



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE 03-02

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Executive Director

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Last Amended: 02/28/2017

ALTERNATIVE COMMUTING RESOURCES

I. AUTHORITY

This Administrative Procedure was originally issued by the Executive Director on April 16, 2003, to implement M-NCPPC Administrative Practice 2-18, Work/Life Program. This Procedure was last amended by the Executive Director on February 28, 2017.

If any portion of this Administrative Procedure is inconsistent with the Practice 2-18, employment laws, Merit System Rules and Regulations, M-NCPPC Practices, or applicable collective bargaining agreements, the language in those sources shall prevail.

II. PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

The purpose of this Administrative Procedure is to provide alternative commuting options for M-NCPPC employees. Since initial implementation, this Procedure has been amended as follows:

- February 28, 2017: Amended to provide updated resources on available commuting programs and to clarify existing policy provisions including consistent use of terminology.

III. DEFINITIONS

Core Hours: The portion of a standard workday when all full-time employees must be present, unless appropriately excused. Core hours are determined by the Department Head or his/her designee, and may vary during peak and seasonal periods.

Off-Peak Hours: Any time beyond the standard rush or peak transit periods such as morning and afternoon “rush-hours.” This typically encompasses the early morning, mid-day, night-time, and weekends.

IV. REFERENCES

- M-NCPPC Administrative Practice 2-18, Work/Life Program
- M-NCPPC Administrative Procedure 95-01, Flextime

- M-NCPPC Administrative Procedure 95-02, Compressed Work Schedule
- M-NCPPC Administrative Procedure 03-01, Telework Program

V. **OVERVIEW/ PROCEDURE**

M-NCPPC is dedicated to preserving the environment by encouraging the use of available alternative commuting resources to help reduce pollution, traffic, and noise associated with single-occupant vehicle use. The use of alternative commuting resources may also reduce costs related to parking, fueling, and maintaining personal vehicles. Available resources are described within this section.

M-NCPPC, in partnership with the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments (COG), provides some information on alternative commuting resources through COG's Commuter Connections Program. Employees may obtain information about the COG's Commuter Connections program online at www.commuterconnections.org, by emailing ridematching@mwkog.org, or by calling the Commuter Connections Program at 1-800-745-RIDE (7433).

Alternative commuting benefits may also be attained through use of work scheduling arrangements such as Flextime, Compressed Work Schedule, and Teleworking. These arrangements, which are offered under the agency's Work/Life Program (M-NCPPC Administrative Practice 2-18), will potentially reduce commuting frequency and distances, and/or encourage travel during off-peak hours. Each Department Head is responsible for setting "core-hours". Information on work scheduling arrangements can be obtained through separate Administrative Procedures that more fully address the respective Work/Life components identified herein.

General information on any agency Work/Life Program may be requested through the M-NCPPC's Health & Benefits Office, Department of Human Resources and Management.

A. **ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES**

All M-NCPPC employees may utilize any available alternative commuting resource in accordance with applicable guidelines.

B. **USE OF ALTERNATIVE COMMUTING RESOURCES**

Alternative commuting resources, which are available to M-NCPPC employees, are described below. These guidelines offer general information on program benefits. M-NCPPC does not operate or administer these programs; therefore, employees should check with individual transportation resources for specific participation requirements.

1. **Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH)**

This service, offered through the Commuter Connections Program, ensures that employees who regularly utilize alternative commuting resources get a ride home during qualified emergency situations. This benefit is available to employees up to four (4) times a year and is generally free of charge (excluding taxes and gratuity). In instances involving rental cars, employees are responsible for these associated costs, if applicable: car taxes, rental car fuel expenses, gratuity, and rental car insurance.

As a prerequisite for this benefit, employees must comply with the following:

- Review specific program guidelines and register with the Commuter Connections Program online at <http://www.commuterconnections.org/commuters/guaranteed-ride-home/> or by calling 1-800-745-RIDE (7433). Commuters must re-register every 12 months from registration to maintain their GRH participation.
- Use an alternative commuting transportation resource at least two times a week (e.g., use a vanpool, carpool, public transit such as Metro, MARC and bus, biking, or walking).
- Have a qualified emergency/situation, such as an unexpected personal or family emergency, unexpected illness, or unscheduled overtime with supervisor's verification (weather-related emergencies or transit service disruptions and/or delays are excluded under the published requirements of the program).
- Use an alternative commuting transportation resource on the day a Guaranteed Ride Home is requested.
- Work in the Washington Metropolitan area, as approved by Commuter Connections.
- Live in one of the areas approved by Commuter Connections.
- Comply with additional Commuter Connections program requirements. Employees should refer to <http://www.mwcog.org/> for the most current listing of program requirements.

2. **High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes**

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes are specially reserved for vanpools, carpools, and public transit during peak traffic hours. These lanes are generally less congested than other unrestricted lanes, often allowing users to bypass traffic in those lanes. HOV lanes serve as a strong incentive for ridesharing, a practice that can reduce congestion and improve air quality.

The following websites provide information on specific HOV lane locations and hours of operation:

- HOV lane information for the Washington Metropolitan Area is available through the Commuter Connections website:
<http://www.commuterconnections.org/commuters/ridesharing/hov-lanes>.
- HOV lane information for the greater Virginia area can be found at <http://www.commuterpage.com/hov.htm>. This website also provides information on toll highways and public transit systems.

3. **Public Transit/Park and Ride Lots**

Public transit carries commuters by bus or rail, or other method of transportation. A Park & Ride lot provides parking spaces for individuals to park and/or meet with a carpool or vanpool, or in some instances, use public transit. The following websites feature information and/or links on public transit options and Park and Ride locations:

- The Commuter Connections Program, which serves the Washington Metropolitan Area, identifies available public transit options, such as Park and Ride lots, Metrorail, and other train lines. The Program provides web links on public transit hours of operation and related fees/fares. Further information is available online at <http://www.commuterconnections.org/commuters/transit/> or by calling 1-800-745-RIDE (7433).
- The Maryland Transit Administration provides information on locations, schedules, and fares for local buses, MARC commuter trains, and other public transit services for the Maryland region through its website, <http://mta.maryland.gov/>.
- The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority provides information on locations, schedules, and fares for Metrobuses, Metrorail, and other public transit services for the District of Columbia through its website, <http://www.wmata.com>

The Commuter Page service provides details for Virginia-based services, including bus, Metrorail, and VRE commuter trains through its website, <http://www.commuterpage.com/hov.htm>.

4. **Ridesharing**

The Ridesharing program is a free service through the Commuter Connections Program that helps registered employees form a new car/van pool, or add more persons to an existing car/van pool. Ridesharing provides HOV-lane access, reduction of driving costs, and environmental benefits.

The Commuter Connections Program maintains a computerized database that matches riders who have similar needs and can meet at convenient locations near their home or office. The Ridesharing service also offers a Commuter Connections Bulletin Board, so that participants can find each other by submitting postings or reviewing postings from other ride sharers.

Employees may register online at: <http://www.commuterconnections.org/commuters/ridesharing/> or by calling 1-800-745-RIDE (7433).