



OC Commuter

News for a better commute from the OC Rideshare Office



Drive Less, Save More

Join in on Rideshare Week for a Chance to Win Great Prizes!

Rideshare Week is Oct. 2-6, and it's your chance to enjoy a happier, less costly, less stressful commute.

Here's what's happening:

Throughout Southern California

MetroLink will be celebrating Rideshare Week. Details are still in the works, so check back at metrolinktrains.com, or join them on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Orange County

Rideshare at least one day during Rideshare Week and you'll have a chance to win great prizes.

For details and to make the pledge to participate, visit octa.net.

Riverside/San Bernardino Counties

If you live in the Inland Empire, throughout the entire month of October, when you sign up and log your rideshare activity on IECommuter.org, you'll qualify to win prizes. You may also be eligible for IE Commuter's **\$5/Day program** to earn additional rewards.

IMPORTANT DEADLINE: Transportation Survey Is Due Friday, Sept. 8

All County of Orange and Superior Court employees recently received the annual transportation survey via email. This survey collects information on how you commuted the week of Aug. 7-11.

Please take a few minutes to complete the survey by the Friday, Sept. 8 deadline.

As a thank you for your participation, you'll be entered into a drawing to win one of 10 \$100 Amazon gift cards.

Don't have the survey? You can also download it [here](#).

It is Mandatory to Participate in the Survey.

The County is required to conduct this survey annually to meet Southern California clean air mandates.

The data is also used to evaluate how the County is doing

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Important Deadline... *(Continued from page 1)*

in providing commute services to employees and helps us identify areas where we can improve.

You Need to Submit a Survey Whether You Commute Daily, Telework or Work a Hybrid Schedule.

In fact, it's important that teleworkers and hybrid workers are included.

The survey measures on average how many employees are working vs. how many vehicles are coming into the worksite.

On a day you're working at home, that counts as a "zero" commute—which when averaged in helps lower the County's overall drive-alone rate.

Be Sure to Say "Yes" to a RideGuide.

When you fill out the annual transportation

survey, you have the option to receive a free RideGuide commute planner—which you can get by checking "yes" to the last question in the survey.

A few reasons you might want a RideGuide...

- It gives you commute options based on where you live, work and your work schedule—everything from bus/ rail routing to carpools to where to find a convenient Park & Ride.
- Even if you're not ready to rideshare now, it might come in handy if you find yourself in need of a way to get to work.
- Transit options change all the time, especially post-pandemic as agencies continue to restore service that had been reduced. The

RideGuide will give you the most up-to-date options.

- You don't have to use it, but it'll be there if you need it.

Get Help With Completing the Survey

The Rideshare Office offers **this short, helpful video on how to complete the transportation survey**. It answers the most often asked questions, including how to

indicate that you work a flex schedule, work a hybrid schedule, or vary the way you commute throughout the week.

For More Information...

Contact OC Rideshare at 714.834.7600 or rideshare@ocgov.com.



Metrolink Only \$10 on Labor Day

On Labor Day, Monday, Sept. 4, Metrolink will offer its special holiday discount rate. It's only \$10 to ride all day, anywhere Metrolink travels.

3 Surprising Rail Safety Facts

Did you know...?

1. Riding the train is a safe way to travel, but it's important for people to be careful around the tracks. A whopping 95% of all rail-related deaths are due to people walking on the tracks or vehicles at train crossings.

2. Every three hours in the U.S., a person or vehicle is hit by a train.

3. It takes the average train traveling at 55 mph more than a mile to stop. By the time a locomotive engineer sees a person or vehicle on the tracks, it is too late.

September is Rail Safety Month. **Get more safety tips at Operation Lifesaver**, a rail safety education organization.



Metrolink Discount for Low-Income Riders



Metrolink last month introduced **Mobility-4-All**, the relaunch of its low-income discount program. It offers a 50% discount on all Metrolink tickets and passes for

riders with a California Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card.

Riders can use their EBT card at any Metrolink station ticket machine to validate and unlock the discount.

All Aboard for Trainfest



Trainfest returns to historic Los Angeles Union Station Sept. 9 and 10 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

This free, family-friendly event will feature exhibits, tours and activities celebrating the legacy and future of Union Station and Southern California's rail systems.

For more information, visit unionstationla.com/happenings.

Go Electric

National Drive Electric Week is Sept. 22-Oct. 1. Find events and networking opportunities (many are online) to learn more about electric vehicles—especially helpful if you're thinking of buying or leasing an EV.

Find details and a frequently updated list of events at driveelectricweek.org.



Don't Miss Out on Rideshare Program Perks

If you carpool, vanpool, ride transit, bike or walk to work, you can enjoy a lower-cost commute vs. driving alone. Through the County Rideshare Office, you may also qualify for other money-saving benefits.

• **\$40, Plus Monthly Prize Drawings**—If you rideshare, telework or drive an EV/PHEV to work as few as 20 times over the past 90 days, you can join Club Rideshare. You'll earn a \$40 sign-up bonus, plus qualify for monthly prize drawings of \$25 gift cards.

• **"Try Transit" Fare Reimbursement—Save Up to 75%**—If you're new to riding transit, **you may be able to be reimbursed for a portion of your OC Bus or Metrolink train passes** for the first three months.

County and Superior Court employees can save 75% the first month, 50% the second month and 25% the third month.

• **"Get a Charge" EV Incentive**—You may be eligible for a **\$100 incentive when you purchase or lease an electric car or truck or plug-in hybrid.**

• **Reduce Your Taxable Income—Use payroll deduction to purchase bus, train or vanpool fares.** You'll be able to pay for them using pre-tax dollars, which will reduce your overall taxable income by up to \$300 per month.

• **Monthly Vanpool Subsidy**—A vanpool is a group of people who commute together regularly in a van, splitting expenses. If you start a new vanpool, **you could be eligible for a \$400 monthly subsidy** toward the cost of leasing a vanpool vehicle. The Rideshare Office can help you find fellow riders and offer advice for getting a vanpool underway.

• **Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH)**—If you need to get home due to an emergency on a day you rideshare, you can **be reimbursed for the cost of a taxi, rental car or Uber/Lyft ride** (up to two times per fiscal year, July 1 - June 31).





Back to School: Kids Ride Free on OC Bus

Youth Free Ride passes are available from your child's participating Orange County school. The pass is for youth ages 6 to 18 and allows them to ride OC Bus at no cost.

For information on how to get a Youth Free Ride Pass for the 2023-2024 school year, visit octa.net/passes.

California Clean Air Day Is Oct. 4

Make a commitment to do something on Clean Air Day to contribute to air quality—whether leaving the car at home and riding the bus instead of driving, planting a tree or changing out your car's air filter.

Find Clean Air Day events near you at cleanairday.org.



What Will It Cost to Ride in I-405 Express Lanes?

Express toll lanes on the I-405 Freeway between SR-73 in Costa Mesa and I-605 at the Orange County Line are set to open later this year. These lanes allow motorists to access free-flowing lanes for a fee—and in some cases, for free!

So what will it cost you to travel in the “fast lane?”

Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) recently announced the toll policy. Good news for ridesharers: Vehicles with three or more people—along with motorcycles and vehicles with designated veterans license plates or disabled person license plates—will get to travel on the 405 Express Lanes for free.

Vehicles with two people will be able to travel on the lanes for free during non-peak hours. Solo drivers (and two-person carpools during peak hours) can pay a toll to use the lanes.

Tolls will vary by hour, day of the week, direction of travel and distance traveled.

According to OCTA, drivers on average will pay about \$3 to travel the entire 14 miles. The maximum toll rate when the facility opens will be \$9.95 from 3-5 p.m. on Fridays if traveling from SR-73 north to the county line.

All vehicles—including carpools—must have a FasTrak transponder, which can be used on any toll facility in California.



Save Cash With Perk Pass



If you ride OC Bus, be sure to sign up for a Perk Pass, which saves you money over the usual fares.

The Perk Pass is a swipe card that can be used on any fixed route OC Bus. Individual fares on a Perk Pass is \$1.25 per boarding. The most you'll pay is \$69 per month, no matter how many trips you take.

Sign up for a Perk Pass through the Rideshare Office. You can also sign up to pay for transit fares using pre-tax dollars, lowering your overall taxable income.



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