

# CLUB RED

PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

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ACHD	<b>COMMUTERIDE</b>
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Updated December 2015

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Welcome to Club Red – a smarter, more fun way to get to and from work.

Club Red is ACHD Commuteride’s vanpool program that provides smart commuters, like you, a safe, dependable commuting option with multiple financial, health and environmental benefits. Not only does this program benefit the vanpoolers, it also benefits all of Treasure Valley. By providing an option for people to share the ride rather than driving alone, our vanpool program eliminates over 1 million vehicle miles off the roadways, congestion throughout the Treasure Valley and 900 tons of Carbon Dioxide making it easier to breathe for everyone. Every month.

ACHD Commuteride covers all costs associated with operating the van in exchange for a monthly fare paid by the vanpoolers, which is up to 80% less than a commuter driving alone. The current service area includes seven counties, one in Oregon. However each vanpool must start, end, or pass through Ada County. The number of routes operating each month is entirely dependent on demand, in fact a new vanpool can start any time ten paying persons (six for reverse/rural commutes) are able to share a route. Vanpoolers can also join one of the 90 existing vanpools, if seats are available. Our longest standing route has been going for 31 years!

The success of the program is dependent upon the courtesy and congeniality of its members. This handbook will give you some basic information on how the program operates as well as helpful tips and suggestions to make your commute more relaxing and enjoyable.

**Welcome aboard!**

Annette Harper  
Vanpool Operations Coordinator



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If you would like more information on becoming a driver for your van, please contact Commuteride (345-POOL or [Commuteride@achdidaho.org](mailto:Commuteride@achdidaho.org)) or talk with the other driver. Driver application and driver agreement forms are located on our website [www.commuteride.com](http://www.commuteride.com). You can submit them to your driver or send them directly to our office either by fax (375-2582) or by email ([commuteride@achdidaho.org](mailto:commuteride@achdidaho.org)).

## DRIVER RULES/INCENTIVES

All Club Red drivers are volunteers and it is an important role with both incentives and responsibilities. We require a minimum of two approved drivers per van. Having the right amount of volunteer drivers per van helps reduce Van Do Not Run days and keeps your van running on schedule.

We realize that a huge benefit of the vanpool program is being able to relax on their commute. However, someone has to volunteer to drive, and while we don't pay them, we do like to reward them.

Drivers are awarded gift cards on a quarterly basis for performing various driver functions. The dollar figure is dependent on the percentage of time they drove and how often they fueled the van (with ACHD Commuteride gas card) but cannot exceed \$35/month.

Volunteer drivers are required to pass our background check, an online training course (1.5 hours), and a one hour orientation class. The background check includes a 3-year Idaho Motor Vehicle Records (MVR) check with the Idaho Transportation Department. Members of the military, and or residents of Oregon are exempt from this requirement, but must show proof of a valid license from their home state and provide a 3-year Motor Vehicle Records check to the Commuteride office before completing the driver's application process. Due to our insurance requirements, 25 years is the minimum age for all vanpool drivers.

## INCENTIVES

Club Red members enjoy multiple financial, health related and environmental benefits by choosing to smart commute. To further promote the use of vanpooling, ACHD Commuteride provides the following incentives to its Club Red members.

### FIRST MONTH FREE

The first 21 days a commuter rides our vans is free. We feel that most people understand the advantages of our vanpool program after 21 days and will stay on as a paying Club Red member. Returning participants are eligible for this incentive only if they are gone for longer than two years.

### RIDER RECRUITMENT BONUS

Our vanpoolers are our best marketing tool, as they exemplify all the financial, health related or environmental benefits associated with vanpooling. We encourage our riders to use their story to recruit other riders by providing a \$40 bonus if an existing rider recruits another rider that stays on any van at least 3 months. Payment is made directly to the recruiting rider upon receipt of a *Rider Reimbursement Form* (found online) and after the new rider has paid two full monthly fares. If two passengers submit the same new passenger's name, whichever recruiter submits their form to Commuteride first is given the bonus. Participants must submit their claim within 90 days from the new rider's start date.

availability upon his/her return. Anniversary Credit and Emergency Ride Home+ dates start again with the month they pay their first full monthly fare after returning.

### HOLIDAYS

If you are required to work on a day that all van drivers are off, you are eligible for a Van Do Not Run Credit. Otherwise, holidays are already incorporated into the van fare.

#### MEDICAL/FAMILY LEAVE

In the event a passenger wishes to temporarily terminate their ridership due to a medical or family emergency beyond his/her control, Commuteride may grant a leave of absence to the passenger for a 90-day period. The participant should submit to the driver a written request explaining the circumstances and when they will return. The driver forwards the request to Commuteride for review/approval. The policy allows monthly passengers to guarantee their seat while on medical or family emergency to keep the same anniversary month for 90 days without paying the fare. The seat may be sold to another rider on a short term basis until the passenger on leave returns with Commuteride's approval. This policy is not designed to accommodate temporary leaves for convenience sake or summer vacations.

#### VACATIONS

Participants paying on a monthly basis wishing to take vacation from the vanpool can do so in two ways:

1. Participants can pay for the entire monthly fare to reserve seat until his/her return. The participants may sublet his/her seat with approval from the driver and the Commuteride office.
2. Participants can pay for rides at the daily pro-rated fare (full monthly fare divided by 21 days) until the last day ridden and quit the vanpool. When returning to Club Red, a participant is considered new however they are not eligible for the First Month Free incentive unless two years have passed. No guarantee is made or implied as to seat

#### EMPLOYER RELATED INCENTIVES

Several Treasure Valley employers provide incentives for their employees to use a smart commuting option. The two below are the most common. Check with your Human Resources department on whether they provide either of these or any other employer related incentive.

#### QUALIFIED FRINGE BENEFIT

As of December 2015, the US tax code allows tax-free transportation fringe benefits of up to \$255 per month per employee for riding a vanpool. These benefits are received one of three ways: 1) through a tax-free employer-paid subsidy, 2) a pre-tax employee-paid payroll deduction, or 3) a combination of both (Internal Revenue Code, Section 132(f)—Qualified Transportation Fringe).

The tax-free employer paid subsidy is where employers provide a pre-determined amount of funds to a qualifying employee who then use it pay their vanpool fare. This is a tax benefit which saves payroll taxes for employers as the value of the benefit paid to employees is considered a tax-free transportation fringe benefit and not wage or salary compensation and payroll taxes do not apply. Employers can save roughly 7.5% in payroll taxes (including FICA, SUI, SDI and city taxes) on the amount employees set aside. If the employer chooses to offer the benefit in addition to the employee's monthly salary, giving an employee up to \$255 in transit benefits is less expensive for an employer than increasing the employee's salary by \$255.

The pre-tax employee-paid payroll deduction works similar to flexible spending plans for health care costs. Businesses that provide this option allow employees to set aside income on a pre-tax basis that can then be used to pay their vanpool fare.

#### TRANSI-CHEKS

New participants are eligible for a \$20 subsidy (Transi-Chek) for each of the first three months fare (2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> months). Transi-Cheks are distributed through participating employers as an incentive to try transportation services. Discounts are available only on monthly rides. Check with your employer regarding Transi-Cheks benefits. If they aren't already participating, let our marketing team know by calling 345-POOL and they will contact your employer to see if a Transi-Chek program can be started.

#### EMERGENCY RIDE HOME+

Club Red members are never stranded at work. In the case of an emergency including family illness, unexpected overtime, etc. our emergency ride home program will take you back to your pick up point if a situation arises that prohibits you from using an alternative transportation mode to get home. The Emergency Ride Home+ is only offered to participants that have gone to work that day by vanpool. Reimbursement will not cover rides home due to natural events, such as heavy snowstorms, blizzards, earthquakes, etc.; planned/scheduled trips such as a doctor's appointment; nor overtime for a project that is known prior to going to work. To use the program, simply call an eligible ride provider (listed on [www.commuteride.com/vanpool](http://www.commuteride.com/vanpool)), show your Club Red card to the

3. New or terminating participants pay an appropriate prorated daily fare based on the number of days the vanpool runs during that month.
4. If leaving the vanpool, participants shall notify Commuteride at least 14 days in advance. Further, they are responsible for paying the fare during the 14 day notice period.
5. Fare refunds are considered in cases of layoff, abrupt termination of employment, and/or abrupt work time changes.
6. Payments are accepted via cash, check, money order, or debit/credit card. Absolutely, no cash is accepted by mail. Further, Commuteride is not responsible for cash that is lost in the mail. Our website offers an online opportunity to pay with a debit/credit card at [www.commuteride.com](http://www.commuteride.com).

#### RETURNED CHECKS

In the case of a returned check, Commuteride requires the responsible party is required to replace the returned check with a money order, certified check or credit card along with a \$20.00 per check service charge.

Commuteride will not accept personal checks from an individual if a second returned check is received within a 12-month period. Only certified checks or money orders are accepted. The driver responsible for the monthly van report are notified, that ACHD Commuteride is refusing to accept personal checks from the individual responsible for the returned check, so the driver will know not to accept a personal check. The restriction on personal checks is in place for one year from the date the second returned check is replaced.

## CLUB RED POLICIES

### TERMINATION/CONSOLIDATE OF ROUTES

In the event ridership falls to a point where it is no longer cost effective to operate, the group is provided a 30 day notice. Commuteride staff will work with the group to find additional participants within those 30 days. If at the end of the 30 days, enough participants are not found to meet the minimum number required (7 on full size vans, 4 on mini-vans) the van is taken off route. Our team will make every effort to place participants on other existing routes in the area.

### PAYMENT

Each participant makes a commitment to the Vanpool when he or she signs the Participant Agreement. To ensure that the vanpool operates smoothly and efficiently, all participants agree to the following:

1. Pay the full monthly vanpool fare in advance; no later than the first working day of each month. If the participant is not riding the first working day, they shall provide the check to the driver early or mail it to the Commuteride Office (5714 Fairview Avenue, Boise 83706 ID). The monthly fare paid entitles them to a reserved seat in the van for the entire month.
2. If a participant fails to pay the full monthly fare by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, they are charged a 10% late fee on any remaining balance.

driver, and head home. The rider provider bills us directly. Gratuities are not reimbursed. Club Red members can use this program up to six (6) times per calendar year, with a maximum of \$300 per year per applicant, and only while funding is available. ACHD Commuteride reserves the right to verify alternative transportation modes on days the emergency ride home is used.

### ANNIVERSARY CREDIT

The longer you stay on the van, the more rewards you get. It's not just the personal gains from the lower transportation costs, being able to relax and socialize, and knowing that you are helping the environment, but also annual rewards for being a long time vanpoolers through annual anniversary credits that are applied to their fare. Full paying participants are eligible to claim an "anniversary credit" after they paid their monthly fare for twelve consecutive months. The anniversary credit of \$10 is applied toward their 13th month fare. Vanpool participants whose employer pays their full fare or use the employer paid "Qualified Transportation Fringe" are not eligible for this incentive.

### VAN DO NOT RUN CREDITS

Occasionally all the eligible drivers of a van cannot drive on a particular day. While this is very rare, we recognize that it is an inconvenience. As an incentive to keep riding the van, we offer a "credit" that is applied to the next month's fare, upon request. The "Van Did Not Run" credit amount is the fare paid by participant (not any portion of the fare paid by the employer) divided by 21.

#### LOCAL AREA BUSINESS DISCOUNTS

Local area business discounts/coupons for all Club Red members, just for thinking differently about their commute and choosing a smart option. Check [www.commuteride.com/vanpool](http://www.commuteride.com/vanpool) for updates.

#### VANPOOL COURTESY

Vanpooling is a relaxing, convenient, cost effective way to go to and from work each day. Since Vanpooling creates a close group, it is important that everyone work together to help make Vanpooling a pleasant experience. Here are some tips to help everyone enjoy their commute:

1. Notify the Driver when you will miss any days riding the van.
2. Keep your driver advised of any changes in your home or work telephone numbers.
3. All passengers and van drivers are required to wear seat belts and shoulder straps while the van is in motion.
4. Ammunition or fire arms are not allowed on any Commuteride Vanpool. This rule is in place to insure a safe vanpool environment for everyone on the van.
5. Smoking is prohibited on all the Club Red Vans.
6. Drivers are encouraged to keep a tight schedule. We request driver's not wait more than 3 minutes for late arrivals (as referenced in your Participant Agreement); therefore arrive at your pick-up location on time. If you're delayed, let your driver know. Reconfirm your assigned pick up times with the driver if changes in ridership or schedule occur.
7. As a group, develop a seating arrangement for easier loading and unloading. Please note there are no assigned seats.

8. Keep conversations light - stay away from anything that is offending or controversial to anyone in the group. This is especially important considering the diversity of the Commuteride vanpoolers. You never know who is listening and understanding.
9. Avoid heavy perfume/after-shave, cigarette/cigar/pipe smell, bad breath, body odor, and greasy work clothes which are sources of discomfort to some others.
10. If you are ill or think that you may have been exposed to a contagious illness; out of courtesy and safety for the other participants, please don't ride the vanpool until you are sure that you are not contagious.

Take pride in your vanpool family and treating them with care and courtesy. If you see something that needs repairing, let your driver know. Your primary driver is the lead person of the group. If you have questions or comments regarding the operation of the vanpool, talk with him/her first. If you are not satisfied with the result, please feel free to contact the Commuteride at 345-POOL.