



Public Transportation

Whether you take the bus, or train every day to work, once in a while for business, or just to pop downtown to wine and dine at your favorite restaurant or club, you're helping to keep pollution out of the air and you may save yourself some time and money.

Riding public transportation can be convenient, easy and fun. Follow these tips to make your ride as smooth as possible.

BEST PRACTICE AREA: GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION

DID YOU KNOW?

14 million Americans use public transit daily, approximately 4.5% of the total U.S. population. If ridership were to increase to 10%, it has been estimated that the United States would decrease its dependency on foreign oil by 40%.

BENEFITS OF TRANSIT:

- **Environmental:** Reduces greenhouse gases and decreases the need for extra lanes on highways. The reduced pavement will decrease the amount of storm water runoff.
- **Energy:** Riding transit decreases the dependency on foreign oil. Many buses are being powered with alternative fuels such as ethanol.
- **Economical:** You will save money on gas, parking and vehicle maintenance costs by riding transit.
- **Quality of Life:** Riding transit will leave you more relaxed and stress free, being able to sleep or read while riding rather than driving with road rage.

BE AN AGENT FOR CHANGE:

If transit in your area doesn't work for you, do something about it. Write letters to your transit company, city leaders and area newspapers and ask that transit service be improved. Investing in transit service can be expensive for a community to implement without the guarantee of steady ridership. Indications that a new route or revised schedule will have regular riders may make the investment to suit your needs easier.

FORM A PLAN:

- **Check the maps:** All transit services offer maps of their routes. Many routes are now on-line and are interactive and include trip planners. Trip planners allow you to type in where you are, where you want to go and what time you want to leave or arrive and it displays what route or routes you need to take.
- **Do a trial run:** If you are nervous about riding transit for the first time or during the heavy rush hour, do a trial run of your trip during less traveled times. If the routes are the same, go on a weekend or during the evening. The fewer people will allow you to ease into the riding experience and know your routes without the extra traffic. Or just take a joy ride and learn how transit operates. Drivers may be more willing to help you during less peak times.
- **Ask questions:** Do not hesitate to ask questions. Call the transit company before your trip and ask any questions you may have. If you have questions about the ride, ask the driver when you get on. Keep it brief though; don't delay the trip for others.

RIDING TRANSIT:

- **Be on time:** No one likes being late. If the bus or train has to wait for you, you're holding everyone else up too. Plan ahead and be at the stop on-time.
- **Plan ahead for the ride:** Know the routes and fares. Have exact change ready to purchase your fare and board quickly. Feel free to ask the driver a quick question, but keep it brief to keep the trip on schedule.
- **Follow transit etiquette:** Follow the golden rule of transit: Don't do anything you wouldn't want the person sitting next to you to be doing. Check out below for tips.
- **Get ready to stop:** Signal your driver after he leaves the stop preceding your stop to give him enough time to get ready, change lanes, etc. Move to the exit doors after signaling the driver and exit quickly to keep the route on schedule.
- **Take it with you:** Be sure to take all your belongings with you when you exit. Going to the transit lost and found can be a pain (provided someone turns your item in). After all, you don't want to be that woman chasing down the bus after forgetting her purse!

DO UNTO OTHERS...:

- **Turn it down & keep it clean:** Listen to music or videos at a reasonable volume. Not everyone needs to hear your tunes. Try to avoid music or videos with suggestive or objectionable content. You never know who might be watching or listening.
- **Give up the seat:** Give up your seat if an elderly or disabled rider or parent with young children gets on.
- **Don't yell:** Converse, but keep it low. Not everyone cares about last night's "The Bachelor".
- **Do it at home:** No one wants to sit next to the guy shaving or brushing his teeth or the woman doing her hair or applying make-up. We appreciate the grooming, but do it at home.
- **Help:** If you see a new rider looking lost or confused, offer to help them out. You were a new rider once too.

TRACK YOUR SAVINGS:

At the start of each week, put the money you would spend on gas, parking, tolls, etc. in a jar. Take your transit fares from the jar and see how much you have left at the end of the week. The results could shock you!

