



UPCOMING ENROLLMENT DEADLINES:



Next:
Tuesday, March 25, 2014

Future:
Wednesday, April 23, 2014
Wednesday, May 21, 2014

REVIEWING OFFICIALS REACH RECERTIFICATION GOAL

Over 100 reviewing officials successfully recertified more than ninety percent of their Transportation Incentive Program (TIP) participants. Sixty-four programs successfully recertified 100% of TIP participants. Congratulations on a job well done!!!

Recertification significantly strengthens the overall internal control environment of TIP by maintaining accurate participant data which reduces the overall management fee paid to administer the program. The recertification process has identified thousands of participants who are no longer actively using transit benefits or no longer affiliated with the Department of the Navy. While the recertification process is new to many and has been an adjustment for some, it has strengthened the program for everyone and as a result, allowing Department of the Navy employees to continue receiving transit benefit to commute to and from work.

The next recertification period is right around the corner. All participants will be required to recertify again between 1 April and 15 May 2014. The good news is that if nothing has changed in a participant's application, then recertification should only take about 10 seconds to confirm that everything in the application remains correct.

Participants who have not yet recertified their application risk being withdrawn from the program and may experience a delay or disruption in benefits if a withdrawal action is taken.

HEY!! I CALLED THE FRONT SEAT. IT'S MY TURN.

Whether it was going on a long road trip with our siblings in the back seat of the family station wagon or riding to school on the big yellow bus, we've all had people riding next to us that got on our nerves. So it shouldn't surprise us that the same may be true on vanpools. Vanpools often are composed of an eclectic group of individuals with different belief systems, different backgrounds and certainly different personalities. These differences can sometimes lead to conflict or disagreements. However unlike the family station wagon or the school bus, there is no parent or bus driver to resolve these issues.

Vanpools are cooperatives. They work based on the riders cooperating together and agreeing to ride together in a particular way. Some vanpools have formal agreements that riders sign asking them to commit to certain standards of behavior in the vanpool. Other vanpools may have a more informal understanding of what life on the van will be like. It is not uncommon for vanpools to have rules like: "no eating on the van" or "if you are late, you are left." Some vanpools have contractual

language that requires a 30-day notice in order to terminate the agreement. However the vanpool is structured and whatever rules or contracts are in place, there is one important thing to remember. The Department of the Navy is not a party to these agreements. Each individual TIP participant enters into their vanpool contract or agreement as an independent customer. The relationship between the vanpool and the rider is a personal relationship in which the government is not involved. As a result, the government does not get involved in resolving disputes between vanpool riders or disputes between a vanpool rider and the vanpool company.

These issues need to be remedied by the riders themselves or with the vanpool company directly. If any dispute cannot be resolved or if a law is broken, local law enforcement or the local judicial system should be contacted directly by those involved. The local reviewing official's role is to confirm that a qualified van is being used to commute to and from work and that the certified commuting cost is accurate and can be supported by documentation like an invoice or receipt. It is not the job of the local reviewing official to ensure that Jimmy gets to sit in the front seat since he called it first.



HOUSE DRAFT BILL MAINTAINS CURRENT MAX BENEFIT

On 21 February 2014, the House Ways and Means Committee published a discussion draft of the Tax Reform Act of 2014. While it is still very early in the process and it is unlikely that this bill will pass both the House and Senate, the language none-the-less provides insight as to what may happen to the transit benefit in the future. The draft legislation would have two effects on the transit benefit. It would 1) freeze the maximum benefit at the current level and 2) remove the inflation adjustment language that has allowed the Internal Revenue Service to adjust the maximum benefit to keep it current with inflation. The draft can be reviewed in its entirety at: http://waysandmeans.house.gov/uploadedfiles/statutory_text_tax_reform_act_of_2014_discussion_draft_022614.pdf

The good news is that this is not the only piece of legislation that has been drafted to address the mass transit maximum benefit. The Commuter Parity Act of 2013 calls for permanent parity between the mass transit and parking fringe benefits. If this bill is successfully passed by both the House and the Senate, TIP participants could see an increase in the maximum benefit.

Since 2014 is an election year, we will likely not see either of these bills make much progress in either chamber. We will just have to wait and see which bill the next Congress is willing to re-introduce and pass.

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