

Employee Commute Options Program



State of Oregon
Department of
Environmental
Quality

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Motor vehicles are the largest single source of air pollution in the Portland area. Under the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) ECO program, employers must provide commute alternatives to employees designed to reduce the number of cars driven to work in Portland and surrounding areas.

ECO is one of several strategies in a federally-required plan to keep the air clean in the Portland area for the next ten years. This plan was adopted by the Environmental Quality Commission on July 12, 1996 after public comment. The plan will prevent adverse health impacts, remove industrial growth impediments, avoid sanctions on federal transportation funds and reduce traffic congestion.

Who is affected; what is required?

Under the ECO program, employers in the Portland area with more than 50 employees reporting to a single worksite must provide incentives for alternative commute options. These commute options must have the potential to reduce the number of employee cars driven to the worksite by approximately 10 percent within three years. Annual employee surveys will measure progress toward this goal.

How does an employer comply?

- Survey employees to determine current commute methods, and
- Prepare a plan to meet target reduction and submit plan to DEQ for approval. Compliance is based on submitting and implementing an approvable plan, or
- Inform DEQ of the intent to accomplish the target reduction, and design and implement a program without DEQ's review.
- Compliance is based on whether a good faith effort was made to achieve the target reduction.

Typical commute alternatives

- Transit subsidies
- Rideshare programs
- Preferential carpool parking
- Bike programs
- Telecommuting
- Compressed work weeks

ECO compliance alternatives

DEQ provides other possible ways for employers to comply with ECO. For some employers, these strategies may be more feasible and cost-effective than providing commute options. These might include:

- Reduce other vehicle traffic to or within the worksite;
- Reduce air pollution emissions from non-auto sources at the worksite;
- Limit construction of new parking spaces (for new development only); or
- Pay a fixed fee.

Timeline

- ECO rules took effect August 1996.
- Employee survey results are due between Nov. 1, 1996 and Aug. 1, 1997, depending on work site location. (Employers are divided into four groups, based on work site location.)
- ECO plan due three months after survey results.
- Compliance with target reduction in three years.

Additional Information and Forms

- Guidance For Alternatives To Trip Reduction
- ECO Strategy Applicability
- Glossary Of Terms for the ECO Rule Checklist
- Guidance For Estimating Trip Reductions From Commute Options
- Carpool Sign-Up Sheet
- Guidance On Conducting Employee Commute Options Survey
- Employer Registration Form
- Commute Trip Reduction Resources
- Pathway to Compliance
- Sample Trip Reduction Plan
- Report of ECO Survey Findings

For more information

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