

Highmark's Employee Self-Service Web site provides ridesharing assistance

Sign up for ridesharing now to be prepared for a potential mass transit strike

(August 26, 2008) Pittsburgh could experience a mass transit strike as early as Monday, Sept. 15.

Details below

- Ridesharing available through HighWire
- Support from ComuteInfo.org
- Two (or more) in a carpool
- Transportation study and other alternatives
- How to sign up to share a ride

A work stoppage by the transportation service would affect light rail transit (the "T"), incline and buses in Pittsburgh.

In the event this occurs, employees in Pittsburgh need to be prepared to consider alternative transportation such as ridesharing (carpooling) walking, biking or being dropped off.

Ridesharing available through HighWire

You can sign up for ridesharing on Highmark's Employee Self-Service Web site. (See the sidebar below for how to sign up.)

This internal Highmark solution will assist employees in finding possible carpooling partners.

After an employee inputs his or her information, a database will collect his or her zip code, name and carpooling phone number and populate a spreadsheet located on the Employee Relations Web site.

Beginning in September, the Web site will be updated weekly. Employees can go to the spreadsheet on the Employee Relations Web site to identify other Highmark employees by searching similar zip codes. Employees can then contact each other to set up a rideshare.

Support from CommuteInfo.org

Any Highmark employee carpool can register with commuteinfo.org.

By registering a car pool with CommuteInfo, the carpool is eligible to use its emergency ride home program. The CommuteInfo Emergency Ride Home (ERH) service is a safety net for commuters in the event of an unexpected personal or family emergency, personal illness, unscheduled overtime, or other eligible event.

The maximum number of trips that Commute Info will reimburse annually is four per registered commuter or up to a total of \$100 worth of trips (annually).

To search the greater Pittsburgh region for a carpooling ride match, Highmark employees can use CommuteInfo.org. This option allows you to find people who work in the city and are interested in commuting alternatives.

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission's CommuteInfo program is coordinated in partnership with transportation management associations, transportation providers,

businesses and non-profit service organizations throughout Southwestern PA.

The CommuteInfo program is designed to serve as an information clearing house for commuters and employers.

The program promotes alternatives that include transit, carpooling, vanpooling and bikepooling. The program serves employers and commuters in Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Washington and Westmoreland counties.

Two (or more) in a carpool

Carpooling saves money and helps to protect the environment, so it's a good idea even under normal circumstances. With a possible mass transit strike, it makes even more sense.

Pittsburgh parking capacity is at 93 percent, which includes North Shore and Station Square. If everyone tried to drive in alone, there would be no parking spots available and traffic would be snarled for several hours each day.

By signing up for ridesharing, you can help prevent that problem.

Read more about what businesses are doing in the event of a strike by linking to the *Post-Gazette* Web site to read the story "Businesses gearing up for possible transit strike."

More information on signing up for rides can be found on commuteinfo.org.

Transportation study and other alternatives

The Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership, the Allegheny Conference and several large corporations, including Highmark, have been working collaboratively to brainstorm and develop contingency plans in the event a strike does occur.

You can read more about those contingency plans by going to the Allegheny Conference Web site.

The May 15 HighWire article highlighted carpooling as an alternative to the bus service. The article also reported the results of our transportation survey, which found that 80 percent of Highmark employees use public transit. So making alternative plans is crucial.

Another way that Highmark is addressing the possible strike is to allow for alternative work arrangements. Those arrangements must be discussed with your manager on an individual basis, however.

Another option for those who live close to the city is biking to work. Highmark provides a number of bike racks and will add racks sometime in September to accommodate more riders.

Biking to work not only saves you money, it is environmentally friendly and provides health benefits as well. For more tips on riding your bike to work, bike routes, safety guidelines and more, go to the Pittsburgh biking Web site.

Watch for an upcoming HighWire article on biking to work and the new Highmark bike racks at the end of September.

How to sign up to share a ride

- Go to Employee Self Service.
- Click on Personal info/home.
- Go to the phone number option.
- Select the Add phone number option.
- Click on the dropdown box and select rideshare.
- Insert your phone number
- Click save

Your information will automatically be added to the carpooling database. This information will be housed on the Employee Relations Web site under carpooling.

Please watch for additional information on HighWire regarding Highmark's business continuity plans regarding this issue.