

Activating the messaging

An Employers' Guide to activating the COVIDSafe Travel Choices key messages for employees. Created in partnership with the Behavioural Insights Unit at the NSW Department of Customer Service.

Here are some ideas to integrate into your communication initiatives that can really make a difference to if, when and how your staff travel for work. Choose the ones that are right for your business!



Stay at home if you are sick

Be real

Debunk presenteeism

Ensure senior managers stay at home when they are sick and tell their staff that is exactly what they are doing and why. Assure staff that taking sick leave is acceptable, especially if you have COVID-19 symptoms, and make them aware of your sick leave policy.



Continue to work from home if you can

Make it appealing

Use leaders as role models

Encourage senior managers to share their work-from-home set up and some tips and tricks on ways they are managing their work-life balance and keeping productive. Share a short video or a regular email update with their teams to encourage them to adopt similar behaviours, assure them that working from home is normal and acceptable and point them to your relevant policies.

Highlight the time-saving benefits of not commuting to the office

There are some great incentives to working from home, including more time and flexibility. Highlight these benefits by encouraging staff to share what they're doing in their non-commuting time, e.g. walking kids to school, reading a book, working out.

Make it competitive

Harness competitive behaviour (1) and use leader board charts to show rates of working from home between teams, with monthly rewards for the team with the most staff working from home.

Ask people to make a commitment to their working from home hours

People are more likely to stick to a behaviour if they have made a commitment to it, particularly if this commitment is public. Support this by asking staff to change their WFH hours in their email signatures or calendar. You could also reward staff who have stuck to their commitment with a "Helping keep us safe" badge/icon for their webpage/email signatures/office windows.

Positive reinforcement

Recognise and reinforce the positive behaviour and effectiveness of staff who are working from home in keeping others safe, like essential frontline workers, to motivate your team to keep going. Use encouraging and prosocial messaging (2), for example "Your team worked from home for % of this week. Your choice has protected our community and helped keep transport safe for essential workers. Keep it up!" or "Thank you for saving a seat for someone who needs it" combined with images of healthcare workers commuting.

Share info on trending norms in your business sector

Share some information or insights on other businesses in your sector to reassure your staff that working from home is now normal for many organisations in NSW.



Try travelling outside peak times

Plan ahead

Follow the physical distancing guidelines

Make it easy and attractive

Encourage staggered start times

Not everyone needs to start work by 9am, and staggering arrival times will help smooth the peak curve and encourage more flexible rostering practices. Some simple ways to shift arrival and departure times outside of the peak could be changing outlook default office hours or asking staff to schedule meetings only during the core hours 10am – 3pm.

Promote discounted off-peak travel fares on public transport and trip planning tools

Staff that need to go into the office and travel by public transport can save money on their commute by retiming their day and travelling outside of the morning and afternoon peak periods.

Transport for NSW has introduced a temporary 50% discount on Opal fares for off-peak travel from 6 July for three months. Peak periods are now:

- 6:30am-10am on Sydney Trains, Sydney Metro, light rail and bus
- 6am-10am on Intercity Trains
- 3pm-7pm on Sydney Trains, Intercity Trains, Sydney Metro, light rail and bus

Staff can see when peak times are in their area by using the **Travel Insights** tool and can check the details (including the capacity of services with physical distancing measures in place) of their service on the days they need to travel to the office using the **Opal** app or any TfNSW endorsed app.

Establish incentives for arriving outside of peak hours

Consider partnering with your local coffee shop to give a discount on their regular morning coffees to staff who arrive outside peak times.

Use visual cues

For example, “traffic light” signs could be placed at a building security desk to show green with “thank you” during off-peak times and red with “change your travel time” during peak times.

Simplify the process around flexible working arrangements

Make the process simple for staff to set up their working from home arrangements or rosters within teams. Set up a shareable roster so teams are aware of everyone’s whereabouts and allocated WFH days.



Walk or ride a bike for shorter trips

Make it easy and attractive

Draw attention to existing bicycle/walking routes

Use your internal communication channels to feature active transport modes and their benefits. You could include an image featuring a train station or a local central area with the caption: “from here it’s only a 20 minute ride to the CBD”. Support this with a local area map of the bicycle/walking routes.

Highlight the benefits of active transport

Incorporating active transport modes into regular commutes has obvious health benefits but also possible time saving benefits. Through visuals or targeted messaging highlight some of the key benefits such as ‘walking can help you reach a personal daily step goal’ or ‘riding a bike can be quicker than driving in busy centres’.

Make it social

Run a competition to encourage uptake of active transport

Encourage staff to incorporate active transport modes like walking or riding a bike into their commute by making it fun and competitive. You could run a “September” – style competition, where staff compete for the longest distances walked during commuting hours and offer monthly rewards. You could take part in **September** or **Biketober** this year where all the organisation has been done for you.

For more information contact the Travel Choices team travelchoices@transport.nsw.gov.au

We have also prepared print and digital artwork files, as well as an image library for use across various platforms to support these and other activation activities. These files can be downloaded directly from our Dropbox. Folder is called **COVIDSafe Communication Resources**

(1) Interventions like leader boards have been shown to increase behaviours related to quantitative goals, such as amount of time in the office

ii Cerasoli, C. P., Nicklin, J. M. and Ford, M. T. (2014), ‘Intrinsic motivation and extrinsic incentives jointly predict performance: a 40-year meta-analysis’, *Psychological Bulletin*, 140, 4, 980-1008. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2014-03897-001>

(2) Use of prosocial messaging, where a behaviour is linked to the wellbeing of others, has been shown to increase intention to perform a behaviour. Li, M., Taylor, E. G., Atkins, K. E., Chapman, G. B., & Galvani, A. P. (2016). Stimulating Influenza Vaccination via Prosocial Motives. *PLoS one*, 11(7), e0159780. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0159780>