

December 2007

Memorandum

To: All U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) Employees

From: Douglas J. Bourgeois /s/  
Director

Subject: Transit Benefit Program Requirements

The transit subsidy program was fully implemented throughout DOI in October 2000. The program has benefited many employees and the environment by subsidizing employee public transportation commuting expenses and by reducing traffic congestion and pollution. The Department of Transportation (DOT) administers the program for DOI. Currently, there are 5,145 employees enrolled at an annual cost to DOI of approximately \$5M.

The Government Accounting Office investigated the program and released a report in April 2007. The investigation uncovered widespread fraud and abuse across the federal government and determined a need for stricter management controls.

This memorandum is a reminder to all DOI managers, supervisors, transit benefit coordinators, and participants of the transit benefit program requirements and the serious consequences associated with violations of these requirements.

By signing the certification statement in the transit benefit application, each transit benefit participant enters into a contract with the U.S. government which states:

- You are not named on a worksite parking permit at any federal agency, nor otherwise participating in a carpool.
- You are using transit benefits only for your regular home to work transportation, and will not transfer or sell the fare media.
- The amount of transit benefits you receive does not exceed your actual monthly commuting cost by public transportation.
- It is a violation of law to provide false or fraudulent information to obtain transit benefits, or to transfer or sell transit benefits.
- You are responsible for adjusting your transit benefit amount upon changes to your commuting methods or work schedules such as leave, official travel and training, telecommuting and flexible work.
- When exit clearing, you are responsible for reimbursing DOI for benefits you may have received beyond the date of leaving the Department.

- You may not use your transit benefit in excess of the monthly statutory limit.

It is imperative that employees comply with these requirements. Violations can result in revocation of transit benefit privileges and other serious consequences including removal from federal service and criminal and civil penalties.

The DOI Program Coordinator will implement additional measures to protect the integrity of the transit benefits program in 2008. The new policy will require annual recertification and provide a commuting expense calculator worksheet with all applications. In addition, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and DOT are working to establish consistent program policy and control, on-line training and best practices for federal agencies. They expect to have these ready in January 2008. DOI will adopt policies and procedures that enhance program awareness and controls.

Additional information about the transportation benefit program including the policy via Frequently Asked Questions, application, exit clearance reimbursement form and list of Bureau and Office coordinators is available at the following website: [http://www.nbc.gov/facilities/transportation\\_subsidy.html](http://www.nbc.gov/facilities/transportation_subsidy.html), or call the Division of Facilities Management Services at 202-208-7182.