

ECO PASS



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Who is eligible to buy Eco Pass?

Any business or neighborhood in Boulder County is eligible for the Eco Pass program, regardless of size! This includes business or neighborhood that may have participated in the past.

How do I use my Eco Pass?

Using your Eco Pass is easy. Just tap your Eco Pass card when boarding the bus or on the light rail platform, show your Eco Pass card to the bus driver or light rail inspector. Then take a seat, relax and enjoy the ride.

How do I get home in an emergency if I get sick or if I work late?

Eco Pass holders are also eligible for the Guaranteed Ride Home Program; **it's an insurance policy on wheels**. This program enables Eco Pass holders who use any form of alternative transportation in their commute to work, be it bus, light rail, bicycle or walking, to a free taxi-ride home in the event of an emergency or an unexpected event! If the employee becomes sick, needs to attend to a family member or must work late unexpectedly - they have a ride home!

Can I purchase the Eco Pass for individuals?

Individuals cannot purchase Eco Pass. The Eco Pass can only be purchased by a company entity as a group employee benefit package or by a neighborhood.

How much money does Eco Pass save compared to driving my car to work?

Below is an average cost per mile depending on the type of vehicle you drive.

	<u>Cost of Commuting</u>			
	<i>(based on 2014 AAA "Your Driving Costs" Study)</i>			
	Small Car	Mid-Size	Large	SUV
Total Cost (in cents per mile)	46.4	58.9	72.2	73.6

For a mid-size car, this means that for a 20 mile commute (10 miles in each direction to and from work), you are spending 58.2¢/mile x 20 miles = **\$11.64 daily**.

\$11.64 x 5 days a week = \$58.20 weekly or \$58.2 x 4 weeks = **\$232.80 monthly**.

These numbers only account for gasoline and wear and tear charges on a vehicle, with no mention of car insurance, car payments or road tolls and parking fees. Under these circumstances Eco Pass is paying for itself in less than 1 month!

Is an Eco Pass cheaper than a monthly pass?

Considerably: Eco Pass can cost as little annually as \$60 per employee, not including the 60% off County discount. This compares to over \$1188 for a local pass or over \$2,052 for a regional pass!

Are Eco Pass card-holders more likely to actually ride the bus once they have their pass?

Since the inception of the Eco Pass program over 20 years ago, we have found that Eco Pass cardholders are 5-9x more likely to ride transit than non-Eco Pass holders.

How do I raise funding for the Eco Pass program?

Eco Pass can be paid entirely by an employer, entirely by the employees of a company, or any combination of the two (i.e. 50/50). Many businesses purchase Eco Pass for their staff as an employment benefit, similar to health care or life insurance.



There are a variety of methods to raise funds for the neighborhood Eco Pass program. In the past, neighborhoods have used everything from mandatory fees through an HOA, to voluntary contributions, to garage sales to pay for their programs.

Neighborhood Coordinators are also able to determine how to bill for the Eco Pass (by household or individual passes, etc.), and who receives an Eco Pass and who does not based upon contributions (some neighborhoods give all residents a pass, other only give passes to residents who contribute a minimum amount of funds to the program).

What is the minimum number of employees needed to qualify for the Eco Pass Program?

For the business Eco Pass, there is no minimum number of employees required for the program. Currently, the Eco Pass program has companies that range from 2 to 2,000+ employees.

What happens to my Eco Pass if I terminate my employment?

Your Eco Pass is only good as long as you are an employee of an Eco Pass provider. All passes must be returned to your employer upon termination or employees/employers may be assessed a fee for non-return.

What if I lose my pass?

Report your lost pass to your employer. Your employer will provide you with an Authorization Form that you must bring to an RTD location to obtain a replacement pass. Lost passes cost \$10 and must be paid for at the time of issuance.



Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Transit Tax Benefits:

What is "pre-tax income"?

Pre-tax income is the employee's gross salary prior to calculating FICA and federal withholding taxes. Transit passes purchased by the employee with pre-tax income is deducted from their salary prior to payroll tax calculations. Pre-tax income applies only when the employee pays for all or a portion of a qualified transit.

What are the tax implications allowing employees to use pre-tax dollars to buy transit passes?

For the employer, there is a decrease in FICA taxes. For the employee, there is a decrease in FICA taxes and federal income tax.

What is a "tax-free fringe benefit"?

Employers are allowed to provide up to \$255 per month (2016 tax year) as a tax-free transit fringe benefit to employees. A tax-free fringe benefit applies only when the employer pays all or a portion of a qualified transit benefit. Transit subsidies are business expenses for the employer, which are deductible for tax purposes. Any amount over the \$255 per month per employee limit allowed by the IRS is considered taxable employee income.