

Commute Trip Reduction Survey

Frequently Asked Questions

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SETTING UP THE SURVEY

1. Who should set up worksite surveys?

WSDOT asks that the jurisdiction representative(s) set(s) up surveys for their worksites. This task can be delegated to experienced Employee Transportation Coordinators (ETCs) at the jurisdiction's discretion. Please contact [WSDOT](#) if you need to obtain permissions for yourself or an ETC, or need assistance in learning how to set up a survey.

2. How do I schedule my survey?

Jurisdiction representatives can schedule their surveys at <https://www.ctrsurvey.org/admin>. Login ID and password are required. Once you have entered the site, click on the "CTR Survey" tab, and click "Add Survey."

3. How long should I keep my survey open?

Surveys should be kept open for no longer than **two weeks** to ensure consistency. Lengthening the survey window introduces more variability and reduces the reliability of survey responses. If you need to schedule a survey to be open for longer than two weeks, please contact [WSDOT](#).

4. What happens if I need to keep the survey open longer?

Contact [WSDOT](#) to discuss extending the survey close date.

5. Do I need to conduct the survey during a certain time of the year?

Yes. For data consistency, WSDOT asks that you conduct worksite surveys from mid-September through October for the fall survey, or March through mid-May for the spring survey. If your worksite does not survey during the same two-week period each survey cycle, it introduces additional bias and lowers the statistical validity of the results.

These periods were selected because they minimize holidays and common vacation periods (e.g., Thanksgiving, Christmas/winter break, summer) and (hopefully) avoid extreme weather.

6. Should I survey all my employees or just the ones who are affected by law?

WSDOT prefers you survey all of a worksite's employees, if possible. If that is impractical (e.g., the worksite has multiple shifts), or you have only surveyed a portion of the worksite's employees in the past, you may survey only the commute trip reduction (CTR) affected portion. If you are unsure about the best path forward, please contact [WSDOT](#) to discuss your alternatives.

7. I have worksites with multiple locations. May I combine all of them into a single survey?

No. Each worksite must conduct its own survey; however, it is possible to coordinate the survey dates so that all worksites are surveying at the same time. Depending on the locations of the worksites, you may need to coordinate with other jurisdictions.

Even for worksites of the same company, there are differences in the built environment, transit service, parking costs, nearby congestion, and other factors that make each site unique. To better understand the impact of the program on each worksite's performance, each one needs to be assessed separately.

8. Can I test the survey?

Yes. If the survey has been set up in the online system you can log in and select the "survey preview" option. The test survey will open in a new window allowing you to navigate through the questions.

9. What is an email domain?

An email domain is the portion of an email address that comes after the @ sign.

- sarah.smith@wsdot.wa.gov = domain is wsdot.wa.gov
- mthomas13@saints.org = domain is saints.org
- wandler@uw.edu = domain is uw.edu

10. For email addresses, what is the difference between domain and upload?

Domain means that anyone with an email address that ends in that domain can take the online survey; email upload means the **entire** email address (e.g., nguyena@wsdot.wa.gov, john.smith@company.com, arice@uw.edu) must match an email on the uploaded list to gain access.

11. Can I do both upload and domain for email addresses?

No. The purpose of using an uploaded email address list is to specify exactly which employees can access the survey. If a company does domain as well, the uploaded email list would not matter, because anyone with an email that ends in the domain would still be able to access the survey.

12. Can I add more email addresses after I've done the initial upload?

Yes. There are two ways to add email addresses once the initial upload has been completed.

- You can add an email address one at a time on the survey email list management page. Type the address into the find/add email box. Then select “add.”
- To add multiple email addresses, create a new spreadsheet with the addresses you want to add in the same format as your initial list. Select the “upload email address” option on the survey screen and follow the directions, choosing the “**append**” option when prompted.

13. Why are email addresses used?

Email addresses are used because they are unique identifiers. They can be used to track who has taken the survey and make sure someone does not accidentally take it twice.

14. Can I combine paper and electronic surveys?

No. Paper and electronic surveys are processed differently, making this problematic. In special situations, paper surveys can be transferred into the electronic survey system by the ETC. Please contact [WSDOT](#) for more details.

15. Can I add questions to the survey?

Yes. If you are interested in adding a question to your worksite's survey, please contact [WSDOT](#) for more information. At least **one month** of lead time is needed to add a question to the survey.

Once the question is made available, the jurisdiction representative (or ETC) will need to manually add it when setting up the survey. The questions can be added by using the “supplemental questions” button.

16. Can I survey subpopulations/groups differently at my worksite?

Yes, but the application is limited. There is an option on the survey page that allows for grouping employees. Enter the group name into the space provided, then follow the instructions to upload email addresses into each group.

Please note: details about each group are **only** available on the surveying tool. They are not able to be downloaded, and they are not shown on the worksite reports.

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

17. Can I get a copy of the survey?

Yes. You can find a copy of the survey [here](#).

18. How long is the survey? What is determined by each question?

The survey has 12 questions. The questions assess the following:

Q1 and Q2 – if an employee qualifies as CTR-affected (see FAQ 19 in this document)

Q3, Q4, and Q5 – used to calculate vehicle miles traveled and mode splits

Q6 – determine the geographic origin for trips

Q7 – see “typical week” section of this document (see FAQs 20, 21, and 22 in this document)

Q8 and Q10 – learn more about the employee’s schedule

Q9 – determine if the employee paid to park

Q11 and Q12 – attitudinal questions to help evaluate potential strategies

19. How are CTR-affected employees determined on the survey?

Affected employees are those who marked “full-time” for Q1 and indicate beginning work between 6a and 9a for at least two weekdays for Q2 of the [CTR survey](#).

20. Why does the survey ask if it was a typical week?

Survey studies have shown that when people are asked to describe their commutes for the previous week, and that week includes abnormalities (e.g., they used a mode they do not usually use), it can cause anxiety. The point of asking if it was a typical week is to provide the person a way to ease that anxiety by being able to acknowledge it does not represent his/her typical commuting habits.

21. If a person answers no to the typical week question, is the response still counted?

Yes. The answer to the typical week question has no bearing on the survey. All answers are counted regardless of how the typical week question is answered.

22. Why does the survey not ask for information about an employee’s typical week?

While many employees do have a typical commute, their mode choice is sometimes changed by external factors (e.g., needing their car at work, bad weather, errands). If everyone filled out their surveys with their typical weeks only, it would not capture these anomalies, and the data would be less accurate.

If you have additional questions about the typical week question, please contact [WSDOT](#).

SURVEY PROCESS**23. What if an employee gets interrupted and closes the electronic survey?**

If an employee partially completes the survey and closes it, s/he will be able to log back in and restart it from where s/he left off. Incomplete surveys will show as “partially completed.”

24. Can I tell who has already started or taken the survey?

Yes. You can access a list of email addresses for all employees who have started or completed the survey. On the survey information page, click the “survey reports” button in the lower right-hand section of the screen. To see which employees have completed the survey, select “completed surveys” from the reports dropdown box. You can view the list on screen or download it.

To see which employees have started but not completed the survey, select “Not completed surveys” from the drop down. If the worksite is surveying via domain (see FAQs 9 and 10), only email addresses that have been used to start and not finish a survey will be shown. If the worksite is surveying via email address, all email addresses that have not completed the survey will be shown. To see the email addresses that were used to start and not finish surveys, next to the “Started” column, click “Order.”

25. How are incomplete surveys handled?

If an employee does not complete a started survey, that employee’s answers are still kept and used to calculate a worksite’s performance, as long as questions 3 through 5 were answered.

26. What happens if someone tries to take the survey more than once?

After a survey is completed, if an employee tries to log into the system with the same email address, s/he will get an error message. **If an employee tells an ETC s/he cannot access the survey, the first thing to check is if that person’s email address is already in the “Completed surveys” group.**

People routinely forget taking the survey, so this resolves the issue more than 80% of the time.

SURVEY RESULTS

27. When do I receive my survey results?

After the survey period ends, the jurisdiction representative needs to close and send the survey results to WSDOT, using the “Close survey” and “Send survey” buttons, respectively, under the CTR survey tab.

Usually, WSDOT processes the survey and creates the report that same week. The results are posted to the FTP survey for download by the jurisdiction representative.

28. Are all responses to the survey counted?

Yes. The numbers on the Employer Survey Report are for all employees, except where specifically indicated as showing CTR-affected only.

SAMPLING

29. Can my worksite use sampling?

Sampling is allowed for worksites with **1,000** or more employees that survey **electronically**. If a worksite has fewer than 1,000 employees, it may not use sampling.

30. Where can I find information on sampling?

The official policy on sampling can be found [here](#).

31. How does sampling work?

Rather than surveying the entire worksite, a smaller subset of employees is randomly selected for surveying. The [sampling policy document](#) specifies the minimum number of returned sampled surveys needed based on worksite size, along with further details on how to implement sampling.

RESPONSE RATES

32. How can I get a high response rate?

There are several strategies you can suggest to an ETC:

- Emphasize that the survey should only take 2 to 3 minutes.
- In the email you send with the link, mention you want as many responses as possible, including from people who drive alone.
- Have a manager or high-ranking official at your worksite email staff asking them to please take the survey.
- Schedule reminders throughout the survey week that stress the purpose and importance of the survey: it can help improve commuting options for those interested.
- Offer incentives if you are able; even a handful of \$5 coffee gift cards are enough to motivate many employees.
- If you are surveying via email list, you can download a report that identifies who has not surveyed, allowing you to target follow-up efforts. You can find these on the survey reports page (see FAQ 24).
- **Make sure the managers at the worksite understand that the purpose of the survey is to help with commute options. One of the reasons people leave a job, especially in urban areas, is because they have an untenable commute. Encouraging employees to take the survey and strengthening a worksite's implementation strategy can head to increased ability to attract top talent, less stressed and more productive employees, increased employee retention, and higher profits. It is important to stress that the survey is not a burden to worksites; instead, it is a tool that can help companies reach their goals.**

33. What happens if a worksite does not meet the minimum response rate?

If the worksite is close, the survey may be extended to allow time to follow up and get more responses. If the worksite cannot meet the minimum 50 percent response rate, you can direct them to resurvey. For more information, please see the official [response rate policy](#).

34. Does WSDOT still apply “fill-in” for response rates under 70 percent?

No. “Fill-in” is no longer used. For more information on “fill-in” and why its use was discontinued, please see the [response rate policy](#).

SECURITY AND PRIVACY**35. Is the survey site secure?**

Yes. The survey site is located on Washington State University’s server behind their firewall.

36. Are individual survey responses confidential?

Yes! Please see our [privacy policy](#) for more information.

ALTERNATIVE NEEDS**37. What if some of a worksite’s employees do not have computers?**

One option is to set up computers (laptops) in a common area at the worksite where employees can take the survey. The ETC can also provide employees with a paper survey form and then transfer the responses to the online survey. Please note that it takes additional staff time to transfer responses to the online system.

38. What happens if I have employees who need accommodations to take the survey (e.g., vision impairment)?

Please work with [WSDOT](#) directly. We will help make arrangements.

39. How can I obtain survey translations?

Contact [WSDOT](#) to request translations. Translations are in PDF and can be emailed, printed, and given to employees to fill out. Responses from the PDF survey translations will need to be transferred into the online system if the worksite is surveying electronically. If the worksite is using paper survey forms, responses need to be transferred to a Scantron survey form.

ADMINISTRATION**40. How do I set up a new worksite?**

For a **single** site, please use this [form](#) and submit it to [WSDOT](#). For **multiple** sites, please use this [form](#) and submit it to [WSDOT](#).

41. How do I change the Employee Transportation Coordinator for a worksite?

For a single employer/worksites, the ETC information can be changed by a system administrator on the worksite management page, in the ETC information section. If it is an employer with multiple worksites and ETCs, the information should be changed in the administrator management section. Select “add” and then enter the information.

Please note that changing the ETC on the worksite management page will also change it for any other worksites that are affiliated with the employer.

EQUIVALENT DATA

42. Can we provide data other than by surveying?

Equivalent data can be substituted for a survey. However, the equivalent data submitted to WSDOT needs to be in a specific format. More information on using equivalent data can be found [here](#). For additional information, please contact [WSDOT](#).

TROUBLESHOOTING

43. Someone cannot access the survey. Why?

There are a number of factors that could prevent employee access to the survey. Verify the link to the survey is correct by having the employee type in the address: ctrsurvey.wa.gov.

If the address is correct, on the survey email list management page, check the following:

- Has the employee already completed the survey?
- If the worksite uploaded email addresses, is the email in the list and spelled correctly?
- If the worksite is surveying via domain, are the correct domains selected?
- Is the employee using his/her work email address or another email?
- If more than one of a company’s worksites is surveying, did the employee select the correct one?

44. What do I do if the electronic survey will not load?

If possible, please give it a few minutes and try the survey website again. If the problem persists, try using a different browser (e.g., Chrome, Firefox) or try accessing it from a different computer. If the survey continues to time-out, please contact [WSDOT](#) to report the issue.

DATA ANALYTICS

45. How is vehicle miles traveled (VMT) calculated?

Vehicle miles traveled is calculated based on average commute distance multiplied by the percentage of drive alone trips.

For more detailed information, please see the [How to Calculate VMT Per Employee](#) document.

46. How is greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) calculated?

Greenhouse gas emissions is calculated based on the number of miles traveled via drive alone trips, as well as portions of carpool and vanpool trips (i.e., pool portion is based on 1 divided by vehicle occupancy). No other modes contribute towards emissions in our calculations.

For more detailed information, please see the [How to Calculate GHG Emissions](#) document.

47. How are mode splits calculated?

Mode splits are calculated as the specific number of mode trips for the survey period divided by total trips for the survey period. For example, if there were 5,000 drive alone trips, and 10,000 total trips, the drive alone split would be 50% ($5,000 / 10,000 = 50\%$).

Important note: modes marked as “Did not work” or “Overnight business trip” **do not count** towards total trips.