



How to: START A GUARANTEED RIDE HOME PROGRAM

Guaranteed Ride Home Programs (GRH), also called Emergency Ride Home Programs (ERH), provide employees with a free ride home from work when an unexpected occurrence prevents them from using their normal alternative commute mode.

GRH programs encourage more employees to leave their cars at home because they no longer have to worry about being stranded at work in the event of an untimely incident such as a personal emergency or unexpected overtime.

Transportation is generally provided by cab or by car rental agencies. Costs for the cab or car rental are either paid for directly by the program, or employees pay for the expense and are later reimbursed. Restrictions are typically placed on the types of emergencies that qualify for the service, and on how often employees may use the service throughout the year.

Benefits

A GRH program may benefit employers by assisting employees to feel secure in participating in an alternative commute program at their worksite. The convenience of the program can help reduce any objections that employees may have to riding public transit or to using a carpool and/or vanpool. Employees can benefit from GRH programs by taking advantage of an economically viable commute alternative without the concern of being stranded at work in the event of an emergency.

Implementation

Employers should establish a program that is customized to their needs. Businesses that maintain vehicle fleets may allow employees to drive those cars as part of its GRH program. Companies should consult with their internal insurance manager when utilizing their own vehicle fleet for the GRH program.



Depending on availability, other organizations could utilize cab and rental car companies. The employer would determine if rental car vouchers or reimbursements will be used. Employees would be subject to the same rental car eligibility guidelines as any person renting a car, and if the employee cannot rent a car, a cab service should serve as a back-up.

When using cabs, several payment methods may be considered. Employees could pay for the cab fare and submit a receipt for reimbursement. Or, employers could develop an agreement with a local cab company that would allow employees to pay with a voucher. The cab company would later invoice the employer for any vouchers collected. Agreements may also include a pre-determined tip amount for the driver.

Guidelines and Procedures

Implementation should include guidelines on the following topics:

- Program administration
- Qualifying employees
- Guidelines and definitions of emergencies
- Limits on frequency (typically 3-5 times per year), and cost and/or distance
- Payments, vouchers, accounting and logistics

A GRH program should only be used for unforeseen circumstances such as an illness (personal or family), unscheduled overtime, and when a carpool or vanpool driver cannot take passengers home. GRH programs would not include transportation to medical or personal appointments, or overtime requested in advance.

Once guidelines are established, a billing system is needed. If a company fleet is used, GRH charges should be added to fleet billing codes. If a cab or car rental company is used, the program administrator should meet with that company to discuss invoicing.

Some other billing considerations are whether employees will give the cab driver a voucher or submit the expense for reimbursement, whether tips are to be rendered at the time of service, or if billing will occur per ride or monthly.

Program Maintenance

- Contractual agreements with external transportation service providers
- Internal promotion of the GRH program
- Updated employee registration lists
- Surveys or feedback forms on the success of your GRH program

Marketing the Program

Based on most studies, GRH programs are not used that frequently by employees, yet they provide a “safety net” for employees who use an alternative commute mode. Therefore, when marketed correctly, it can be an essential asset to your company’s commuter program, and might even be considered one of your program’s most valuable selling points. You can use the GRH program to engage employees in further discussions regarding all of your commute programs, and place it in the forefront when you advertise using any commute alternative. Some of the methods you can use to market your GRH program are:

- Including it as a benefit in orientation packets
- Providing articles about it in company newsletters
- Emailing all employees to promote and explain the GRH program
- Making special presentations at employee events and meetings
- Displaying special GRH posters and fliers throughout common areas

511 OFFERS FREE SERVICES AND TOOLS FOR EMPLOYERS

Want to help your employees find more efficient and economical ways to get to work? 511 offers a variety of services and tools to help you assemble a successful Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program at your worksite. This service is provided at no cost to your organization by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. Services include:

ONLINE RIDEMATCHING

With just a few clicks on 511.org, the RideMatch Service instantly matches your employees with other people making a similar commute.

VANPOOL FORMATION AND SUPPORT

Vanpooling may be an option at your worksite, and we can help you set up vanpools from start to finish.

COMMUTE INCENTIVES

Employees who use commute alternatives to driving alone can benefit from a variety of incentives, including commuter tax breaks, free bridge tolls, carpool lanes and other financial incentives.

WORK SITE EVENTS

511’s representatives will participate in select events to promote carpooling and vanpooling at your worksite.