

## SECTION 1: WHAT IS THE EMERGENCY RIDE HOME (ERH) PROGRAM?

Emergency Ride Home (ERH) program is a service provided by Commute Connector, a program of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). The ERH service allows you to commute with confidence, knowing that we have you covered should an unexpected personal emergency arise.

The ERH program is a backup plan in case you must arrange transportation home due to specific qualifying events. If one of these situations arises, you can request reimbursement for the expense of your emergency ride home.

To use the ERH reimbursement system, create a Commute Connector account, and log your commute trips. You can use the program up to six (6) times a year, and up to \$100 for each qualifying emergency.

## SECTION 2: WHO CAN USE THE EMERGENCY RIDE HOME (ERH) PROGRAM?

To qualify for the Emergency Ride Home program made available through Commute Connector, the following guidelines must be met:

- Live or work in Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Lee, Manatee, Okeechobee, Polk, and Sarasota County
- Actively use an alternative mode of transportation for at least half of your commute trips (e.g. two round-trips per week)
- Qualifying alternative modes of transportation to work include carpooling, vanpooling, riding the bus, walking, or biking
- Emergency event must meet the qualifying criteria for reimbursement

The ERH program is a service for all commuters who live or work in the FDOT District 1 twelve-county area who are registered with Commute Connector and use an alternative mode of transportation two (2) or more times per week for their commute to work. Whether you carpool, vanpool, use transit, bicycle or walk to work, we are here to provide this service when a **qualifying emergency** arises.

## SECTION 3: WHAT IS A QUALIFYING EMERGENCY?

### • *Illness*

Sometimes illness unexpectedly strikes while we're at work. When this happens, your carpool or vanpool group may not be able to take you home. Likewise, if you use transit, walk or bike to work, the last thing you may be able to do when you're sick is pedal or walk home. Unexpected illness during work hours is a qualifying emergency event.

Another example of a qualifying emergency event is if a dependent (e.g. a child or another family member) is sick and you must leave work in order to provide care.

The Emergency Ride Home program should not be used in the event of a medical emergency. In the event of a medical emergency, please dial 911.

### • *Having to unexpectedly work late*

Even the most compatible carpool or vanpool group may find themselves in a situation where the driver or one of the passengers needs to stay at work for some surprise overtime. There may also be situations where you

unexpectedly need to work later than the last scheduled transit route home. Unexpected overtime hours are a qualifying emergency event.

#### **SECTION 4: WHAT IS NOT CONSIDERED A QUALIFYING EMERGENCY EVENT?**

The following circumstances do not qualify for reimbursement:

- The ERH program may not be used for a ride *to* work, personal or work-related trips, or scheduled overtime.
- A transit closure is *not* a qualifying event. In the event of a transit closure, please contact the transit agency directly regarding alternate service/routes.
- Additionally, you may not request reimbursement for a trip for personal errands; trips with more than one intermittent stop; scheduled appointments; medical appointments; scheduled overtime; company-wide emergencies or closures; business related travel; termination of employment; vehicular failures; transportation system and/or provider closures or failures; 911 medical emergencies; natural disasters or acts of God.
- The Emergency Ride Home program should not be used in the event of a medical emergency. In the event of a medical emergency, please dial 911.

You may contact us directly if you are not sure if your situation qualifies for the ERH program. Please note that our office is not staffed 24/7, but we will return your call or reply to your email as soon as we are able.

#### **SECTION 5: HOW MANY TIMES CAN I USE THE ERH SERVICE?**

You may receive up to six (6) reimbursements per calendar year, if you have confirmed participation, and are using an alternative mode to get to work at least twice a week.

Each reimbursement claim that is accepted and processed counts toward your maximum six (6) per calendar year. Any reimbursement claims that are refused or rejected do not count towards your annual allotment of six (6) reimbursements.

#### **SECTION 6: HOW DO I GET REIMBURSED?**

To be reimbursed for the expense of your Emergency Ride Home, you **must submit a Reimbursement Claim Form within 30 days of the qualifying emergency event.** To make a claim, complete the Emergency Ride Home Reimbursement Claim Form and submit it by email, fax or mail.

- By email: Email as an attachment to [ERH@CommuteConnector.com](mailto:ERH@CommuteConnector.com)
- By fax: Fax completed claim form to **407-641-9989**, marked **ATTN: Commute Connector**
- By mail: Send a completed form to **TranSystems, ATTN: Commute Connector, 415 E. Main Street, Suite 101, Bartow, FL 33830.**

Reimbursements checks are typically available one to two weeks after an approved claim form is received and processed. Reimbursement checks **must be cashed within 30 days** of the date of the check. If a reimbursement check is not cashed within that timeframe, a replacement check will **not** be issued.

## SECTION 7: MORE INFORMATION ON REIMBURSEMENTS

### Taxi Reimbursements

- Ask for a receipt, as you will be required to submit a copy with your reimbursement claim form. The receipt should notate the total amount you paid the driver.
- You are allowed to make one emergency-related stop to pick up a sick child or a prescription if needed.
- The taxi receipt must show the taxi company's name, the taxi company's contact information, and the date and time the ride was provided. Please note the driver's name on the reimbursement form when you submit the reimbursement request.
- Rides provided by transportation network companies (e.g. Uber, Lyft) fall under the taxi reimbursement category.
- Any tip provided to a taxi driver may be reimbursed **if it does not exceed 20% of the total trip cost**. If the amount paid to the driver exceeds 20%, we reserve the right to reimburse only the trip amount and exclude the total tip amount. The receipt must document any tip amount that was paid to the driver.
- Please note the \$100 limit.

### Rental Car Reimbursements

- Commute Connector will reimburse the cost of a 24-hour car rental.
- Any charges after the 24-hour time span will not be reimbursed.
- When selecting a vehicle, please note that this program will only reimburse you for the cost of the most economical rental available at the time of pick-up/delivery. If the vehicle that the rental car company offers you is not in the "economy" class, we require documentation from the rental car company stating that there were no economy class rates or vehicles available at the time of your reservation.
- Optional insurance purchased through the rental agency is the responsibility of the renter; the cost for optional insurance is reimbursable if included in the \$100 maximum reimbursement level.
- Some car rental companies provide free delivery of the vehicle to your worksite depending on the time the reservation is made. If this service is not available in your area and you have no other way to get to the pick-up location of the rental car, Commute Connector will reimburse the cost of a taxi cab to get you to the car rental pick-up point. **Please note:** The total reimbursement level is \$100 for each emergency event, even if two transportation modes are needed to get home (e.g. you have to take a taxi to the rental company to pick up your rental car, etc.).
- If you refuel the rental car before returning it, you must include your fuel receipt along with the rental car receipt to be reimbursed. The fuel receipt must be the same date as the car rental period. Total reimbursement level is \$100 for car rentals, including fuel costs. A car rental and fuel reimbursement request qualifies as one of six reimbursement requests.
- Zipcar or other carshare services that provide rentals on a per-hour basis fall under the rental car reimbursement category. However, this program does not reimburse the membership cost to access Zipcar or other carshare vehicles.

### Mileage Reimbursements

- If you can arrange your own transportation through a co-worker, friend or family member, Commute Connector will reimburse the cost of mileage up to \$100.

- To receive reimbursement for mileage, the Program Coordinator may need to verify the unscheduled overtime or illness with a supervisor/manager at your worksite. Contact information for the supervisor/manager should be provided when the request for reimbursement is submitted.
- The reimbursement check will be issued to the registered commuter that requests reimbursement – not to the individual providing the ride home. It is up to the registered commuter to ensure that the person that provided the ride home is compensated.
- Contact information for the individual who provided the Emergency Ride Home trip must be included on the Reimbursement Claim Form so that we have all necessary information on file to verify that the ride was provided and for the reported number of miles.
- The Program Coordinator will contact the person who provided the Emergency Ride Home trip to verify the ride and mileage. **We must receive confirmation within 30 days of the first verification request.** Failure to do so will result in a rejected reimbursement claim.
- The mileage reimbursement rate will match the current Florida state mileage reimbursement rate at the time of the ride.
- Reimbursements can **only** be for the mileage of the trip provided; we cannot compensate the person that provided the ride for their time, nor can we reimburse for the additional cost of any tolls or fuel.
- Mileage reimbursement will be capped at the total round-trip mileage from the commuters' work to home. For example, if your commute is 25 miles one-way, your maximum mileage reimbursement is capped at 50 miles.

#### SECTION 8: ADDITIONAL NOTES

- Reimbursements will be distributed by check only.
- Commute Connector reserves the right to end or change the Emergency Ride Home program at any time and without notice.
- Intentional abuse of the Emergency Ride Home program will result in suspension or termination of ERH privileges.
- Your employment and worksite location may be verified.
- You will be eligible for the program after your registration has been completely processed by Commute Connector and you have been sent a confirmation email.
- Please do not wait until you need a ride home to register, as you may not be immediately eligible.
- **Please note: registered commuters must arrange their own transportation home.** Commute Connector does not provide transportation services.
- By registering in the Commute Connector program and database, you acknowledge that Commute Connector and its supporting entities or agencies do not endorse or recommend any transportation agency or provider and are not liable for any personal injury, loss, theft or damage to you or your property or for any consequential damages resulting from participation in the Emergency Ride Home program. The decision to accept a ride with a co-worker, via transit service, taxi, or other transportation provider rests entirely with the user.

If you have additional questions regarding the Emergency Ride Home reimbursement program, please contact us at 866-585-RIDE (7433) or by e-mail at [ERH@CommuteConnector.com](mailto:ERH@CommuteConnector.com)