

TRANSIT BENEFIT INTEGRITY AWARENESS TRAINING

Presented By:

U.S. Department of Transportation



Training Objectives

- Clarify transit benefit requirements
- Emphasize internal controls
 - minimize fraud and abuse
- Address ramifications of non-compliance
- Provide real-life scenarios
 - Enhance understanding
- Educate participants to their roles and responsibilities



Topics

- **Program Overview**
 - **Background and Objectives**
 - **TRANServe**
 - **Website**
 - **Legal Implications**
- **Understanding the Certification Statement**
- **Scenarios**



Background

- **Established in 1991, as a Federal Transit Administration pilot program**
- **Federal Employees Clean Air Incentives Act in 1993**
- **Federal Workforce Transportation Fringe Benefit – EO 13150 April 21, 2000**



Program Objectives

- Reduce Greenhouse Gases
- Reduce Traffic Congestion



TRANServe's Role

- **Fee for Service**
- **Distribute the Transit Benefit to Qualified Employees**
- **Administer the Transit Benefit Program**
- **Establish Best Practices**
- **Replace image with Debit Card**



Participant Page

TRANServe.dot.gov

- ✓ **Enroll, Recertify, Change, Withdraw**
- ✓ **Expense & Verification Worksheet**
- ✓ **Transit Benefit Integrity Awareness Training**
- ✓ **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**
- ✓ **SmartBenefits® Presentation**
- ✓ **Fraud & Abuse Penalties**
- ✓ **Transit Links**



Legal Implications

Tax Evasion & Fraud

Employees who misuse the transit benefit are subject to disciplinary including discipline and disqualification from the Transit Benefit Program.

Disciplinary penalties may include removal from federal service.



Knowledge Check

The Transit Benefit Program's objective is to:

- A. Increase compensation of federal employees per month.
- B. Incentivise federal employees to use public transportation to reduce the federal government's contribution air pollution and traffic congestion.
- C. Reward the employees for their hard work.



The Answer

The correct answer is B.

*The Federal Workforce Transportation Fringe Benefit Program under Executive Order 13150 and **IRS 132.f** was implemented to reduce air pollution and traffic congestion.*



Knowledge Check

If I misuse my transit benefit in any way, such as selling my benefit or overestimating my commuting cost, I can lose my job with the federal government.

TRUE

FALSE



The Answer

*The correct answer is **TRUE**.*

Disciplinary action may be taken up to and including removal from employment.



Knowledge Check

The role of TRANServe is to:

- A. Distribute Transit Benefits to DOJ-OIG.
- B. Administer the Transit Benefit Program.
- C. Establish Best Practices.
- D. All of the above.



The Answer

The answer is D. All of the above.

The TRANServe program was put in place by the Secretary of Transportation to administer the Transit Benefit Program, to distribute the transit benefit to federal employees and to establish Best Practices around transit benefits.



Certification Required

Anyone who enrolls in the transit benefit program must certify that certain conditions are true. The following slides describe these conditions.



What does certification mean?

“To formally and legally attest a specific statement to be true”



Certification Statement

WARNING !

This certification concerns a matter within the jurisdiction of an agency of the United States. Making a false, fictitious, or fraudulent certification may constitute criminal violations punishable under Title 18, United States Code, Section 1001, by imprisonment up to five years and fines up to \$10,000 for each offense, and/or agency disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal.

- I certify that I am employed by the U.S. Federal Government.
- I certify that I am not named on a federally subsidized parking permit with any other federal agency.
- I certify that I am eligible for a public transportation fare benefit, will use it for my daily commute to and from work by public transit or vanpool, and will not give, sell, or transfer it to anyone else.
- I certify that in any given month, I will not use the Government-provided transit benefit in excess of the statutory limit. If my commuting costs per month on public transit exceed the month statutory limit, then I will supplement those additional costs with my own funds rather than use a Government-provided transit benefit designated for use in a future month.
- I certify that I will not claim the transit benefit in excess of my actual monthly commuting expense. If at anytime during a given month I am out of work due to sickness, vacation or any other reason, on official travel, or use a private vehicle for commuting, I will claim less and adjust the amount of my transit benefit the following month if appropriate.
- I certify that my parking fees are not included in the computation of the daily, weekly or monthly commuting costs for my transit benefit.

I Agree

I Do Not Agree



Certification

What did I just agree to?

- I am employed by the _____.
- I am eligible for a transit benefit.
- I will use the transit benefit exclusively to commute to and from work using mass transportation.
- I will not give, sell or transfer my transit benefit to anyone else.
- I will not use the Government-provided transit benefit in excess of the subsidy provided by my Agency
- I will not include parking fees as part of my daily, weekly or monthly commuting cost.



Certification Part I

“I certify that I am employed by DOJ-OIG and am not named on a federally subsidized parking permit with DOJ-OIG or any other federal agency.”

This means:

- ✓ *You do not have federally subsidized parking*
- ✓ *You are not listed on any federal parking pass*
- ✓ *You do not park your personal/leased vehicle at a government parking lot or garage*



Certification Part II

“I certify that I am eligible for a public transportation fare benefit, will use it for my daily commute to and from work, and will not transfer it to anyone else.”

This means:

- ✓ *You qualify to receive the transit benefit*
- ✓ *You use mass transportation to and/or from work*
- ✓ *You will not give or sell your subsidy benefit to anyone*



Certification Part III

“I certify that in any given month, I will not use the Government provided transit benefit in excess of the statutory limit.”

This means:

- ✓ *You will not use more than your commute costs.*
- ✓ *If you have commuting costs in excess of those provided by the transit benefit, you agree to pay those additional costs out of pocket.*



Certification Part IV

“I certify that I will not claim the transit benefit in excess of my actual monthly commuting expense and that parking fees are not included in the computation of the daily, weekly or monthly commuting costs.”

This means:

- ✓ You will not claim more than your monthly estimated commuting cost*
- ✓ Your parking fees are not included in the computation of your daily, weekly or monthly costs*



Knowledge Check

Sharon joined a carpool after commuting by train for five years. She receives the maximum benefit per month in transit vouchers to use for her commute. Sharon has decided to sell her benefit to her best friend at a 10% discount, since she believes the benefit belongs to her.

Is Sharon correct to take this action?

YES

NO



The Answer

*The correct answer is **NO**.*

It is against the law to sell or give away your transit benefit. Unused transit benefit funds must be returned to the federal agency who provided the benefit.

The change in Sharon's commute disqualifies her for this transit benefit.



Knowledge Check

Carmen travels from Virginia to get to work. His commuting costs are \$264 per month. He is qualified to receive additional transit benefit since his commute is so costly.

TRUE

FALSE



The Answer

The correct answer is **FALSE**.

The statutory limit currently provides employees a subsidy of up to the maximum tax free amount (2014 is \$130) when they commute using mass transportation. The employee must cover the additional amount, “out of pocket”.



Scenarios

The following scenarios were developed from the DOT Program Policy and Guidance Document and from the Frequently Asked Questions on the DOT Transit Subsidy Benefit Intranet Site, TRANServe.dot.gov



Scenario 1

My commuting costs have changed.

What do I do?



Scenario 1

My commuting costs have changed.

All changes to your commuting costs must be updated on your application. To make these changes, follow these steps:

- 1. Go to: TRANServe.dot.gov*
- 2. Navigate to “Participants”*
- 3. Scroll down to DOJ-OIG*
- 4. Click on “Transit Benefit Application System”*
- 5. Log In*
- 6. Choose “Change”*



Scenario 2
I ride in a carpool.

***Do I qualify for the transit
benefit?***



Scenario 2

I ride in a carpool.

No.

A carpool does not meet the definition of mass transportation. Carpool riders are not eligible to receive the Transit Subsidy Benefit.



Scenario 3

I ride mass transit and park in the lot near the station.

Can I use my benefit to pay for parking at my commuter lot?



Scenario 3

I ride mass transit and park in the lot near the station.

No.

Indirect costs, such as gas, mileage, or parking cannot be included as part of the estimated commuting cost.



Knowledge Check

Chris is going to an off-site meeting. She is taking mass transit to and from the meeting, and decides to use her transit benefit. This is the correct course of action.

TRUE

FALSE



The Answer

The correct answer is **FALSE**.

Travel to an offsite meeting or training class is an office expense. The Transit Benefit is provided solely for your home-to-work-to-home commute via mass transportation.



Scenario 3

What do I do when I leave the agency?

What can I do?



Scenario 3

What do I do when I leave the agency?

1. *Go to: TRANServe.dot.gov*
2. *Navigate to “Participants”*
3. *Scroll down to DOJ-OIG*
4. *Click on “Transit Benefit Application System”*
5. *Log In*
6. *Choose “Withdraw*



Scenario 4

I plan to go on extended leave.

Can I still receive my transit benefit?



Scenario 4

I plan to go on extended leave.

If you are out on extended leave (90 days or more), you must withdraw from the program and re-enroll when you return. To do this, follow the steps below:

1. *Go to: Go to: TRANServe.dot.gov*
2. *Navigate to “Participants”*
3. *Scroll down to DOJ-OIG*
4. *Click on “Transit Benefit Application System”*
5. *Log In*
6. *Choose “Change”*
7. *Click “Withdraw from Program”*



Knowledge Check

Shunda is leaving the DOJ-OIG to work for DOJ. She has determined that the correct way to handle her leftover transit benefit vouchers is to:

- A. Give the leftovers; to her sister.*
- B. Sell her leftovers to her co-worker.*
- C. Withdraw from the program and return the funds.*



The Answer

The correct answer is C.

Benefits are not transferable and are not to be sold.

Excess vouchers or funds must be returned to your employer. Electronic funds are automatically returned at the end of the benefit month and will stop once you withdraw.



Scenario 5

I have been working off-site or working from home for the past two months.

Can I still get my Transit Benefit for the months I missed?



Scenario 5

I have been working on-site at or working from home for the past two months.

No.

If you are NOT commuting to DOJ-OIG office, you are not eligible for the program.

See guidelines for eligibility.



Scenario 6
I plan to telecommute.

***Do I need to change my
benefit amount?***



Scenario 6

I plan to telecommute.

Yes, if your commuting costs changed when your work scheduled changed. Update your application.

To make these changes, go to:

1. *Go to: TRANServe.dot.gov*
2. *Navigate to “Participants”*
3. *Scroll down to DOJ-OIG*
4. *Click on “Transit Benefit Application System”*
5. *Log In*
6. *Choose “Change”*



Knowledge Check

Martha has come to an agreement with HR and her supervisor to telecommute two days each week. She currently receives \$25 per week in transit benefit. The correct course of action to take based on this change is to:

- A. Thank her supervisors' for his/her understanding.*
- B. Continue claiming her transit benefit without change.*
- C. Change her transit benefit to \$15 per week.*



The Answer

The correct answer is C.

You must change your commuting expense worksheet if your transit expenses change.



Scenario 7

What if my fare media is lost, stolen or damaged?

Who do I contact?



Scenario 7

What if my paper fare media is lost, stolen or damaged?

Paper Fare Media

Once you receive paper fare media, you are responsible for its safekeeping. Lost or stolen fare media will not be replaced by the Agency. Some transit authorities have methods to exchange damaged fare media. Your Agency Point of Contact may be able to advise how best to handle damaged fare media in your area.



Scenario 7

What if my electronic fare media is lost, stolen or damaged?

Electronic Fare Media

When you purchase a reloadable electronic fare media card, be sure to register it with the Transit Authority Provider, if this option is available. Registration prevents a permanent loss of irreplaceable Transit Benefit funds. The electronic fare media on a lost, stolen or damaged card can be transferred to the new card.

Note: *You must purchase the new card with personal funds.*



Scenario 10

I didn't use all my benefit.

Can I give it to a co-worker?



Scenario 10

I didn't use all my benefit.

No. Your transit benefit belongs to you, and no one else. Did you know it's against the rules (and the law) to sell or give your transit benefit to someone else? The program was designed to assist employees with public transportation costs in an effort to cut-down air pollution and relieve traffic congestion. The IRS code states that this is a tax-free benefit. http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-tege/fringe_benefit_fslq.pdf



Knowledge Check

Marie is going out on maternity leave for three months. The correct way to suspend her transit benefit is to notify her supervisor.

TRUE

FALSE



The Answer

*The correct answer is **FALSE**. If you are out on extended leave (90 days or more), you must withdraw from the program and re-enroll when you return. To do this, follow the steps below:*

To make these changes, go to:

- 1. Go to: TRANServe.dot.gov*
- 2. Navigate to “Participants”*
- 3. Scroll down to DOJ-OIG*
- 4. Click on “Transit Benefit Application System”*
- 5. Log In*
- 6. Choose “Change”*



Use your Transit Benefit

Remember... it is only for
your Home-to-Duty
Station-to Home
commute.

✓ CONGRATULATIONS!

(Enter Name Here)

**You have successfully completed
TRANSIT BENEFIT INTEGRITY TRAINING**

