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Preparing for Winter Travel



Whatever Mother Nature throws at us this winter, we can take steps to prepare for it and reduce its impact on our commutes. Here are some simple steps to take to make your morning or evening winter commute safer:

- 1. Know the weather forecast.** The Seattle office of the [National Weather Service](#) is the best source of information for Puget Sound area weather conditions. Track the conditions before you go for both where you live and work. Follow the guidance in weather advisories or warnings that are forecasted or in effect. Learn to track precipitation—check out the [University of Washington's Department of Atmospheric Science's radar loop](#). Although it may not be snowing at your house, it may be somewhere on your route.
- 2. Check road conditions before you travel.** The Washington State Department of Transportation has an excellent set of online tools and resources such as [traffic cameras, maps, and regularly posted traffic alerts](#). WSDOT also offers a free smart phone app that puts all of the information at your fingertips!
- 3. Be ready for the unexpected!** The [American Automobile Association](#) offers a variety of traffic safety information and tips for winter driving. Make sure your vehicle is road-worthy for winter. Keep a set of tire chains or cables in your car and become familiar with installing them before you need them. Pack a blanket or sleeping bag, a water bottle, snacks, and a book, in case traffic comes to a



REQUIRED

JANUARY 26 - ETC BASIC TRAINING

All ETCs must attend Basic Training one time within six months of their appointment. Next Training: January 26, 1:00-4:00 p.m. Please [register](#) by January 19th.

STATE AGENCY ETC REQUIREMENTS

The [Joint Comprehensive CTR Plan for State Agencies in Thurston County](#), adopted in 2011, requires that all ETCs at state CTR worksites attend at least two trainings or Networking Sessions each year. We will be tracking this as part of worksite program review beginning in 2012.

This requirement may be met by:

- Attending ETC Basic Training or other offered CTR training
- Attending ETC Networking Sessions
- Hosting a *Here to There* Fair (formerly called Transit Fairs)

standstill for an extended period of time.

4. **PowerPoint on riding Transit in the winter.** This slideshow given at the December 7 ETC Networking Session is available [online](#) for you to share with your worksite.

Riding the Bus

Ride the bus—let a professional drive you to work and avoid stress when roads are snowy or icy. Here are some helpful tips to make your winter bus adventures easier:



1. **Learn your route.** Use [Intercity Transit's Trip Planner](#) to obtain a customized trip plan. Try riding your route at least once before a storm hits. Worried your bus is running late? Try using the mobile app [OneBusAway](#) to access transit information at your desk or on the go.
2. **Learn your routes' snow detours.** Learn about detours from Intercity Transit's homepage, facebook, twitter, listen to local radio, or call Intercity Transit's customer service at 360-786-1881. Intercity Transit symbolizes their snow detours on their route maps with snowflakes. Visit [IntercityTransit.com](#) or see page 101 in their Transit Guide for more information about snow detours.
3. **No matter what...**wear warm, visible clothing and use a flashlight or reflective accessories if riding in the dark. If your bus stop is located along a hill, its best to walk to the bottom of the hill to catch the bus.

Emergency Ride Home/SAFE- Ride Program

Now is a great time to review your worksite's policy for employee emergency ride home. If your worksite offers such a program, take time to remind your employees about this benefit. If you are planning to take time off for the holidays, make sure you have a backup plan to assist employees who may need to access this service during your absence.

The State Agency Free Emergency (SAFE)-Ride Program is available to state employees in Thurston County who ride the bus, drive or ride in a carpool or vanpool, walk, or bike to work. This program will cover the fare of a taxi if an employee encounters an unexpected event or emergency that requires an employee to leave work early or late. Certain eligibility restrictions apply. However, bear in mind that inclement weather in and of itself is not an eligible reason to use the SAFE-Ride Program. For more information about the SAFE-Ride Program, visit [ctr.wa.gov](#) or contact Amber Nguyen, NguyenAm@wsdot.wa.gov or 360-705-7877.

Bonus Winter Weather Commuting Material

During the December 7 ETC Networking Session, ETCs learned about safe, comfortable and fun winter weather bicycle commuter tips. This short slide show is available [online](#) for you to download and share with your worksite.



RideShareOnline.com Tools Help Worksites Track Employee Subsidies

[RideshareOnline.com](#) is more than a free online ride matching service. The Washington State Department of Transportation and several other state agencies have begun using RideshareOnline.com to track their employees commute trips for subsidy reimbursements, promote their internal CTR programs, and connect their employees to promotions outside of their agencies. During the December 7 ETC Networking Session at TRPC, WSDOT employees Christopher Aiken and Dacia Stricklett demonstrated a variety of user and administrator tools available at RideshareOnline.com. They provided an overview of the complete tool, and focused on the calendar function that allows employees to track commute, business, and personal trips. In addition, they demonstrated reporting capabilities that allow an administrator to run a query of commute trips filtered by date and mode.

If you are interested in learning more about how RideshareOnline can boost your CTR program, contact Dacia Stricklett at strickd@wsdot.wa.gov or 360-705-7845.

Transit Tidbits

Bus Passes, the Gift that Keeps on Giving: When you give an Intercity Transit gift certificate for a monthly pass, you give mobility, independence, stress-free transportation and savings at the pump for an entire month! Pick-up a festively wrapped monthly pass gift certificate at Customer Service at the Olympia Transit Center. Or, purchase by phone with a VISA or MasterCard.

Dash Begins Legislative Session Schedule January 9: January 9 through March 9, 2012, Dash will operate weekdays every 12 minutes, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., and every 15 minutes 7-9 a.m. and 5-6 p.m. Dash riders can park at the Farmers Market lot January through March. Parking costs \$1.50/hour. Saturday Dash service will resume when the market re-opens in April 2012.

New Online Tool: You can now view Intercity Transit's Web site in more than 50 different languages! Visit intercitytransit.com, select the language you need from the drop-down menu on the right side of the navigation bar, and Google Translate takes care of the rest.

Vanpool Reaches Milestone: Intercity Transit's vanpool program reached an important milestone last week with its 200th vanpool group! The vanpool incentive program has had a very successful year with 26 new vanpool groups and 481. And it's not too late to earn vanpool rewards in 2011! Visit intercitytransit.com for details.



UPDATES

[Rider Alert](#)

[Vanpool Roster](#)

HOLIDAY TRANSIT SERVICE

Intercity Transit is **closed** on **Christmas and New Year's Days**. Service **ends early Christmas Eve**. Visit intercitytransit.com for schedules. Intercity Transit wishes you a wonderful holiday season!

Let Us Know if You Are Moving

If your worksite is moving or dealing with reorganization, remember that you need to notify us. In most cases, a new worksite I.D. number will need to be assigned and a baseline survey done. We encourage you to think about CTR early in the process. These can be an opportunity to reach out to employees about CTR as they establish new commuting habits. We are happy to talk with you about how to see your worksite through moving or reorganizing as an ETC.

At the December 7 Networking Session we heard from two ETCs about their experiences in handling either a worksite move or agency reorganization. Kerry Tarullo with the City of Olympia discussed the city's move to their new City Hall building and Annette Gavette with the WA State Dept. of Licensing spoke about handling reorganization as some employees moved to the WA State Dept. of Revenue. We also heard information sent to us from Jerry Ferrante with WA State Dept. of Commerce on that worksite's move. Thank you all for sharing what you learned.

Congratulations to ETC Prize Winners!

The following ETCs won a random drawing prize at the December 7 ETC Networking Session:

Victoria Harold-Carter,
WA State Dept. of Social & Health Services
Diane Graf, WA State Office of Attorney General
Annette Gavette, WA State Dept. of Licensing
Joan Samuelson, WA State Investment Board
Joann Snyder,
WA State Dept. of Social and Health Services
Marcia Horovitz,
WA State Dept. of Enterprise Services



Congratulations to you all ... glad you and all ETCs who made it were there! Remember that prize drawings are a great way to introduce some interest and fun into your worksite CTR programs. If you are a state agency, you can review state policies on the use of public funds in state agency CTR programs at the following link: <http://www.ctr.wa.gov/docs/GUIDE06.PDF>.

ETC Question of the Month



Q: Where do I find information about the Rural & Tribal Transportation Program (R/T)?

A: R/T provides weekday accessible transportation services for the Nisqually Indian Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, the communities of Bucoda, Rainier, Rochester, Tenino, Yelm and other parts of rural Thurston County. R/T provides connections to Intercity Transit in Thurston County and Twin Transit in Lewis County. The service is available to anyone who lives or travels in Thurston County, and R/T honors the StarPass program and accepts transfers from Intercity Transit or Twin Transit.

[Read more about it >>](#)

SCHEDULE A RIDE

Call 1-800-650-7846 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. weekdays. You can get information and cancel a ride outside those hours.

ORDER BROCHURES ON THE R/T PROGRAM FOR YOUR WORKSITE:

Contact TRPC at ThurstonCommutes@trpc.org

Note: The ETC who submitted this question will receive a prize! Submit your questions to:

ThurstonCommutes@trpc.org

Improved Communication Tools Coming Soon

The CTR Partners* are testing new methods to streamline communications with ETCs. We began last October when we introduced the ETC Newsletter, our first effort to consolidate messages about CTR requirements, training, and promotions into one communication. In January, we will test a Web-based newsletter service, Constant Contact. This tool allows you to opt into or out of certain types of email messages by your choice. It also provides us tools to poll ETCs on future training events and track how you access materials and information. We will use this information to help us better serve your worksite.



We want to know how effective this new tool is. Please open, read, and follow the instructions you receive in test e-mail messages sent from ThurstonCommutes@trpc.org. We will email only a few short messages and may contact you directly to troubleshoot about messages that do not transmit as expected. We appreciate your help and patience during this test period.

Thank you!

*Thurston Regional Planning Council, Intercity Transit, Thurston County, and the Cities of Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater, and the Washington State Department of Transportation.

Mark Your Calendar... 2012

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|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| ➤ | ETC Basic Training | January 26 |
| ➤ | ETC Networking Session | February 9 |
| ➤ | 2012 Program Reports (Annual Reports) | due February 29 |
| ➤ | Telework Week | March 5-9 |

We Can Help: Contact Information

Thurston Regional Planning Council
www.thurstoncommutes.com

[Holly Gilbert](#) or [Paul Brewster](#)
956.7575

- State & Local Requirements & Compliance
- Training & Technical Support
- Surveys & Annual Program Reports
- Networking & Promotions
- Data

Intercity Transit
www.intercitytransit.com

[Kris Fransen](#)
705.5836

- Public Transportation Services & Support
- Transit Guide
- Vanpool
- Promotions

[Carolyn Newsome](#)
705.5829

- Vanpool Questions

Washington State Department of Transportation (for state worksites)
www.ctd.wa.gov

[Amber Nguyen](#)
705.7877

- Emergency Ride Home (SAFE-Ride):
[George Blake](#)
705.7922

- Transit Pass (STAR Pass):
[Dacia Stricklett](#)
705.7845
- Policy

RideshareOnline
Find a Rideshare Partner: www.rideshareonline.com

Rural & Tribal Transportation
www.thurstonRT.org or 1.800.650.7846 – serves rural portions of Thurston County and connects to Intercity Transit and Twin Transit in Lewis County. State employees can use their STAR Pass.