



Guaranteed Ride Home Customer Satisfaction Survey

Results for Fiscal Year 2010

Draft Report

January 18, 2011

We'll get you home. Guaranteed.

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments



TITLE: Commuter Connections Guaranteed Ride Home Customer Satisfaction Survey Results for Fiscal Year 2010.

DATE: January 18, 2011

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AGENCY: The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) was established in 1957 by local jurisdictions to address regional concerns including growth, housing, environment, public health and safety, and transportation. The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) became associated with COG in 1966 and serves as the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the region. The TPB prepares plans and programs that the federal government must approve in order for federal-aid transportation funds to flow to the Washington region.

Commuter Connections is a regional network of transportation organizations coordinated by the TPB. Established in 1974, Commuter Connections offers free commuter services to help both businesses and their employees find the best available commuting options to improve traffic congestion and improve air quality through lower auto emissions. Primary services of Commuter Connections include ridematching for carpools and vanpools, administration of the Guaranteed Ride Home program, marketing of alternative commute options, and coordination of an employer outreach program including telework.

Funding for Commuter Connections is provided by:

District Department of Transportation
Maryland Department of Transportation
Virginia Department of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation

ABSTRACT:

This report presents the results of a survey of all Guaranteed Ride Home trip recipients during fiscal year 2010 (July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010). The survey was designed to gauge the level of satisfaction of commuters who utilized the GRH service.

The GRH program was started in 1997 to eliminate a key barrier to using alternative modes; commuter fear of being stranded at the workplace during an unexpected personal or family emergency or unscheduled overtime.

PUBLICATION:

The final report once adopted will be published on the Commuter Connections website at www.commuterconnections.org under the About US, Publications section.

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Background

Guaranteed Ride Home Program Description

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) through its Commuter Connections program, under the auspices of its funders, has operated the Guaranteed Ride Home program (GRH) since January 1997. A “commuter insurance” program, GRH is designed to encourage ridesharing and transit usage by providing a way home for qualifying commuters in the case of an unexpected personal/family emergency or unscheduled overtime when their normal alternative commute mode is not available. Many area workers who consider switching commute modes from Single Occupancy Vehicles to carpools, vanpools, and transit are concerned about being stranded at work if they unexpectedly have to leave before or after standard work hours. GRH eliminates this concern, and encourages ridesharing, taking transit, bicycling and walking to work. Commuters who use these transportation modes twice a week are provided with four free GRH rides home per year. Alternative mode commute practices reduce the number of automobiles on the road and help the region toward air quality goals. The GRH program’s Participation Guidelines and survey samples used during FY 2010 are provided in the Appendix of this report.

Customer Satisfaction Survey and Methodology

The Customer Satisfaction Survey for GRH was conducted as an ongoing study each month throughout the fiscal year. All customers who obtained a free ride home through the program during FY10 were provided the opportunity to participate in the survey. Midway through FY09, Commuter Connections began to administer the GRH survey online. Online surveys were employed as they are more expeditious and efficient from an administrative standpoint and reduce printing and postage costs. Emails are sent on the day following the GRH trip, along with a link to the survey. Customers who have not provided Commuter Connections with an email address, roughly 25%, continue to receive the survey through the U.S. Postal Service. For each ride taken, those who had not supplied an email address were mailed a postage-paid response card survey along with a cover letter (*see* Appendix). The letter informed the GRH customer of the purpose and voluntary nature of the survey. The online survey email contains a similar message. Both the hard copy and online surveys allow respondents to rate the GRH service and provide comments and suggestions. Some respondents voluntarily provide their name and with their consent, may be featured in news articles and/or the Commuter Connections web site as testimonials.

Survey Design

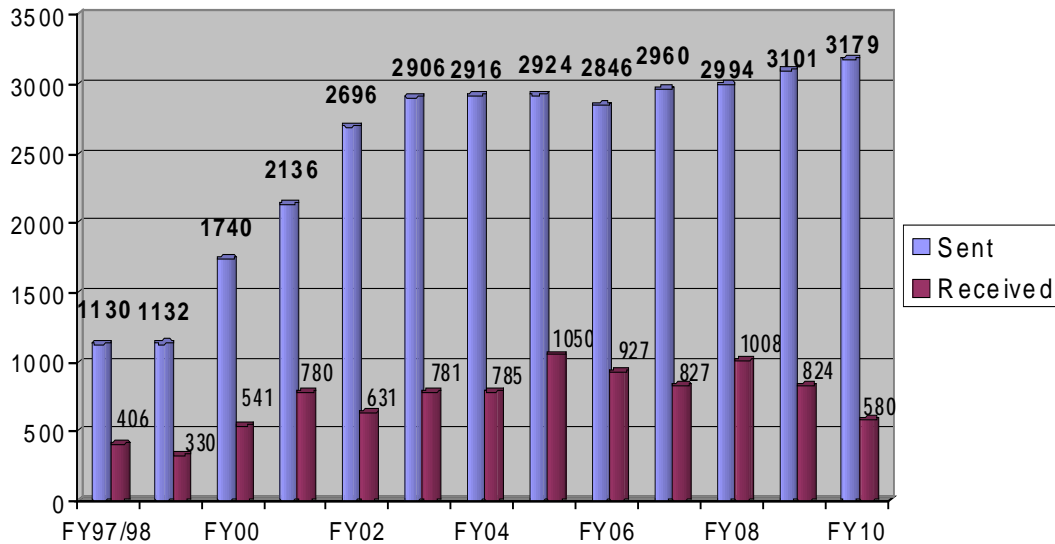
The survey consisted of five multiple-choice questions, one fill in the blank and an area for comments. Four questions provided insight into customer opinions regarding various operational functions of GRH and asked the respondent to rate the different aspects of the service by circling one of four responses—“Poor,” “Fair,” “Good,” or “Excellent.” Another multiple choice question asked the reason for the trip, and a fill in the blank question asked the respondent to indicate their wait time. The comments area provided an open ended forum to offer specific or general feedback, whether positive or negative. For some multiple choice questions, a few respondents did not indicate a rating, or added a qualifier to the response, such as “very,” a plus symbol (+), or a minus symbol (-). These types of qualifiers were ignored when tabulating the survey results.

The performance areas of GRH were addressed by four multiple-choice questions: reservations staff; transportation service; response time and overall service. “Reservations staff” refers to the operators who answered telephone calls from commuters requesting GRH service, verified the request in accordance with the official GRH participation guidelines, and arranged the ride for the commuter. These operators are employees of Diamond Transportation Services, Inc., which provided such services under a contractual arrangement with COG. “Transportation service” refers to the modes of transportation (e.g. taxi, rental car service) and the affiliated organizations (e.g. xyz cab company, Enterprise Rent-a-car) that provided the trips from the workplace to the final destination. The types of transportation modes used for the GRH trips were selected by Diamond Transportation based on the type and severity of the emergency, distance traveled, and customer preferences.

Response Rates

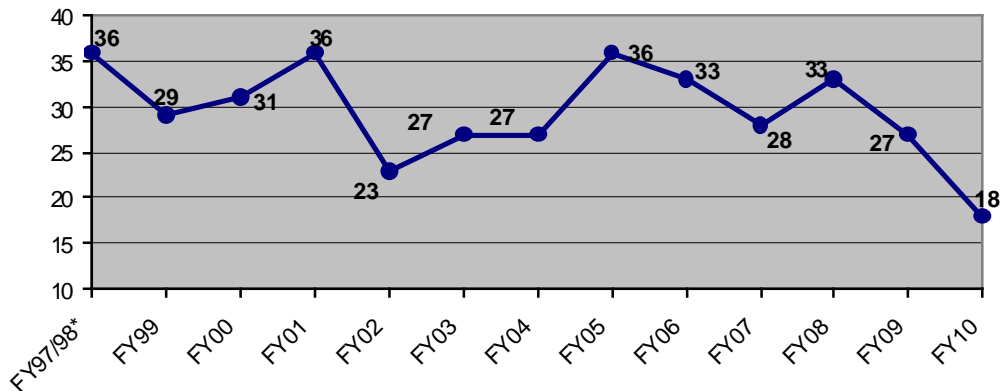
Number of Surveys Sent and Received Since Program Inception

Of the 3,179 surveys distributed in fiscal year 2010, 580 completed surveys were received. This was the highest quantity of surveys ever distributed. The number of surveys sent increased by 78 and response fell by 244 surveys.



Response Rates in Percentages - All Fiscal Years.

Response rates typically fluctuate by several points from year to year, and movement from FY09 to FY10 was no exception. The percentage of respondents in FY10 was 18%, a decrease of nine percentage points from the previous year. This was the largest drop in response since fiscal year 2002 when the response rate plummeted by thirteen percentage points due to postal service disruptions following the Anthrax crisis. The FY10 drop was directly attributed to the switch to an online survey system. Online surveys are easier to ignore and may be tied up in spam/junk filters. Physical survey cards tend to have more impact. In many households, the volume of emails received has surpassed traditional postal delivery mail. Another plausible reason why there are significantly fewer online responses, may be due to the fact that GRH customers may realize that online surveys are not anonymous.



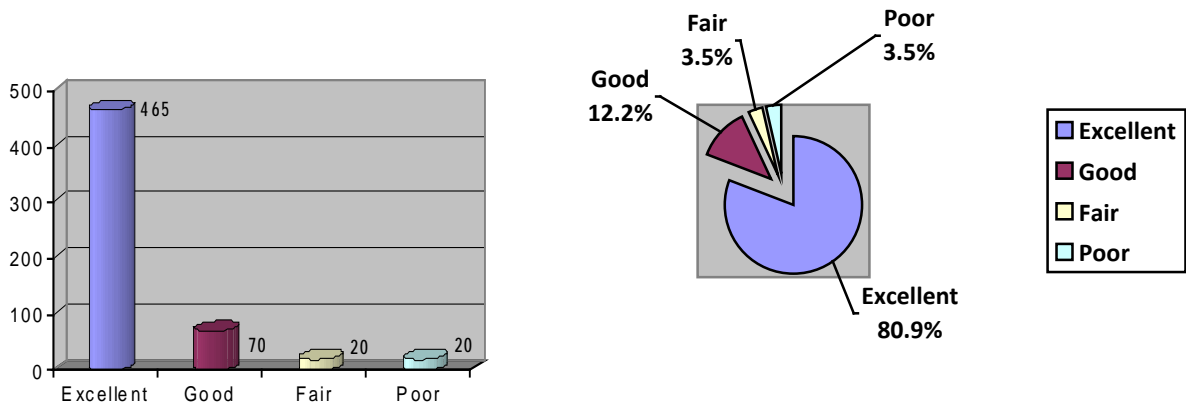
Fiscal Year 2010 Survey Results

This section indicates survey results received from 580 respondents for fiscal year 2010. Upcoming sections of this report will provide a comparison of results with previous fiscal years (1997 through present). See appendix for samples of the survey response card and online survey that were used. Note: some respondents did not answer all questions. As a result, response totals to some questions may not equal to the total number of survey respondents.

Reservation Staff

Number and Percentage of Responses Received

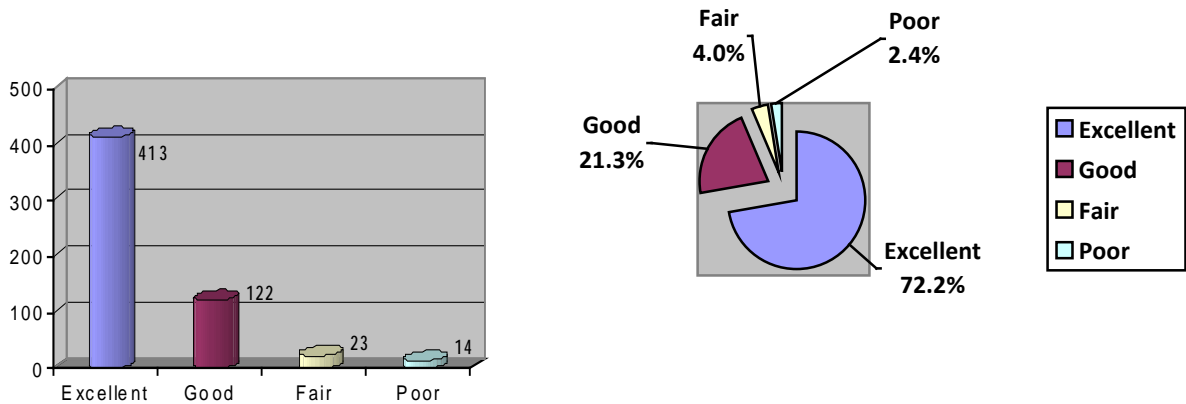
How would you rate the service you received from our GRH trip reservation staff?



Transportation Service

Number and Percentage of Responses Received

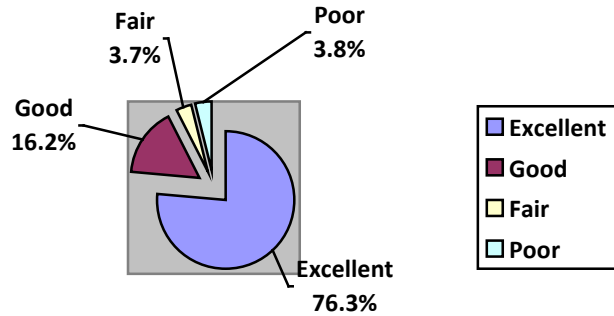
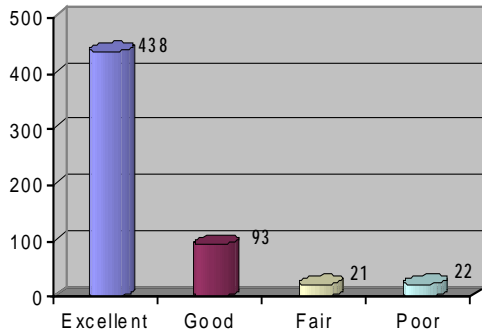
How would you rate the taxi or rental car service?



Response Time - Rating

Number and Percentage of Responses Received

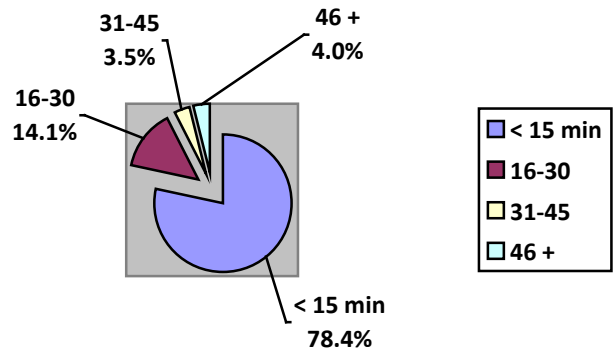
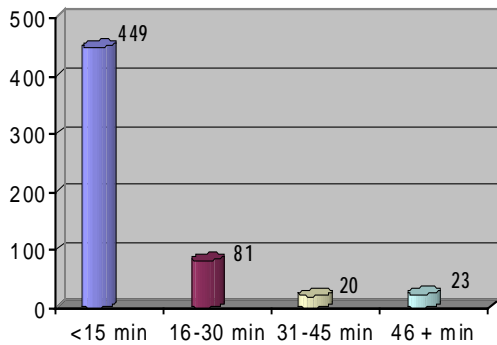
How would you rate our response time?



Response Time – Minutes

Numbers and Percentages of Responses Received

Approximately how many minutes did you wait until your ride?

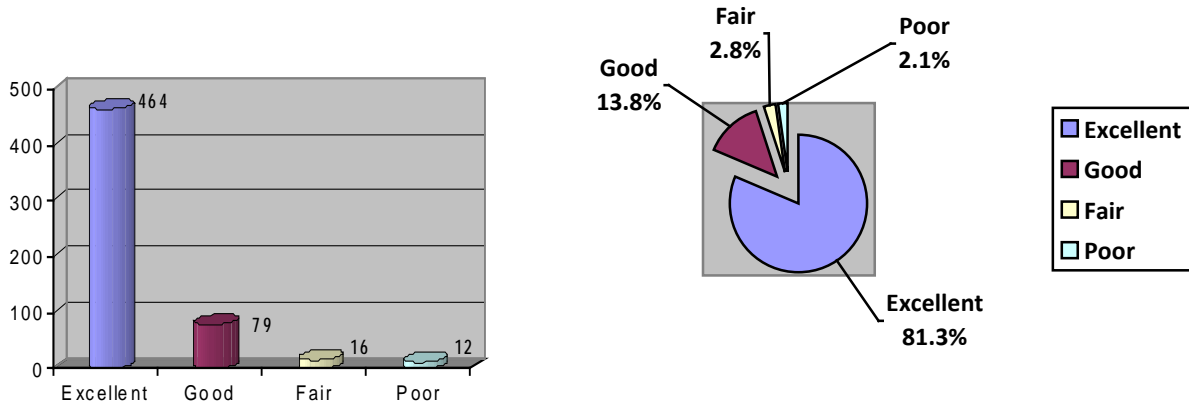


Average response wait in FY10 was 14 minutes, a one minute improvement from the previous year. The percentage of customers with a wait time of 30 minutes or less was 92.5%.

Overall Service

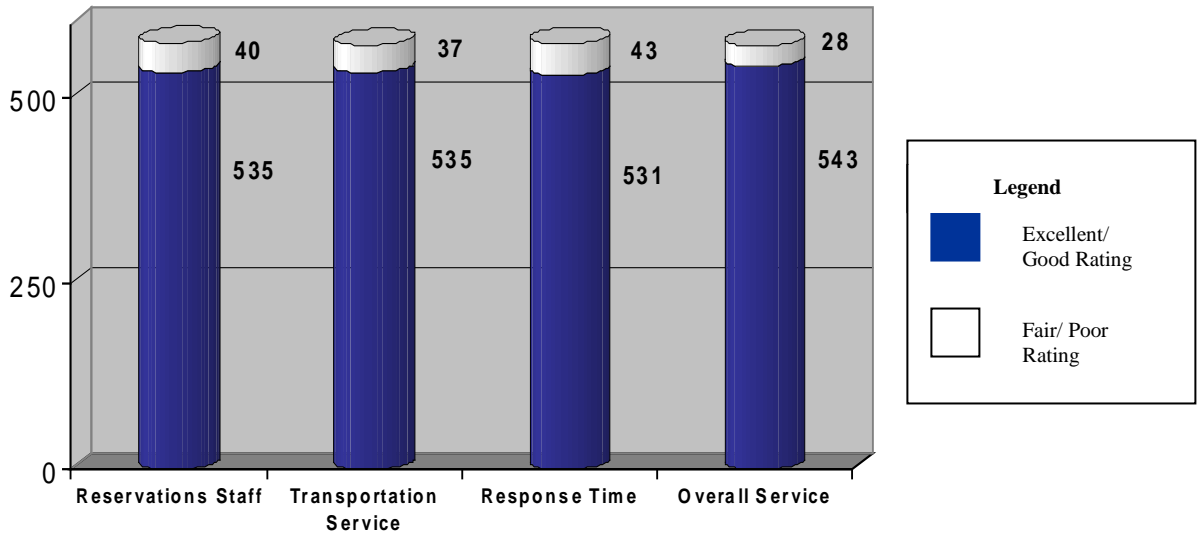
Numbers and Percentages of Responses Received

Overall, how would you rate our GRH service?



Excellent/Good vs. Fair/Poor: All Questions

Number of Responses Based on Combined Satisfaction Levels

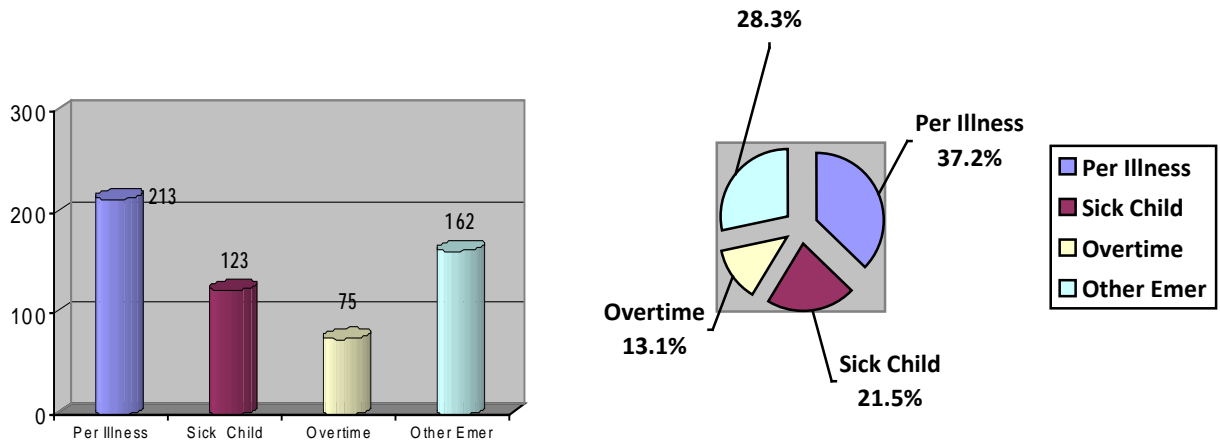


This chart emphasizes the overwhelming positive ratings (excellent & good) compared to the negative ratings (fair & poor). For example, 535 respondents gave the Reservations Staff category a positive rating, noted in the darker area, in contrast to merely 40 negative responses in white.

Reason for Trip

Numbers and Percentages of Responses Received

What was the reason for your GRH Trip?



Written Responses

In addition to the multiple-choice questions, survey respondents were offered the option of providing written comments. This open ended response area generated mostly compliments. Other written responses included suggestions, complaints, as well as a few miscellaneous comments. All feedback is valuable for assessing customer attitudes regarding specific service areas, and overall comments help to gauge the general pulse of the program. The total number of written responses equaled 397 out of a total of 580 returned surveys, more than two-thirds (68%) of survey participants. Some respondents provided feedback that fell into more than one category. For example, these responses included both a complaint and compliment and were recorded in both categories. *“Driver should have trusted his GPS. He went way out of the way to get me home, but was very pleasant and accommodating otherwise”*. Another survey respondent wrote, *“It would have been nice to have the taxi come a little sooner. Otherwise the service was great.”*

Compliments

With 369 compliments, positive feedback was overwhelmingly the most common type of written response. Compliments were given by 93% of those who provided a written response, nearly 6.5 times the rate of complaints. Many were expressions of gratitude for the GRH service. Some commuters explicitly listed GRH as the main reason which allowed them to utilize an alternative commute mode. Many of the respondents provided personal stories about how GRH helped them during a crisis situation.

Most compliments were about the Overall Service followed by the Taxi/Rental Service. The breakdown of compliments by category are as follows: Overall Service 42%; Taxi/Rental Service 26%; Reservations Staff 22% and Response Time 10%. It should also be noted that compliments regarding the Taxi/Rental Service received almost exclusively pertained to taxi trips, as only a small percentage of the trips used the rental car service.

Samples of actual compliments from FY10:

- *This was my first time using GRH and I was very pleased with the service I received. Customer service at Commuter Connections was very friendly, the long cab ride to Fredericksburg was pleasant as the driver was very friendly.*
- *My mother was very ill with diabetes! Thank you Thank you Thank you for helping me with this ride home--I was so frantic I missed the 12:55pm train and needed to get home. Your staff was very nice and gracious in scheduling and working with me!! The taxi driver was very accommodating.*
- *First time user. Service is critical. I loved it. My son is on chemotherapy and this puts me more at ease since I am a full time VRE rider. I've told all my non-VRE friends about it.*
- *This was only my 2nd time using the program. I was very impressed that it took less than roughly 20 minutes to receive a ride....that's counting from when i first called GRH about needing a ride home. I'm very happy with the service.*
- *This is an OUTSTANDING service. Since I live in Woodbridge, VA and there are NO PRTC bus services returning from DC to Lake Ridge until aft 12:30, or so, I have found GRH very, very important, especially when I became very ill in the AM.*
- *I have worked 32+ years with a DC law firm and as I am getting older, it is very, very comforting knowing that GRH is there to help relieve the emotional stress associated with feeling stranded due to an unexpected illness. I feel very blessed knowing that should an emergency arise, GRH is there to get me home ASAP.*
- *I don't think I would be able to Slug everyday not knowing how to get home in an emergency. I love this service.*
- *I broke my arm at work and was in great pain. The woman handling my call was super helpful. I also had a great cab driver. This was my first time using guaranteed ride home and I am so grateful this service exists.*

Complaints

A total of 57 complaints were received about the GRH service; 14% out of the 397 written responses. Of respondents who lodged a complaint, more than a quarter (28%) also gave a compliment. Most complaints were about the Taxi/Rental Service followed by the Reservations Staff. Complaints received under the Taxi/Rental Service category almost exclusively pertain to taxi trips, as a small percentage of trips used the rental car service. The breakdowns of complaints by category in descending order are as follows: Taxi/Rental Service 35%; Reservations Staff 28%; Overall Service 25%; and Response Time 12%.

Another common type of complaint related to the need for the reservations staff to ask probing questions, which is done in order to verify whether the request fully meets the GRH trip approval requirements. Most commuters understand this as one of the necessary steps of the program, while some are defensive and put off by this process. Without these safeguards, some commuters might abuse the program rules and take advantage of the free service. GRH can only be used for unexpected emergencies such as a personal illness, a sick child or other personal or family emergency situations. To keep costs down, the reservation staff may also encourage commuters to use a rental car instead of a significantly more expensive taxi fare. They may also ask the commuter to supplement the trip with Metrorail for part of the distance. In some cases the approval of a GRH trip must rely on the perceived “unexpectedness” of the caller’s situation. This is to prevent misuse of the program for non-emergency situations. The reservations staff must at times differentiate between true emergencies and flagrant abuse. When making such judgments, a GRH trip may be rejected if the emergency is divulged as “expected”, such as a planned doctor’s appointment.

Complaints about the taxi service included some confusion about where to pick up the taxis as well as problems with identifying which taxi was part of the GRH program. Additional issues included the attitudes of some drivers, cab cleanliness, and the lack of knowledge the cab drivers had of the GRH program. Unfortunately, many of the taxi drivers do not possess common sense customer service skills and some taxi companies do a poor job of communicating the GRH program protocol to their drivers. Although problems and issues are discussed between the GRH contractor and the taxi companies, the filtering down of information to the drivers can be less than ideal. Ultimately, the taxi companies are responsible for the training of taxi drivers and Commuter Connections has little direct control over this aspect of the service. Customers are welcome to specify the cab company and/or driver by name when completing the survey but rarely do so. They may also lodge a complaint directly to the taxi company. When known by Commuter Connections, this feedback is communicated to the appropriate cab company through the managing contractor.

Sample of actual complaints from FY10:

- *The cab was old and overheating, I told the driver it was smoking he ignored me. We broke down on the highway. A state trooper took me the rest of the way-nightmare.*
- *The driver did not know how to get to 95 South. He cut off two cars and drove 55 mph on 95. Speed limit is 65.*
- *They did not show up until 45 minutes later. I decided to just wait for my van pool instead of using the cab because the HOV restrictions were already in effect and it would have taken me much longer to get home.*
- *Was appalled I had to take metro out to Vienna in order to get my cab. Very disappointing.*
- *The representative was a little "defensive."*
- *I was very ill and unable to drive but was told I could only be taken to my car or home when I needed to go to my doctor. This is a major problem when you are very ill.*

Comments and Suggestions

Comments and/or suggestions were received by 101 respondents, representing 25% of all written responses.

Sample of actual comments & suggestions from FY 2010:

- *I felt bad that I didn't have any cash on me to give the driver a tip. He seemed perturbed by that.*
- *I appreciated the quick taxi pickup, but it was the beginning of rush hour and the taxi spent a lot of time sitting in traffic. I wondered if I could have gotten to my destination quicker by taking metrorail, then having taxi pickup at the metro station nearest my destination. I don't know if this is considered when dispatching rides during heavy traffic hours, but it should be. Would also save you money.*
- *I was confused about whether or not Commuter Connections would tip the taxi driver and he didn't like the fact that I did not give him a tip. I think the reservations staff should make it clear what will occur regarding a tip for the driver.*
- *I think it would be beneficial to both GRH and the commuter if there were more than one choice for cab company in Montgomery County, Maryland. Barwood Taxi takes too long to be available.*
- *I would like to make one suggestion: GRH provide a general estimate of how long it takes for the cab to arrive. I recognize this can't be guaranteed*
- *The GRH call center needs to accept calls from any area code. Being from Texas, my cell phone number has the area code of 214. None of my calls would go through to GRH -- the voice response I received said my number was outside the accepted calling area.*

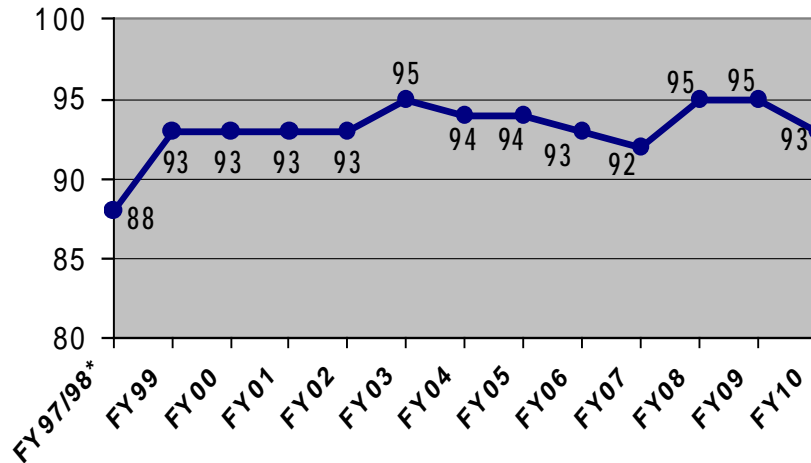
Comparison to Previous Fiscal Years

Reservations Staff

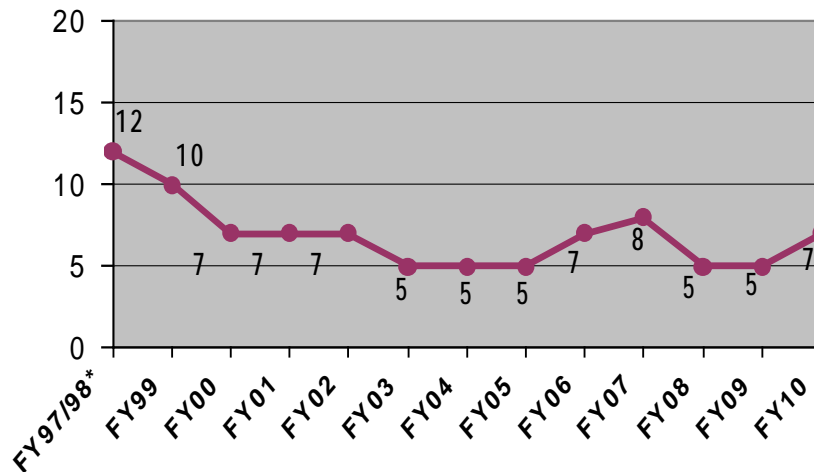
Percentages of Responses Received for Question One Over All Fiscal Years

How would you rate the service you received from our GRH trip reservations staff?

Excellent and Good Combined Ratings



Poor and Fair Combined Ratings



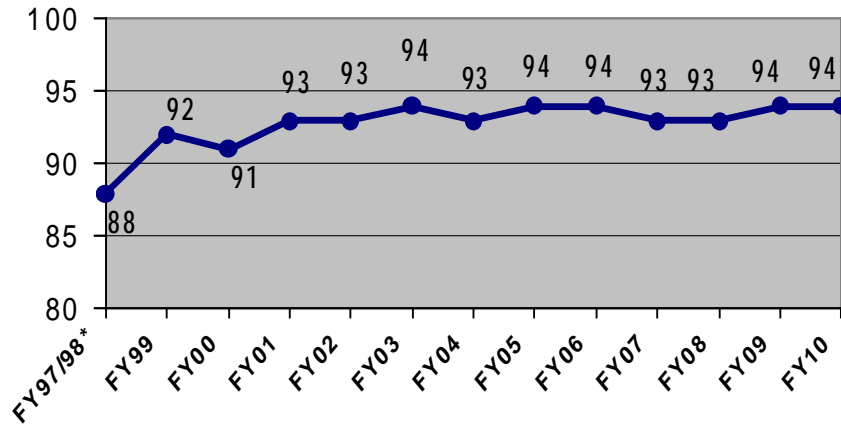
* FY97 was the first year the program began and data was only collected for a small portion of the time. FY97 data was combined together into FY98 to make it statistically significant.

Transportation Service

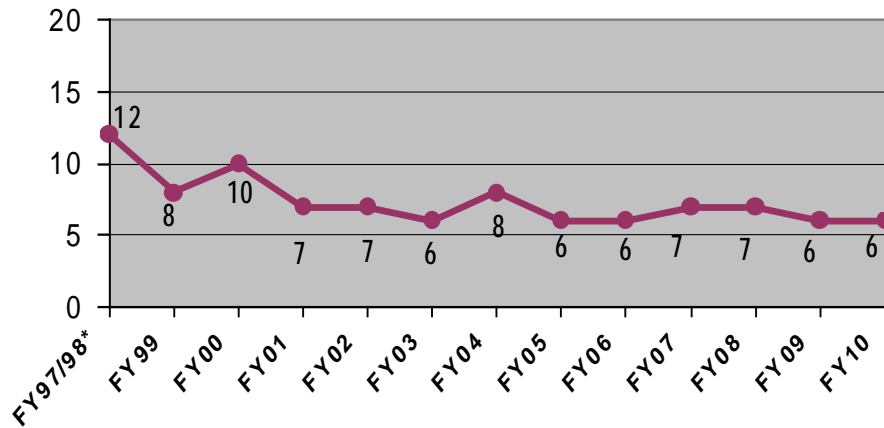
Percentages of Responses Received for Question Two Over All Fiscal Years

How would you rate the taxi or rental car service?

Excellent and Good Combined Ratings



Poor and Fair Combined Ratings



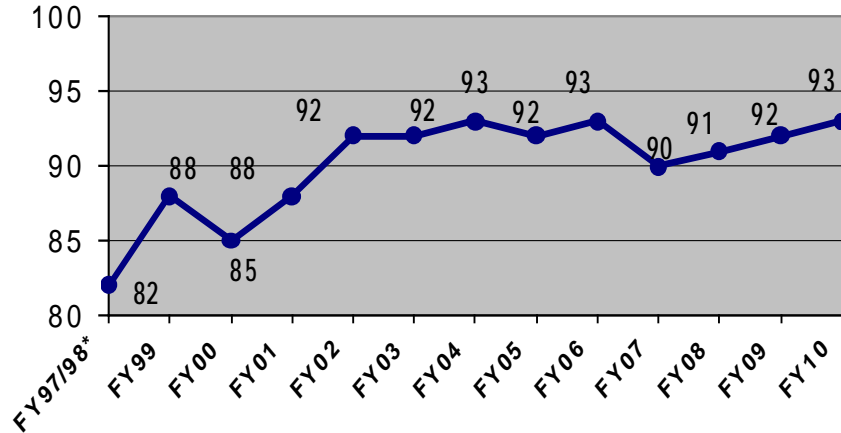
* FY97 was the first year the program began and data was only collected for a small portion of the time. FY97 data was combined together into FY98 to make it statistically significant.

Response Time

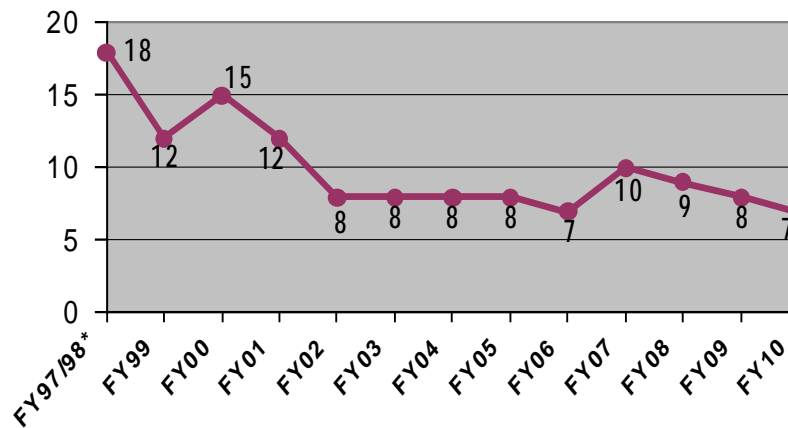
Percentages of Responses Received for Question Three Over All Fiscal Years

How would you rate our response time?

Excellent and Good Combined Ratings

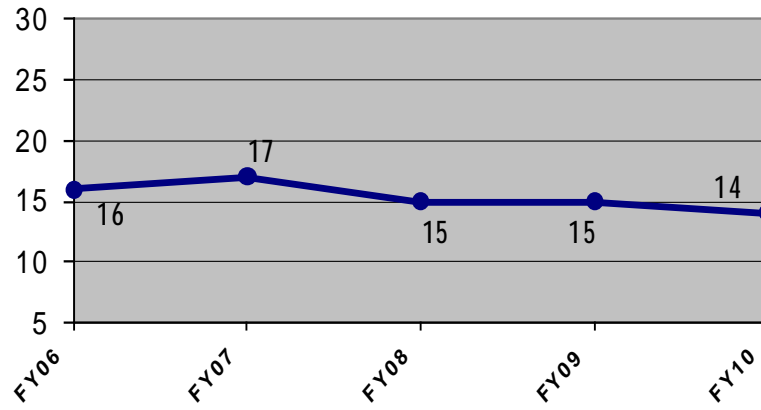


Poor and Fair Combined Ratings



- FY97 was the first year the program began and data was only collected for a small portion of the time. FY97 data was combined together into FY98 to make it statistically significant.

Average Response Time – Minutes



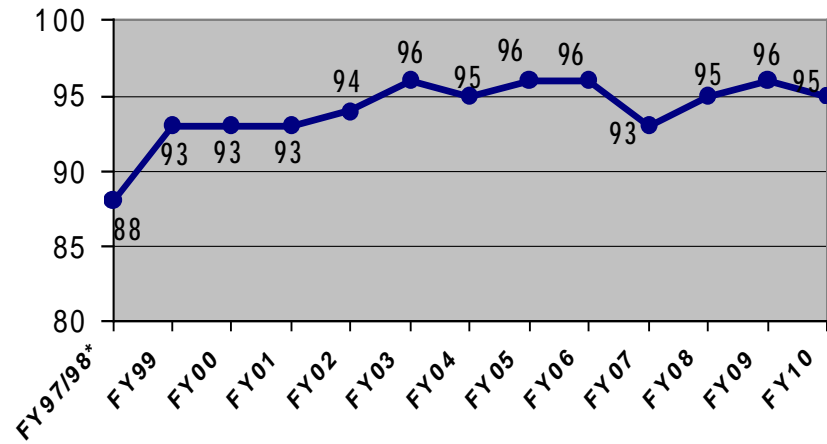
FY06 was the first year this question was added to the survey.

Overall Service

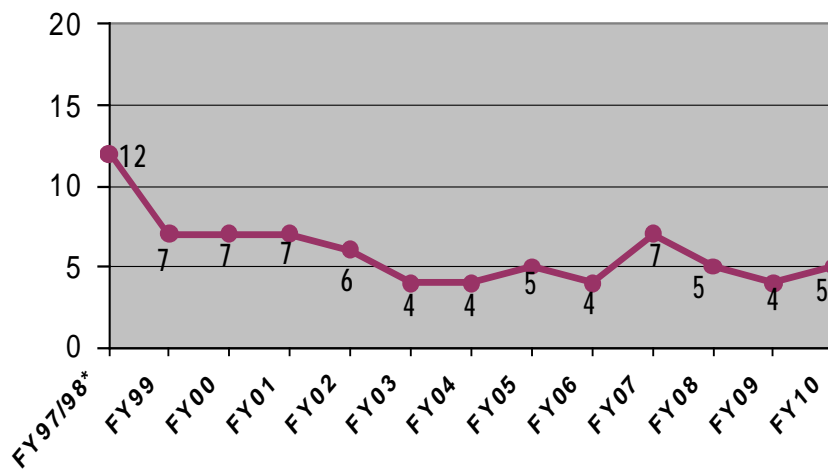
Percentages of Responses Received for Question Four Over All Fiscal Years

Overall, how would you rate our GRH service?

Excellent and Good Combined Ratings



Poor and Fair Combined Ratings



* FY97 was the first year the program began and data was only collected for a small portion of the time. FY97 data was combined together into FY98 to make it statistically significant.

Recap Summary

Of the 3,179 surveys distributed in fiscal year 2010, 580 or 18% surveys were completed. The vast majority, 95% of the survey respondents were satisfied with the overall GRH service. Written responses were entered on more than two-thirds (68%) of the returned surveys, the majority of which (93%) contained compliments. Compliments outweighed criticism 6.5 to 1. Good or above ratings were given by at least 92% of the respondents for each category. Average response wait was 14 minutes and 92.5% waited 30 minutes or less.

Appendix

Sample Cover Letter Sent with Survey Card



Dear Commuter:

Thank you for using the Commuter Connections Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program in September. As a standard practice, we send out survey cards to all of our customers, in order to determine their level of satisfaction with this free service. Your feedback will help us gauge the program's continued value and also help improve and better serve commuters in the Washington metropolitan area.

Please take just a moment to complete the enclosed survey card and simply drop it in the mail within 10 days, no postage necessary!

Please note, your answers to the survey should only reflect your September 2008 GRH trip. If you have again used the GRH service after September 30, 2008, you will receive a separate survey card for that trip.

For the latest Guaranteed Ride Home participation guidelines, or if you would like information about other Commuter Connections services, please visit our web site at www.commuterconnections.org, or call us at 1-800-745-7433.

Thank you for using an alternative method of transportation to get to work and for supporting the Guaranteed Ride Home program. Your efforts help to reduce traffic congestion and improve the air we breathe.

Please be sure to tell your co-workers and neighbors to sign up for the free Guaranteed Ride Home program at www.commuterconnections.org.

Happy Commuting!

COMMUTER CONNECTIONS

We'll get you home. Guaranteed.

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS, 777 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, N.E. SUITE 900, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20002-4239

THE COMMUTER INFORMATION SOURCE FOR MARYLAND, VIRGINIA AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

www.commuterconnections.org



1-800-745-7433

Sample Survey Response Card





NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES



BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

First Class Mail Permit No. 10532 Washington, DC
Postage Will Be Paid By Addressee



COMMUTER CONNECTIONS
METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
 777 NORTH CAPITOL ST NE
 SUITE 300
 WASHINGTON DC 20077-0637



Thank you for using Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH).
 We'd like to know how you feel about our program.

Please take a moment to complete this card and drop it in the mail. Your response is greatly appreciated.

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	
1. How would you rate the service you received from our GRH trip reservations staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. What was the reason for your GRH trip? <input type="checkbox"/> Sick Child <input type="checkbox"/> Overtime <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Illness <input type="checkbox"/> Other Emergency 7. Your name: (optional) _____ 8. Comments: _____ _____ _____
2. How would you rate the taxi or rental car service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. How would you rate our response time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Overall, how would you rate our GRH service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Approximately how many minutes did you wait until receiving your ride?	_____ minutes				

1-800-745-RIDE • www.commuterconnections.org



We'll get you home. Guaranteed.

Sample Online Survey

Commuter Connections GRH Satisfaction Survey

We'd like to know how you feel about our program. Please take a moment to complete this survey. Your response is greatly appreciated.

How would you rate the service you received from our GRH trip reservation staff?

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Excellent

How would you rate the taxi or rental car service?

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Excellent

How would you rate our response time?

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Excellent

Overall how would you rate our GRH service?

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Excellent





Approximately how many minutes did you wait until receiving your ride?

What was the reason for your GRH trip?

- Sick Child
- Personal Illness
- Unscheduled Overtime
- Other Emergency

Please Provide us with any comments about your GRH experience.

Do you consider your comments to be a: (check all that apply)

- Compliment

- Suggestion

- Complaint

- General Comment


Do your comments refer to: (check all that apply)

- Taxi or Rental Car Service
- Overall Service
- Reservation Staff
- Response Time

Response Data by Year, Question and Rating - Percentage of responses

Survey Questions	Responses	FY97/98	FY99	FY00	FY01	FY02	FY03
How would you rate the service you received from our GRH trip reservations staff?	Excellent	62%	66%	70%	74%	76%	78%
	Good	26%	27%	23%	19%	17%	17%
	Fair	6%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%
	Poor	6%	5%	3%	3%	3%	2%
How would you rate the taxi or rental car service?	Excellent	59%	66%	65%	70%	69%	70%
	Good	29%	26%	26%	23%	24%	24%
	Fair	6%	5%	6%	4%	4%	4%
	Poor	6%	3%	4%	3%	3%	2%
How would you rate our response time?	Excellent	58%	60%	65%	70%	73%	74%
	Good	24%	28%	20%	18%	19%	18%
	Fair	9%	6%	10%	7%	3%	4%
	Poor	9%	6%	5%	5%	5%	4%
Overall, how would you rate our GRH service?	Excellent	61%	68%	69%	73%	78%	79%
	Good	27%	25%	24%	20%	16%	17%
	Fair	7%	5%	4%	5%	3%	3%
	Poor	5%	2%	3%	2%	3%	1%
Totals	Excellent	60%	65%	67%	72%	73%	75%
	Good	26%	27%	23%	20%	19%	19%
	Fair	7%	5%	6%	5%	4%	4%
	Poor	7%	4%	4%	3%	4%	2%

Survey Questions	Responses	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10
How would you rate the service you received from our GRH trip reservations staff?	Excellent	78%	78%	78%	76%	78%	80%	81%
	Good	16%	16%	15%	16%	17%	15%	12%
	Fair	3%	3%	4%	4%	3%	3%	4%
	Poor	2%	2%	3%	4%	2%	2%	4%
How would you rate the taxi or rental car service?	Excellent	70%	73%	76%	68%	71%	74%	72%
	Good	23%	21%	18%	25%	22%	20%	21%
	Fair	6%	4%	4%	5%	5%	3%	4%
	Poor	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%
How would you rate our response time?	Excellent	75%	75%	77%	74%	74%	78%	76%
	Good	18%	17%	16%	17%	17%	14%	16%
	Fair	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
	Poor	3%	3%	3%	5%	5%	4%	4%
Overall, how would you rate our GRH service?	Excellent	78%	78%	78%	75%	77%	79%	81%
	Good	17%	18%	18%	18%	18%	17%	14%
	Fair	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%
	Poor	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%	1%	2%
Totals	Excellent	75%	76%	79%	73%	75%	78%	78%
	Good	19%	18%	17%	19%	19%	17%	16%
	Fair	4%	4%	2.5%	4%	4%	3%	4%
	Poor	2%	2%	1.5%	4%	3%	3%	3%

In some cases, rounding may cause categories to not add up to 100%.

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA GUARANTEED RIDE HOME PROGRAM PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

1. **Commuters must call Commuter Connections and receive authorization from Commuter Connections prior to using the Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) service.** Commuter Connections will issue an authorization number(s) to the commuter to approve a GRH trip. **Commuters will not be reimbursed for trips not authorized by Commuter Connections.** After approval, Commuter Connections will make the GRH trip arrangements for the commuter and, if necessary, provide instructions on how and where the GRH transportation provider will pick up the commuter. Commuter Connections is equipped to provide wheelchair accessible transportation as part of the GRH service as needed.
2. Commuters must be officially registered with Commuter Connections before using the GRH service. Commuters must provide the supervisor name and phone number and at least two (2) phone numbers (home/cell and work) in order to register for GRH service. Registered commuters are those who have received an official registration letter and GRH ID card from Commuter Connections. Commuters who have not been officially registered may use the GRH service one time, providing they meet all other eligibility criteria. This is referred to as a “one-time exception.” Any commuter granted a one-time exception must be officially registered before additional GRH trips are granted. Registered and one-time exception commuters must be carpooling, vanpooling, taking transit, bicycling, or walking to their site of employment at least two (2) days per week **and** on the day they use the GRH service. GRH is only available to people commuting to and from work.
3. Registered commuters may use the GRH program up to four (4) times annually from their official registration date. Commuters who received a one-time exception then officially register with Commuter Connections may use the GRH service three (3) more times within 12 months from the date of their one-time exception GRH trip. The GRH trip credits are non-transferable.
4. Commuters must re-register annually to maintain their GRH registration. Commuters must contact Commuter Connections to re-register and update their registration information.
5. The GRH program may only be used in cases of unexpected personal or family emergency, unexpected illness, or unscheduled overtime. **Cases in which the GRH program cannot be used include, but are not limited to the following: previously scheduled medical appointments, trips to the hospital or emergency room for a commuter that needs medical attention, personal errands, transit service disruptions and/or delays, business related travel, working late without a supervisor’s request, weather emergencies, any type of building closings or evacuations, and natural disasters.**
6. Requests to use the GRH program because of unscheduled overtime must be made *before* the commuter’s registered work end time, **and** a supervisor’s verification will be required at the time of the request.
7. GRH service is available between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except designated program holidays and any planned and/or unplanned Federal Government office closings. **GRH TRIPS MUST BE TAKEN BEFORE 10:00 P.M.** to ensure that the commuter has received their ride. **Designated program Holidays include: New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Birthday of Martin Luther King Jr., Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.**

8. To be eligible, a commuter must be physically working in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) as defined by the United States Office of Management and Budget. The MSA includes the District of Columbia, the Maryland counties of Calvert, Charles, Frederick, Montgomery and Prince George's, the City of Alexandria and the Virginia counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, and all cities within the aforementioned counties.
9. Eligible commuters can live anywhere inside the MSA or in any of the following areas: Allegany, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Caroline, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Harford, Howard, Kent, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Talbot, or Washington counties, and the City of Baltimore in Maryland; and Caroline, Clarke, Culpeper, Fauquier, Frederick, King George, Lancaster, Madison, Northumberland, Orange, Page, Rappahannock, Richmond, Shenandoah, Stafford, Spotsylvania, Warren, or Westmoreland counties, the City of Fredericksburg, or the City of Winchester in Virginia; and Berkeley, Hampshire, or Jefferson County in West Virginia; and Adams, Franklin, or York counties in Pennsylvania. Any residence outside of the above-mentioned areas will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
10. All GRH trips must originate from the commuter's work location. Depending on the nature of the emergency, and home and work locations, a commuter using the GRH service may be required to use a taxi, car rental, transit, or any combination of these services to reach their destination point. **Commuter Connections will determine the type of service used and will issue a valid GRH authorization number at that time.**
11. Commuter Connections will pay for one vendor service and/or one transit service per request. If the GRH trip uses a taxi, Commuter Connections will pay for all charges, excluding gratuity, to the destination. **The commuter is responsible only for tipping the taxi driver.** Cancellation on the part of the commuter of a GRH trip may count as one of the four annual trips. If a transit option is used for part of the GRH trip, the commuter will be mailed a transit reimbursement voucher. The transit reimbursement voucher must be submitted back to Commuter Connections within thirty days of transit use in order for payment to be made. Please allow 45 days for reimbursement. A commuter's supervisor must sign the transit voucher for any trip granted because of unscheduled overtime in order for the reimbursement to be issued.
12. If the GRH trip is made by rental car, the commuter is responsible for signing a standard rental agreement, showing a valid driver's license, proof of insurance, providing a credit card number for collateral, returning the rental car within a 24-hour period, and the following charges: gasoline refueling charges, taxes, purchase of insurance (if necessary), and additional rental charges if auto is not returned within a 24-hour period (unless Commuter Connections has given prior approval for additional rental time). The commuter will be responsible for any loss or damage to the rental car.
13. GRH is a free service provided by Commuter Connections at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG). COG will use its best efforts to provide the Guaranteed Ride Home in accordance with the guidelines shown above. By requesting assistance from the Guaranteed Ride Home program, the participant in the program explicitly acknowledges that COG assumes no liability for the timeliness of the GRH participating vendor(s) or any accidents that may occur on the conveyance.

Guidelines are subject to change without notice.

11/18/08