

Employee Commute Options

Oregon Administrative Rules 340-242-0010 through 0290

What are the ECO Rules?

The [Employee Commute Options](#) rules, also called ECO, apply to employers in the Portland area with more than 100 employees reporting to a work site. These employers must provide incentives for employee use of commute options like taking the bus or carpooling. The incentives must have the potential to reduce commute trips to the work site by 10 percent from an established baseline.

ECO is part of a federally required plan to reduce smog levels. This plan also includes the DEQ Vehicle Inspection Program and industry regulations.

Why do we have ECO?

The main goal of ECO is to protect public health by reducing air pollution from motor vehicles. Car exhaust is one of our region's largest single sources of air pollution.

ECO also helps reduce traffic congestion. Added time to deliver goods and services hurts the competitiveness of our region's businesses.

Health and environmental effects of air pollution

Car exhaust is a main ingredient in ground-level ozone, also called smog. Breathing even low levels of smog can decrease lung function and aggravate asthma.

Smog hurts everyone but is especially harmful to children, older adults and people with heart disease and breathing problems like asthma. According to the Oregon Health Authority, approximately 10.2 percent of adults and 9.5 percent of children in Oregon have asthma. This is higher than the national average. More than a quarter of adults with asthma report missing at least one day of work per year due to their condition.

Car exhaust is a primary source of carbon dioxide, a global warming gas.

Car exhaust also is a major source of air toxics - chemicals known or suspected to cause cancer and other serious health effects. A recent DEQ study shows unhealthy levels of benzene and other air toxics in Portland's air.

How does an employer comply?

DEQ requires employers to:

- Survey employees to determine current commute methods
- Prepare a plan to meet the target reduction and submit the plan to DEQ for approval
- Perform follow-up surveys every two years to measure progress toward the 10 percent trip reduction goal

What are some typical commute options incentives?

Popular programs include:

- Transit and vanpool subsidies
- Allowing employees to purchase transit passes with pre-tax dollars (can also reduce an employer's FICA and unemployment taxes)
- Carpool matching and preferential parking for carpools
- Compressed work weeks (4/10s for example)
- Telecommuting
- Bike/walk incentives
- Emergency ride home program

Is there a penalty for not complying?

Yes. DEQ requires an employer to demonstrate *good faith effort*. This means an employer must survey employees and submit and implement a reasonable trip reduction plan. Failure to follow through with these requirements can result in a fine. DEQ will not fine a company for not reaching its trip reduction goal.

Alternative formats

Alternative formats of this document can be made available. Contact DEQ's Office of Communications & Outreach for more information at 503- 229-5696.



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Department of
Environmental
Quality

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Air Quality**
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Contacts:
Rose Lim or Susan Drake
e-mail:
eco@deq.state.or.us
web site:
www.oregon.gov/DEQ

[DEQ ECO Compliance Help](#)

(503) 229-6154; eco@deq.state.or.us

- ECO rule interpretation & compliance assistance
- Survey and plan assistance
- Referral to other resources

[TriMet Employer Programs](#)

(503) 962-6474; employerprograms@trimet.org

- Transit pass plans for employees, students
- ECO planning assistance
- Surveys and survey processing
- On-line survey
- Information about pretax payroll deduction
- Employee transportation coordinator training

[C-TRAN](#)

(360) 695-0123 or (503) 238-8054

- Public transit serving the Vancouver/Portland Metro area
- Trip planning assistance

[Rideshare Online](#) powered by Drive Less/Save More

(503) 813-7566; contact@drivelessavemore.com

- Rideshare and carpool matching and incentives
- How to videos for biking and walking safety and driving tips
- Trip-tracking diary and more
- Facebook and Twitter feeds

[Metro Regional Travel Options](#)

(503) 813-7566; rto@OregonMetro.gov

- Drive Less Save More Commuter Dispatch e-mail service highlights ways to reduce drive-alone trips to the worksite
- Free geocoded maps (scatter maps) to help large employers plan and organize rideshare, transit and bike options
- Regional rideshare matching

Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) advocate for employers and are central sources of information on commute transportation issues. Contact the TMA that most closely serves your area for help with ECO compliance and to learn about transportation options in your area.

[Gresham Regional Center TMA](#)

(503) 665-3827; grctma@gdda.org

[Lloyd TMA](#)

(503) 236-6441; mail@lloydtma.org

[South Waterfront TMA](#)

(503) 972-2830

communityrelations@southwaterfront.com

[SMART Transit \(Wilsonville\)](#)

(503) 682-4523; smart@ridesmart.com

[Swan Island TMA](#)

(503) 745-6563; sitma@teleport.com

[Westside Transportation Alliance](#)

(503) 906-7961; wta@wta-tma.org

