a half of those days. If the participant rode only eight days, the participant would be responsible to repay the federal government the pro-rated amount for the thirteen days that he or she did not ride.

If a participant has a compressed schedule, with eighteen working days, the participant would be required to ride at least nine of those days. If the participant rode only eight days, the participant would be responsible to repay the federal government the pro-rated amount for the ten days that he or she did not ride.

Vanpool Logs: All vanpools must maintain a vanpool log to document, on a daily basis, which participants are using the vanpool to commute to and from work. All TIP participants must sign the vanpool log at the end of the month to certify that the vanpool log accurately reflects the participant's actual riding history. Signed logs must then be provided to the local POC by the fifth calendar day of the following month.



Please review the vanpool policy memorandum and contact the Office of Financial Operations should you have any questions regarding the updated guidelines.

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