

CARPOOLING

The Smarter Travel Guide to setting up a Carpooling Scheme



Smarter
Travel
Programme

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The information in this guide is provided for general guidance. It may not cover every situation, and we can't guarantee it is complete or up to date.

You are responsible for how you use this information, and we accept no liability for any outcomes that result from carpooling activities.

1. Introduction

Every day, thousands of commuters drive to work on the same routes to the same destinations as their colleagues or fellow students. If two drivers shared a car/carpooled, there would be 50% fewer cars on the road at peak hours.

What is carpooling?

Carpooling is when two or more people share the journey to the same or nearby destination. The number of passengers may vary, drivers and vehicles may rotate, and the carpool might operate every day or only when it's convenient. Typically the driver isn't paid for their service, but fuel and parking costs are shared.

What is a carpooling scheme?

A carpooling scheme is a structured programme within an organisation or campus that facilitates and encourages two or more people to share a car journey to the same or a nearby destination. The scheme typically includes a system for matching participants based on routes and schedules, along with guidelines or policies to support safe, efficient, and consistent participation. It may also include incentives (e.g. priority parking or rewards) and coordination by a designated organiser.

Who is this guide for?

This guide is meant for organisations that are interested in implementing a carpooling scheme.

Is carpooling suitable for your organisation?

Carpooling generally suits locations where public transport, walking and cycling options are limited, or where staff and students commute long distances, or similar routes at similar times. It will also suit organisations that experience traffic congestion issues around their site or wish to repurpose land currently used for parking.



2. Before you start

Successful carpooling schemes rely on behaviour change. Encouraging people to alter established commuting habits can take time, so careful planning and preparation are essential. Before implementation, consider the following actions to help ensure the scheme's success.

Coordinating your Carpooling Scheme

Prior to implementing a carpooling scheme in your organisation, it is important to appoint a coordinator who will be responsible for the day to day administration of the scheme. The carpooling scheme coordinator should:

- be the dedicated point of contact for the scheme
- manage the matching tool for drivers
- promote the scheme
- monitor/report on the efficacy of the scheme

Appointing a carpool coordinator will greatly increase the chances of the scheme being a success within your organisation.

Attitudes and Concerns

Surveying staff and students can assist you in understanding general attitudes and concerns towards carpooling, and allows you to address concerns before the implementation of the scheme. The Smarter Travel team can advise you on how to develop a commuting survey for your staff and students.

Support from Management

Securing senior management support is often the first challenge when introducing a carpooling scheme. Benefits such as reduced parking demand, lower traffic congestion, and the potential to repurpose land currently used for parking can provide a strong rationale for investment. To strengthen the case further, develop a business case that compares the projected costs of implementing and operating the scheme with the expected benefits and savings. Where the overall benefits outweigh the costs, a strong case for implementation can be made.



Fact!

Parking spaces don't come cheaply. The average cost of a parking space in Dublin city centre according to the [HWBC Market Outlook 2018](#) was coming in at €4,000 p.a. per car space and €1,500 p.a. per car space in Dublin suburbs. **The total parking spend for 50 spaces in Dublin came in at €200,000 a year.**

3.Removing Barriers to Carpooling

Staff and students who are used to the freedom and flexibility of travelling alone may be reluctant to sign up to a carpooling scheme. Below are some of the most common objections and questions asked about carpools, and their solutions.

Will participants be able to choose their fellow carpoolers?

Yes, most schemes provide the opportunity for participants to meet potential carpoolers and to select partners based on certain criteria. All of this information is sought upfront in the registration process and should include the ability to carpool with partners of the same sex, non-smokers or even those who like the same type of music. Some organisations develop their own carpooling policy that commits all members to abide by common rules.

Our staff do shift-work. How will carpooling work for them?

Carpooling has proven to work particularly well for staff who work shifts, as they generally have clearly defined start and finish times. In some instances, staff who live near one another and who wish to carpool may need to change shifts to align with other participants. In these cases, support for flexible working policies may be considered by management and/or a guaranteed lift home scheme might be implemented (see page 13 for more details).

Not all staff and/or students have access to company email address or intranet

In this case, the carpool coordinator should ensure that as well as communicating electronically, participants also have access to hard-copy information.



We have plenty of parking

But how much is it costing the organisation? Encouraging your staff and students to carpool can reduce your need to provide parking spaces, which can save you money and free up the space for other uses such as increased cycle parking, fleet bike parking and charge points for e-bikes.

Insurance Implications

Organisation

Insurance Ireland does not have a standard agreement with insurers regarding carpooling. It is advisable to contact your organisation's insurance company directly to understand the insurance implications of implementing a carpooling scheme.

Drivers

The Irish Insurance Federation advises that carpooling will not affect a driver's insurance if:

- the vehicle is not built or adapted to carry more than eight passengers excluding the driver
- the passengers are not being carried as part of a business of carrying passengers
- the total contributions received do not involve an element of profit

If an insured person who is going to take part in a carpooling scheme has any doubt about their insurance cover, they should clarify same with their insurer.

Passengers

Passenger cover for private cars is compulsory under the Road Traffic Acts. Once the policy is in order there is no problem.



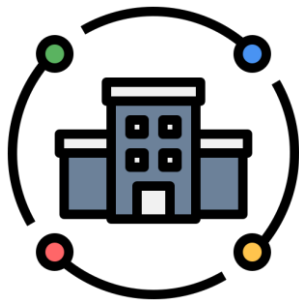
Fact!

The average cost of running of running a family car in Ireland is €10,373 per year, or €864 per month which includes various expenses such as insurance, tax, maintenance and fuel costs.

Source: Annual Cost of Running a Car in Ireland | OUTsurance

4. Benefits of Carpooling

Carpooling has clear benefits for both your organisation and your staff and/or students, and may also benefit the wider community.



Organisational Benefits

- Reduces costs and car parking problems
- Frees up land for other uses
- May increase productivity and retention
- May promote internal social networks
- May improve organisational image
- Reduces traffic congestion around site
- Reduces Scope 3 carbon emissions



Individual Benefits

- Reduce travel costs (if shared)
- Save time (reduced traffic congestion)
- Reduce stress (burden of driving shared)
- Less vehicle wear and tear (if cars rotated)
- May reduce need for a second car
- May provide alternative travel options
- May reinforce social networks
- 'Greener' choice



Community/Societal Benefits

- Reduces traffic volumes and congestion
- Reduces vehicle emissions
- Contributes to a cleaner environment
- Helps reach emission reduction targets and achieve the sustainability goals

5. Five Simple Steps to Carpooling

Once you have removed potential barriers and secured the support of both management and staff/students, you are now ready to start implementing your carpooling scheme in 5 simple steps.



STEP 1

Choose a Matching Tool

The critical component of any carpooling scheme is matching commuters. There are many ways of doing this, depending on the size of the organisation and its budget, as well as available human resources and IT capability. Tools range from informal arrangements, such as notice boards and coffee mornings, to software packages and smartphone apps. If carpoolers choose to meet at a pick-up point, this should be a safe place, such as a [Park and Ride](#) or a [Park and Share](#) facility.

No matter which matching tool you choose, all require the following basic information from your staff and/or students:

- Pick up point (home location or designated area)
- Work location
- Work schedule (days, times and flexibility)
- Driving preference (driver/passenger/both)
- Other preferences (gender, non-smoker etc.)
- Car registration number (if driving)

Common Types of Carpool Systems

Coffee Mornings

A simple method is to hold a coffee morning and divide staff and students into groups based on their home location or pick-up point, so that they can meet potential carpoolers. Nearby organisations may wish to hold a joint coffee morning to increase the likelihood of commuters finding a suitable match. This approach is easy to do and can be effective in smaller organisations. The key advantage is that prospective carpoolers meet 'face to face', allowing them to address concerns about security, sharing personal information, or if they'll get on with their fellow carpoolers. The downside of this approach is that the performance and effectiveness of the scheme cannot be automatically monitored by the scheme coordinator.

Notice boards

This is a simple system that can be implemented immediately, has low set-up and administration costs, and is effective in a smaller organisation. It's a self-service method, whereby prospective carpoolers place notices on a notice board seeking others in their area to carpool with. Interested parties then contact each other to make arrangements. A key advantage of the notice board is that potential drivers, who might have reservations about carpooling, can watch for potential passengers without feeling a sense of 'commitment' that often comes from a more formal registration process. The downside is often limited opportunity to find a suitable match due to low participation rates, and as with the 'Coffee Morning' approach, there is no automated way to monitor the effectiveness of the scheme.

Corporate Intranet

As with the above tools, this is a simple system that can be implemented immediately, has low set-up and administration costs and is effective in any workplace. Potential carpoolers place 'classified' type notices on the company intranet and interested parties then contact each other to discuss possible arrangements. This is generally seen as more credible than a notice board, as intranet activity is monitored and certain rules govern the use of an organisation's intranet. Again, a downside to this method is that there is no automated way to monitor its performance or effectiveness.

Spreadsheets and Databases

This approach is a more formal alternative to the above methods and provides greater control while being relatively low cost to run. Prospective carpoolers record key information on either a paper or online registration form. The carpool coordinator then identifies potential matches manually and distributes 'match lists' of potential carpool partners. This manual method can be labour-intensive – especially if many people register or multiple matching criteria is required. One way to reduce this is for participants to form carpools either through informal networks or at coffee mornings and then submit one form per carpool which entitles them to incentives such as priority parking. The coordinator keeps a list of each carpool, which also assists in monitoring purposes.

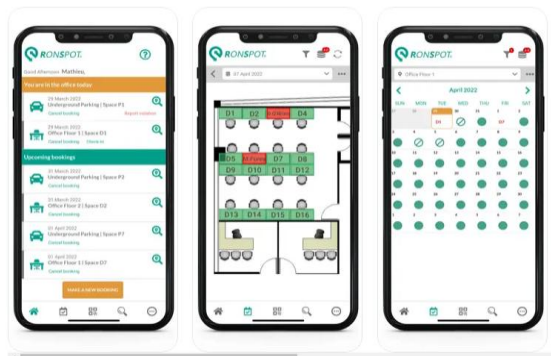
Carpool Software

A popular method of matching participants is software that is usually installed on the organisation's computer network or accessed online or on an app. When participants register, their information is recorded and potential matches are automatically generated based on location, work schedule and preferences. Participants then decide who to contact. This automated method generally provides greater security, ensuring privacy for participants and enhanced matching facilities. It does, however, have higher costs than other schemes and is more appropriate for larger organisations or where several organisations may decide to share a carpool scheme.



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Company Desk & Parking
Jemstone Technologies.
Designed for iPhone
#190 in Utilities
★★★★★ 4.3 • 26 Ratings
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Examples of some carpooling applications*

Matching Tool	Features	Organisation Type
Coffee Morning	- Low set up and administration costs - Low level of administration required and easy to implement - Informal, allows participants to choose their own partner - Difficult to monitor rates of participation and efficacy	Small-Medium Organisations
Notice Board / Corporate Intranet	- Low set up and administration costs - Low level of administration required and easy to implement - Informal, 'self-service' method - Difficult to monitor rates of participation and efficacy	Small-Medium Organisations
Spreadsheet / Databases	- Low-Medium set up and administration costs - Medium-High level of administration required - Increases chances of finding a suitable match - Provides detailed data on uptake and efficacy of scheme	Medium-Large Organisations
Carpool Software	- Medium-High set up and administration costs - Low level of administration following initial set up - Increased matching ability and automated matching - Provides detailed data on uptake and efficacy of scheme - Can be expanded to include neighbouring/nearby organisations	Large Organisations, Multiple Organisations

*Note : We do not endorse any third party application

STEP 2

Develop a Carpool Policy

Carpooling may not be for everyone, so it is important to stress that staff and students don't have to commit to carpooling forever. However, developing a carpool policy is the best way to ensure that carpoolers share a safe, comfortable and pleasant journey, and continue the practice of carpooling on the commute.

Etiquette

Good etiquette is required of all participants including polite, friendly behaviour and punctuality to agreed appointments. All participants agree to inform their fellow participants as far in advance as possible of inability to provide or to attend for a lift, or any other interruption to the arrangements agreed between the participants. A carpool policy should establish the etiquette for the carpooling arrangement, and may include:

- How long the driver will wait for passengers
- How carpooling partners will communicate e.g. text confirmation 30 minutes before arrival
- Is eating allowed in the car? etc.

Safety

When it comes to carpooling journeys, everyone is responsible for their own personal safety. Carpoolers should be advised to trust their instincts; and remember that they are under no obligation to go ahead with any carpool arrangement. If an individual has any doubts about their travelling companion, for any reason, then they should not travel with them.

Operations

Your carpool policy should clearly state how your scheme will operate:

- Will priority parking be provided to carpoolers?
- Will reserved parking be provided? If so, how will carpool spaces be reserved?
- Will permits be issued? If so, which department issue permits?
- Where and how should permits be displayed?
- How will permits and priority parking be monitored?

In addition, the facilities/estates team should be fully informed as to how the scheme will operate and how carpool spaces should be managed.

Licence, Insurance, Tax and NCT

It should be stressed in the policy that all drivers participating in the scheme must be fully licenced and insured, and that the tax and NCT certificates for the vehicle being used are valid and in date.

STEP 3

Incentivise your Carpooling Scheme

So now you're clear about the logistics of running a carpool scheme. But how do you encourage staff and students to participate – particularly those who may be reluctant to commit to a carpool?

Priority Parking

By proactively managing the supply and demand of your organisation's parking spaces, you can create an effective incentive to carpool. Priority parking is usually the parking spaces closest to your building or in the nearest car park, and is a huge incentive where the parking supply is limited or where drivers have to walk long distances between the car park and their workplace. Signage should be used to identify priority spaces, which also helps to raise the visibility of your carpool scheme.

Financial Incentives

These can include cash rewards for carpooling, such as a daily payment, or rewards in the form of free or discounted parking fees for carpoolers. Setting up a carpool 'points scheme' can also be effective, which awards participants with gift vouchers or discounts at local restaurants or shops for the number of carpool trips they make.

Flexible Working Hours

Policies allowing flexi-time can help remove barriers to carpooling and other commuter options such as walking, cycling and using public transport. This approach gives participants the flexibility as to when they arrive at work, take a lunch break and leave work, all while still working the number of required hours each day.

This allows participants to travel outside peak congestion hours, have more flexibility for personal and work time, and increase the number of potential carpool matches with others from different departments or locations. It also means managers can support participants' need to 'leave on time' to honour their carpool commitments.

‘Guaranteed Lift Home’ Scheme

Also referred to as an ‘emergency lift home’, this is a key tool for promoting carpooling as a sustainable commuter option. The guaranteed lift home scheme acts as an insurance policy for carpoolers by reassuring them they have a timely and inexpensive way to get home if their carpool partner needs to leave early.

Most guaranteed lift home schemes offer a taxi ride home and have agreements with taxi or rental car services. The guaranteed lift home is a relatively low-cost service to implement but is generally regarded favourably by participants.

Shared Costs

It’s recommended that individual carpoolers come to their own arrangements around sharing costs and driving responsibilities.

Prize Draws and Raffles

Consider holding weekly or monthly prize draws and raffles for participants of the carpooling scheme. Prizes may include shopping or lunch vouchers, or a free car service. The winners of the draws and raffles and associated prizes could be publicised and announced via a weekly or monthly email to encourage sign up and highlight the benefits of participating in the scheme.

‘Green Commuter’ Staff Benefits

‘Green Commuter’ benefits could be introduced for staff and students who switch to carpooling or more sustainable modes of travel. These may include free tea and coffee, Green Commuter coffee and cake mornings, or free lunches on an occasional basis. Green Commuter benefits should be publicised and made as visible as possible to encourage sign up to the scheme.

“Share the Wheels for Free Meals” - incentive scheme introduced by Northern Trust, Limerick. Each month carpoolers were entered into a draw for lunch vouchers.

STEP 4

Promote your Carpooling Scheme

Raising awareness of your scheme and generating membership are essential to the success of any carpool scheme. Ongoing marketing and promotion of the scheme will ensure membership of the scheme continues to grow over time.

An effective marketing and communications campaign will include positive messages about the policies and incentives of your organisation's carpool scheme. It should also focus clearly on the benefits to the individual, such as cost and time savings, reduced stress, congestion and pollution, a more sociable commute and increased travel options. It's usually the role of the carpool coordinator to ensure staff and students know about the scheme and encourage their participation. There are a number of ways to do this:

Launching the Scheme

'Top Down' Support

Endorsement from management is essential, get your CEO to encourage staff participation via an email, in the organisation's newsletter, at a staff meeting, or before class. Management may also consider participating in the scheme to further encourage staff and student 'buy-in'.

Launch Event

Hold a coffee morning launch/information session at which the CEO reinforces the benefits of the scheme and management's support for it. Ideally staff and students should be able to sign up for the scheme during the event, and be supported in networking with potential 'matches'.

Posters, Flyers and Newsletters

Posters that contain general information about your scheme can be displayed on notice boards and in common areas, and should highlight the benefits of car-pooling and how to sign up for the scheme. Advertise your scheme using both hard-copy (posters, flyers) and electronic material and in the newsletter.

Raffles and Prize Draws

Use raffles and prize draws to encourage participation and sign ups. Prizes may include vouchers for a car service.

Carpool Introductory Pack

Develop a carpool pack to give to all new participants which incorporates a welcome letter from the CEO, a brochure on how carpooling works, and other relevant information.

General Promotion

Staff/Student Induction

Incorporate carpool information in your recruitment and induction material. Staff/Student inductions should also be used to promote and highlight the benefits of carpooling.

Poster Campaigns

Posters that contain general information about your scheme can be displayed on notice boards and in common areas. You can also develop one-off posters to inform staff and students of specific events and promotions.



Poster campaigns highlighting the benefits of carpooling are a good way of encouraging carpooling within your organisation.

Leaflets/Brochures

Leaflets/brochures are a good means of distributing more detailed information about your carpooling scheme. They can be distributed in reception and staff rooms, student unions and clubs, on notice boards, and included with recruitment/induction packs, or in pay slips.

Newsletters

Newsletters are a popular way of reporting progress and feedback to staff/students, and can be either in paper or electronic form. It's also a good idea to regularly include positive testimonials from carpoolers so that other staff and students are encouraged to adopt the scheme.

Corporate Website or Intranet

Corporate websites or intranets can provide or link to information specific to your travel plans and carpool scheme. Consider setting up a dedicated travel information page, containing information on your carpooling scheme and other smarter modes of travel.

Promotional Events

Roadshows and coffee mornings are good ways of promoting your scheme, because they provide informal opportunities for staff and students to assess the scheme and potential carpool partners without obligation.

Signage and Permits

Carpool permits/stickers and priority parking signage can be used to identify scheme participants and are also a good visible promotional tool for your scheme among other carpark users.

Celebrate Successes

Celebrate successes with awards and promotions, and make sure that staff and students know about increased uptake of the scheme. This may encourage others to sign up as it gives the scheme credibility and highlights its reliability.



STEP 5

Monitor, Review and Adjust

Once you've implemented your carpooling scheme, it's important to continually monitor and review its effectiveness, particularly as it relates to your travel plan objectives.

Monitor

It's important to keep records on participation, costs, and frequently asked questions to help you determine what works and what doesn't. Monitoring progress is also important in increasing staff and student participation, meeting objectives and gauging how much individuals save by participating in the scheme. There are several tools that can be used to evaluate the success of your scheme:

Review and Adjust

Having monitored the scheme's performance, you can then adjust any aspects of the scheme that are ineffective or require improvement. Share positive results with staff and students to highlight the success and reliability of the scheme, and continually repeat positive messages about the benefits of carpooling for staff and students, the organisation and the environment.

Evaluation Tool	
Participation rate	Regularly communicate individual and scheme achievements to increase awareness and involvement.
Staff Concerns/ Queries	Compile and review staff and student feedback to highlight challenges or successes.
Costs of the Scheme	Keep records that identify staff and overhead administration costs, marketing and promotion costs (e.g. materials and events), items or benefits provided as incentives, and capital and miscellaneous costs, such as one-off expenditures and improvements.
Periodic reviews	A Smarter Travel Monitoring survey can be a quick and easy way to assess the achievements of your carpool scheme, and identify where improvements can be

