

Frequently Asked Questions about Commuter Benefits

Commuter benefits accounts allow employees to set aside pre-tax funds used for eligible transit and parking expenses related to commute to work, governed by IRC Section 132. Consumers can have both a parking account and a transit account, each account is separate, and funds cannot be transferred from one to the other.

1. What are IRS Contribution Limits?

For 2020, the parking contribution limit is \$270 per month. The mass transit contribution limit is also \$270 per month. Under IRS regulations, total contributions (consumer and employer) for a transit plan or parking cannot exceed the pretax contribution limit.

2. What expenses are eligible?

Parking: expenses for parking at or near your work location or at or near a location from which you commute using mass transit.

Transit: expenses include public transportation such as train, bus, monorail, streetcar, subway, ferry. This also includes services such as UberPool and Lyft Shared. Vanpool expenses are eligible, but the highway vehicle must seat at least six adults, excluding the driver.

3. How do I enroll in transit or parking benefits?

Depending on your employer, you can: 1) enroll online directly on the Consumer Portal during open enrollment, 2) enroll via your employer's benefits administration system or 3) enroll via paper or other method preferred by your employer. Employers using methods 2 or 3 will send your enrollment information to us to create your commuter benefits account.

4. What do I do if the cost of my monthly pass changes? Can I update my election amount?

Election amounts can be updated month-to-month. Depending on your employer, you can: 1) update your election directly on the Consumer Portal or 2) update your election in your employer's benefit administration system or other preferred method.

5. When are my funds available?

Funds are available as they are contributed to your account each payroll cycle. If you are placing a Smart Commute order, then your ordered funds will be available on your transit authority smart card by the first of the month you selected.

6. How can I use my funds?

If you already have a benefits debit card, then we'll simply add accounts to your existing card to use at merchants selling eligible expenses. The card maintains separate accounts for parking and transit and when you swipe the card the transaction will be directed to the appropriate purse based on the merchant.

For parking and vanpool expenses, you can pay out-of-pocket and request reimbursement for your expenses on the Consumer Portal or mobile app. Reimbursement can be issued via direct deposit to your bank account or check. Mass transit expenses are not eligible for reimbursement per the IRS, when an eligible method such as the benefit debit card or Smart Commute are available.

7. Can my spouse or dependent use my commuter benefits account?

No, Transit and/or parking benefits are limited to employee expenses only: reimbursement is not allowed for spouse or dependent transit or parking expenses.

8. What happens if I terminate employment?

Your benefits debit card will be deactivated, and you'll have a run-out period to submit mass transit or parking claims incurred while you were still actively employed. Your employer determines the length of the run-out period. For additional information on the run-out period, refer to your employer's Adoption Agreement. After the run-out period ends, any remaining funds in your account are forfeited back to your employer's plan.

9. What happens if I choose to no longer participate in commuter benefits but I'm not terminating employment?

You can continue to submit mass transit and parking claims for a set amount of time determined by your employer's plan design, also known as the run-out period. Your benefits debit card will no longer work for mass transit and parking expenses, however, and any pending Smart Commute orders will not be fulfilled.

10. What if I have dollars remaining at the end of the year? What if I have dollars remaining from my employer's prior administrator?

At the end of the plan year, funds will automatically roll over to the new plan year. Since commuter benefits is a month-to-month benefit, you aren't required to re-enroll. If you have funds remaining from a previous administrator, then your employer will provide the necessary information and we can add the appropriate balances to your account for you to use.