

# Commute Ease

## ***Answer Book***

*Your guide to our Section 132(f) qualified  
transportation plan administration.*

Employee  
**Benefits**  
Corporation



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### Welcome to the CommuteEase Answer Book!

The information in this book is intended to answer general questions about your CommuteEase administration and may not provide exact or detailed information for specific situations. For help with detailed questions, please contact your Client Service Consultant to ensure a proper answer or result.

*The CommuteEase Answer Book* is not intended to replace your established procedures, but to supplement them. You are encouraged to develop and establish procedures that address your in-house CommuteEase processes.

The book is based upon our interpretation of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) and guidance from our legal counsel. At any point you may wish to seek legal advice from your own legal counsel.

**We hope you find this information helpful.**

### CommuteEase and Employee Benefits Corporation in Detail

Employee Benefits Corporation administers your CommuteEase plan and is available throughout the year to offer assistance to you and your employees.

#### About CommuteEase

CommuteEase is a Section 132(f) qualified transportation fringe benefit plan that, in accordance with IRS guidelines, allows employers to provide pre-tax benefits to employees for certain work-related commuting expenses. The money an employee chooses to contribute to their CommuteEase account(s) (up to the monthly statutory limit) is not counted as taxable income when the employee's gross pay is taxed, so the employee pays less in taxes.

CommuteEase is made up of two available benefits, with each benefit covering different types of commuting expenses. **Transit** allows employees to pay for mass transit fares and passes and expenses related to vanpooling. **Parking** allows employees to either pay their parking provider directly or receive reimbursement for their parking expenses. These are **pre-tax accounts**. Please refer to your *Plan Adoption Agreement* to determine which benefits your company has selected to offer its employees.

We provide you with all the necessary documents for CommuteEase and a streamlined process for your employees to schedule contributions, pay for eligible expenses using the Benefits Card, view account balances and transactions, submit parking claims, and more. We also provide examples of the types of invoices you receive and some basic information on the plan to get you started.

#### About Employee Benefits Corporation

We are a third-party benefits administrator that provides your company's benefits administration. We manage your company's commuter plan under CommuteEase.

We began administering Section 125 cafeteria plans in 1989 and expanded into other related areas, including Section 105 Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) administration, Section 132(f) commuter benefits, and COBRA administration.



# Our Website and Your Online Account

## About Our Website | [www.ebcflex.com](http://www.ebcflex.com)

Our website and your online account are there to provide you the information and account details you need to manage CommuteEase.

You can securely log into your online account and view a variety of detailed account information, including your invoices and funding, participant usage, downloadable forms and reports specific to your plan design, and more. It's a convenient, one-stop shop for CommuteEase needs, and always available.

Without registering or logging in, you can also view news updates, product updates, and general Employee Benefits Corporation information.

## Employee Benefits Corporation's Website in Detail

### Website Address

Our website is located at [www.ebcflex.com](http://www.ebcflex.com).

### Your Online Account

Your online account is your employer account management portal. It lets you monitor your account, review invoices and payments, download forms and materials, enroll and

remove plan participants, and generate important reports. It is a convenient—and secure—way for you to manage CommuteEase.

You can access your online account at any time. Employee Benefits Corporation sends an activation email that helps you create your username and password. Please contact your Client Service Consultant if you did not receive your activation email.

If you already are a client of Employee Benefits Corporation, you previously created your username and password. You should continue to use the same login credentials.

### Main Features of Your Online Account

Your online account is the easiest way for you to review your information. There are a variety of useful features at your disposal. The following is a general description of the main sections of your online account.

- **Account Access**

Once you log in, you see basic information regarding your plan, as well as a variety of links to further details.

- **Account Settings**

The main *Account Settings* page allows you to review the set up of your account. Click *Administration > View Account Settings* to view payroll schedules, billing schedules, bank accounts, divisions, contacts, and billing settings.

- **Invoicing and Payments**

The *Fee Invoices* and *Funding Requests* pages list the different types of invoices your company receives for any and all plans, including administrative fees and funding requests.

- **Plan Information**

Your company's plan design information is readily available, whether you want to print copies of *My Company Plan* or if you simply need a reminder of your plan's eligibility requirements, on the *CommuteEase Plan Information* page.

- **Forms and Materials**

You can download materials and forms relevant to your CommuteEase plan and plan design. Simply go to *Resources > Forms and Materials* and click the CommuteEase logo.

### • Manage Participants

*Manage Participants* lets you enroll or terminate participants online, conveniently, and securely, with no faxing required. *Manage Participants* validates your data and provides you with a confirmation of the change online quickly. Your participant's record is updated automatically and you can print a copy for your records.

### How To: Use the Secure File Uploader

Use these instructions to submit files using our secure file uploader:

1. Save the file you would like to upload on your computer
2. Log into your online account at [www.ebcflex.com](http://www.ebcflex.com)
3. From the menu, click *Resources > Upload Files*
4. Select the type of file you would like to upload from the drop-down list
5. Click *Browse* to locate the file saved on your computer
6. Click *Upload file*

### Participant Online Accounts

Participants log into their [www.ebcflex.com](http://www.ebcflex.com) accounts to access their CommuteEase information. This is where participants manage upcoming contributions, view balances and transactions, and submit parking claims.

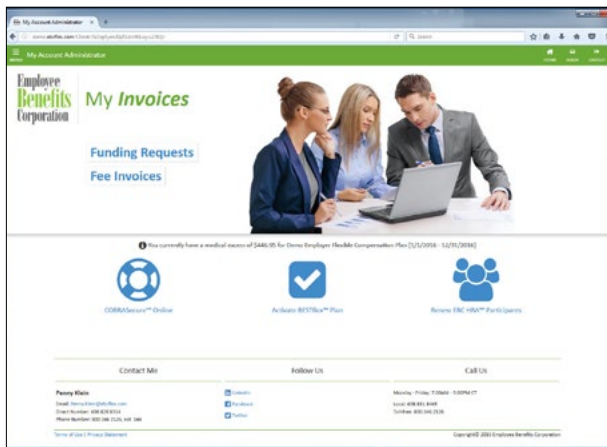
Participants can also download a copy of *My Company Plan* and their *Summary Plan Description*, manage their account username and password, and update their contact information.

### Participant Online Account Activation Instructions

Participants follow these steps to activate their online account.

1. Go to [www.ebcflex.com](http://www.ebcflex.com)
2. Click *Log In > Participants*
3. Click *Register* and follow the registration instructions

After following the registration instructions, participants receive their temporary password via email within minutes. Then, they can log on and securely access their account information.



Access your employer account management portal online at [www.ebcflex.com](http://www.ebcflex.com).



# Important CommuteEase Plan Documents

## About Important CommuteEase Plan Documents

We provide these documents online to help you manage and communicate how your plan works. To download these documents, log into your online account and click *Resources > Forms and Materials*.

## Important CommuteEase Plan Documents in Detail

### Plan Document

The *Plan Document* is the outline of your plan and should be followed according to the specified plan setup. This document supersedes the *Summary Plan Description (SPD)* or any other reference materials you may receive.

- Keep your *Plan Document* available
- Use it as a reference tool

### CommuteEase Plan Adoption Agreement and Service Agreement

The *CommuteEase Plan Adoption Agreement* goes hand in hand with your *Plan Document*. This agreement explains the specific design of your plan. It lists the accounts that are available and the parameters of the plan.

The eligibility requirements of the plan are established in the *Plan Adoption Agreement*. This includes minimum hourly requirements, waiting period(s) and other eligibility information.

The *CommuteEase Service Agreement* is a legal contract to provide service related to the administration of CommuteEase. Fees, funding, responsibilities, and agreed-upon services are outlined in this document.

Please keep a copy of your signed *Plan Adoption Agreement* and *Service Agreement*.

### Summary Plan Description

The *Summary Plan Description (SPD)* is the participant's guide to the plan. It explains how the plan works, as well as its various guidelines and rules. Participants can reference the SPD throughout the life of CommuteEase.

When your plan is set up, you may either print and distribute or electronically distribute the SPD.

### My Company Plan

*My Company Plan* is the appendix to the SPD. It details the specific parameters of CommuteEase for participants.

You can download a new copy of *My Company Plan* through your online account. It should be copied and distributed to eligible employees. If you would like to make changes to your

CommuteEase plan, please call or email Client Services to obtain an amendment form and updated documents.

## Important CommuteEase Plan Documents Online

### How To: Download Documents Online

The current version of these – and many other – documents are available for download in your online account.

1. Log into your account at [www.ebcflex.com](http://www.ebcflex.com)
2. Open the menu and click *Resources > Forms and Materials*
3. On the page that opens, click CommuteEase

Click the name of a form to view and download it .

### How To: Download My Company Plan

You can always download a copy of *My Company Plan* through your online account. Open the menu and click *Plan Information > CommuteEase*.

When the CommuteEase page opens, click *Download My Company Plan*.



# CommuteEase Eligibility

## About CommuteEase Eligibility

We provide tools to help you set up your eligible employees as well as information you can share with new hires or employees who may become eligible at a later date.

The *CommuteEase Employee Eligibility File* is provided to you during set up to collect a listing of your employees who are eligible to participate in CommuteEase. Once you have completed the spreadsheet and returned it, your employees have online access to set up and manage contributions to their CommuteEase accounts.

Unlike many other benefits, there are no enrollment forms or payroll deduction authorization forms. All of these steps are completed in one simple online process.

Once your plan is up and running, log into your online account and use *Manage Participants* to inform us of newly-eligible employees.

## CommuteEase Participant Informational and Educational Materials

### CommuteEase Participant Materials

When you first begin CommuteEase and when new hires become eligible, we provide materials to help your

employees understand the benefits of CommuteEase. Employees should receive a *Summary Plan Description (SPD)* and a copy of *My Company Plan*. You can also access our online toolkit to download flyers, posters, and email templates. Visit [www.ebcflex.com/CommuterToolkit](http://www.ebcflex.com/CommuterToolkit) to view and download resources.

If your employee chooses not to set up contributions to their CommuteEase account(s) when they first become eligible, they can enroll for a future month as long as they remain eligible for the benefit.

## New Plan Eligibility File

### New Plan Eligibility File

When submitting the *CommuteEase Employee Eligibility File* it is very important that you enter employee information correctly. Please reference the sample employee we provide in the spreadsheet for the correct format. It is important to note that submitting this file does NOT set up contributions. Employees need to schedule contributions themselves in a separate step.

## A. Download the CommuteEase Employee Eligibility File

1. Log into [www.ebcflex.com](http://www.ebcflex.com)
2. Open the menu and click *Resources > Forms and Materials*
3. Click *CommuteEase*
4. Click *CommuteEase Employee Eligibility File*

## B. Complete the CommuteEase Employee Eligibility File

Only enter employees eligible to participate in CommuteEase. Use the sample employee as a guide.

## C. Complete the Balance Worksheet

If you offered a qualified transportation fringe benefit plan prior to adopting CommuteEase, some of your employees may have a balance on the prior plan. Complete the *Balance Worksheet* tab of the *CommuteEase Employee Eligibility File* for any employees with a transit or parking balance from the prior plan. This information is applied to the individual employee accounts as a pre-tax transit or parking balance. After these funds are applied, they will display as an adjustment on your next *CommuteEase Funding Invoice* to distinguish from your employees' upcoming scheduled contributions that you will need to deduct from

payroll. It is important to note that submitting a balance does NOT schedule future contributions.

If your participants need to use prior plan funds to pay for or be reimbursed for commuter expenses prior to your effective date with us, they must do so with the prior administrator before balance information is transferred to us. Employers are encouraged to have participants use up balances prior to transitioning to CommuteEase to avoid any issues where funds were withheld to pay for previous expenses.

### How To: Complete and Upload the Eligibility File Spreadsheet

1. Save the completed *CommuteEase Employee Eligibility File* spreadsheet on your computer
2. Log into [www.ebcflex.com](http://www.ebcflex.com)
3. Open the menu and click *Resources > Upload Files*
4. Click *Enrollment/Election Changes* in the drop-down list
5. Use the *Browse* button to locate the *CommuteEase Employee Eligibility File* saved on your computer
6. Click *Upload file*

## Mid-Year New Hires

### New Hires in Detail

Your company's eligibility requirements are defined in your *CommuteEase Plan Adoption Agreement* and *My Company Plan*. Your company may hire new employees who, based on your plan design, become eligible to participate in CommuteEase. In the month before your new hire becomes eligible, you must submit them via *Manage Participants* so they can schedule a contribution for the next month. If you have a large volume of newly eligible mid-year hires, you may submit them at once using the *CommuteEase Employee Eligibility File* spreadsheet.

If your employee chooses not to schedule a contribution to their transit and/or parking account(s) when they first become eligible, they can enroll for a future month as long as they remain eligible for the benefit.

### Supplying CommuteEase Materials

Newly eligible employees should receive copies of the *Summary Plan Description (SPD)* and *My Company Plan* to fully understand the benefits of CommuteEase.

Once the employee's information is received, they have access to schedule contributions to their transit and/or parking account(s) online.

## Plan Eligibility Review

After your *CommuteEase Employee Eligibility File* has been processed, you are responsible for maintaining an accurate listing of eligible employees in our system. As the employer, you have complete control over which employees are eligible for CommuteEase. This can be accomplished by using *Manage Participants*, accessible through your online account, an easy-to-use, convenient tool for enrolling or terminating employees in the plan.

CommuteEase works differently from the other benefits that we offer. As the employer, you enroll employees into the plan the month before they become eligible to participate. Enrolling employees in CommuteEase grants them the ability to set up contributions to their transit and/or parking account(s) through their online account. Please keep in mind that even though you may enroll an employee in CommuteEase, this does not necessarily mean that the employee will set up contributions and have payroll deductions. Because of this, you may have employees enrolled in CommuteEase that never use the benefit.

Please note that it is important to periodically review your eligible participants, participants in the 90-day runout period for parking claims, and terminated employees in *Manage*

*Participants*. To do this, click *View Participants*. This page lists all eligible participants, not just those that have set up contributions to their CommuteEase accounts. Please refer to *View Participants* to determine if there are participants that are no longer eligible or if there are eligible employees not listed. If you need assistance or have a question, please contact Client Services for help.

## Manage Participants

*Manage Participants* enables you to add newly eligible employees conveniently and securely online once your CommuteEase plan has been established. *Manage Participants* provides you with confirmation when you make updates. Your employee records are updated automatically and you can print a copy for your records.

You can also use *Manage Participants* to terminate employees when they are no longer eligible to participate in CommuteEase. For more information about terminating employees, refer to the *Termination of Participants* section of this document.

### How To: Use Manage Participants to Enroll a Newly Eligible Employee Online

To start, log into your online account at [www.ebcflex.com](http://www.ebcflex.com).

1. Open the menu and click *Manage Participants > Enroll Participants*
2. Enter the employee's personal and contact information, then click *Next*
3. Enter the plan information, then click *Add Plan*
4. Once all plan information has been added, click *Next*
5. Enter the employee's reimbursement method, then click *Next*
6. Verify the plan information is correct and click *Submit*

## Eligibility and Termination Files

If you are an employer who is adding a large number of new hires or terminations, you may choose to send a *CommuteEase Employee Eligibility File* or *CommuteEase Employee Termination File* spreadsheet instead of using *Manage Participants*. Both spreadsheets can be found on the *Forms and Materials* page under CommuteEase.

## FAQs

### Q. Who can participate in CommuteEase?

A. Only eligible employees may participate in CommuteEase. Please refer to the *Plan Adoption Agreement* or *My Company Plan* for eligibility requirements. Partners in a partnership, sole proprietors, and more-than-2% shareholders of a Subchapter S corporation are considered to be self-employed individuals and are not eligible to participate in CommuteEase. In addition, any spouses and lineal ascendants and descendants of the more-than-2% shareholders in the Subchapter S corporation are also not eligible to participate. This includes children, grandchildren, parents, and grandparents.

### Q. What methods are available to notify Employee Benefits Corporation of a newly eligible employee?

A. You notify us of newly eligible employees via the *CommuteEase Employee Eligibility File* or through our online *Manage Participants* tool. *Manage Participants* lets you add eligible participants online, conveniently and securely.

### Q. When must I provide a new employee's information to Employee Benefits Corporation to allow the employee enough time to set up a contribution?

A. We recommend that you provide employee eligibility data at least one month prior to the first benefit month. For example, if an employee wishes to use CommuteEase funds to pay for eligible commuter expenses for January, you need to provide eligibility information to us no later than December 1st. This will allow the employee time to schedule a contribution prior to the December 13th cutoff.

### Q. How can my employees save money with this benefit?

A. Employees are not required to pay income, Social Security, or FICA taxes on money that is used to pay for commuting expenses up to the statutory limit. Assuming a combined tax rate of 30%, participants can save more than \$375 per year on transit expenses of \$1,260. They can save another \$720 per year on parking expenses of \$2,400. That's like getting over three months for free!

### Q. What other benefits does CommuteEase give my employees?

A. In addition to the tax savings, your employees benefit from the convenience of having their funds loaded onto the Benefits Card, a prepaid debit card which they can use to pay for eligible expenses. Employees can also set up recurring contributions, so they don't have to do anything until they want to cancel it or make a change.



## Termination of Participants

### About Termination of Participants

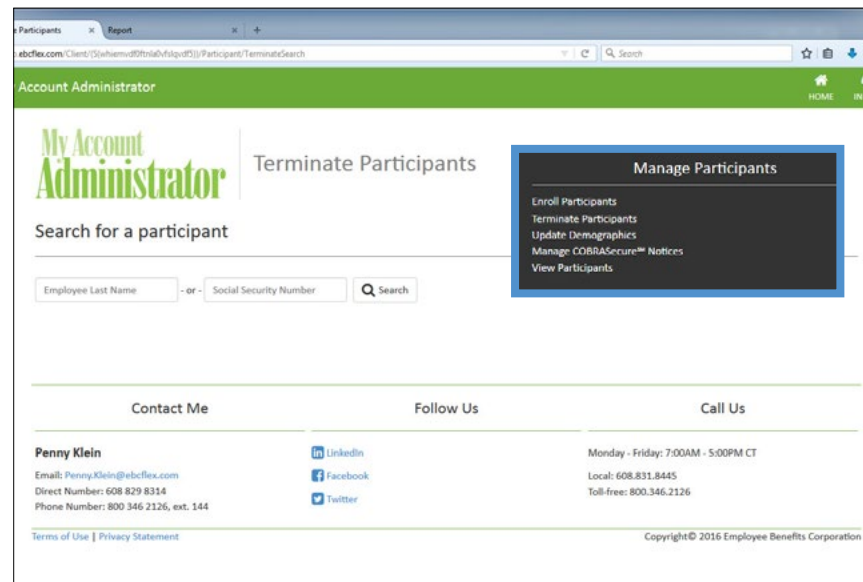
Throughout the year, CommuteEase participants may terminate their employment with your company or otherwise lose eligibility for CommuteEase, and, in turn, end their participation in the plan. You must take a few steps to notify us of the terminated participant.

**You still need to notify us if an employee terminates who is eligible for CommuteEase even if that employee has never made a contribution to a CommuteEase account.**

Employers are invoiced monthly administration fees based on the number of participants. For the purposes of monthly fees, a participant is defined as someone who has a parking or transit balance on their Benefits Card, has set up a contribution within the current calendar year, or has recently lost eligibility but is within their 90-day parking claims runout period.

Employers must notify us to avoid incurring monthly fees for terminated employees.

Participants with a parking account have 90 days to submit parking claims online for qualified expenses incurred or paid



*Manage Participants allows employers to enroll, terminate, and manage employee accounts online.*

before the date of termination or loss of eligibility.

The Benefits Card is shut off as of the date of termination. If the termination date is in the past, the Benefits Card is shut off as of the date the termination is processed.

## Manage Participants

### Termination of an Employee

When you become aware of a CommuteEase participant terminating employment, log into your [www.ebcflex.com](http://www.ebcflex.com) online account and click *Manage Participants > Terminate Participants* in the menu.

*Manage Participants* allows you to terminate participants online, conveniently and securely. *Manage Participants* validates your data and provides you with a confirmation of the change. Your participant's record is updated automatically and you can print a copy for your records.

Employees who terminate employment or who lose eligibility for CommuteEase must be terminated through *Manage Participants*, via the *CommuteEase Employee Termination File* spreadsheet, or via EDI file. Failure to terminate the employee will result in the employee having access to manage upcoming contributions online, as well as access to funds on their Benefits Card. In addition, you will continue to be invoiced a monthly fee as long as the employee remains active and has scheduled a contribution.

#### How To: Use Manage Participants to Terminate an Account

To start, log into your online account at [www.ebcflex.com](http://www.ebcflex.com).

1. From the menu, click *Manage Participants > Terminate Participants*
2. Enter the employee's last name or Social Security number

3. Click the name of the participant you wish to terminate
4. Check the *Terminate Plan* box for the plan you wish to terminate and enter an end date for the participant, then click *Next*
5. Review the information and click *Submit*

Note that it is not necessary to send any termination information to Employee Benefits Corporation via additional methods if you use the *Manage Participants* tool.

If you have any questions regarding termination, please contact your dedicated Client Service Consultant.

### CommuteEase Employee Termination File

If you have a large volume of terminations to process at one time, you may submit them at once using the *CommuteEase Employee Termination File* (available on the *CommuteEase Forms and Materials* page). When submitting this file to Employee Benefits Corporation, it is very important that you enter all the employee information correctly.

#### A. Download the CommuteEase Employee Termination File

1. Log into [www.ebcflex.com](http://www.ebcflex.com)
2. Click *Resources > Forms and Materials*
3. Click *CommuteEase Employee Termination File*

#### B. Complete and Upload the CommuteEase Employee Termination File

Enter only terminated employees in the spreadsheet. Enter all the information using the sample employee as a guide and upload the file.

### Contribution Impact

Your employee's termination date may have an impact on contributions. If the employee's termination date is after the 14th of the current month, contributions will already be processed and fulfillment cannot be stopped for the following benefit month. You should withhold the entire contribution amount on or before the participant's last payroll date, based on the information in the *CommuteEase Funding Invoice*.

To enable a smooth participant experience, funds are loaded onto participants' Benefits Cards prior to the applicable benefit month. If you enter a participant termination after their funds were loaded for the upcoming benefit month, Employee Benefits Corporation can't prevent access to or recover those funds.

## FAQs

### Q. What happens if a terminated participant is rehired?

A. A former CommuteEase participant who is rehired must complete the waiting period, if any, before they are eligible to participate again.

### Q. What happens if a terminated participant has spent more transportation funds than have actually been deducted from the participant's salary?

A. You may take the additional amount out of the employee's last paycheck.

### Q. Do I have to terminate an employee if he or she never contributed to a CommuteEase account?

A. Yes. You still need to notify us if an employee terminates who was eligible for CommuteEase.

***Q. Is there a form I can use to terminate a CommuteEase participant?***

A. We provide *Manage Participants* as a convenient, online tool to terminate your participants. You may also terminate CommuteEase participants via the *CommuteEase Employee Termination File* spreadsheet, or via an EDI file.

***Q. What happens if a terminated participant has a remaining transit balance after termination?***

A. The remaining balance is returned to you through your next *CommuteEase Funding Invoice*. Any pre-tax funds are forfeited by the participant and any post-tax funds should be returned to the participant.

***Q. What happens if a terminated participant has a remaining parking balance after termination?***

A. Terminated participants with a remaining parking balance after termination can submit claims for eligible parking expenses for up to 90 days after their termination, as long as the expense was incurred prior to the termination date. The remaining balance is returned to you through your next *CommuteEase Funding Invoice* following the 90-day parking claims runout period. Any pre-tax funds are forfeited by the participant and any post-tax funds should be returned to the participant.



## CommuteEase Accounts

### About CommuteEase Accounts

CommuteEase is a collection of commuter-related accounts and offerings to provide your employees the most comprehensive, easy-to-use commuter benefit plan possible. Each commuter account provides your employees a pre-tax benefit to commute to and from work.

Benefits offered under CommuteEase are different than many of the other benefits you offer to your employees. First, CommuteEase accounts are administered on a monthly basis. Your other benefits are often maintained on a plan year or calendar year basis. Second, due to this monthly record keeping, your employees are able to tailor this benefit to their needs. If their needs change month to month, they can make changes to their scheduled contributions through their online account.

### Transit

Transit accounts allow employees to set aside pre-tax funds to pay for eligible transit-related expenses to travel to and from work. There are two types of eligible transit expenses: mass transit expenses and commuter highway vehicle expenses.

The IRS establishes a maximum amount of money that may be payroll deducted on a pre-tax basis in any given month.

Your employees can use transit funds on their Benefits Card to purchase transit passes or similar fare media that entitle them to transportation. Common types of transit passes include passes, tokens, fare cards, and smart cards. These passes can then be used with mass transit authorities such as buses, trains, subways, tram cars, and ferries.

The transit account includes vanpooling, which allows your employees to use their Benefits Card to purchase rides in a commuter highway vehicle, also known as vanpool. The vehicle can be publicly or privately owned. The vanpool vehicle must have a seating capacity of at least six adults (excluding the driver) and, if the vanpool is run by you or your employees, at least 80% of the miles must be to and from a place of work and on trips where the vehicle is at least half full (excluding the driver).

Participants log into their account at [www.ebcflex.com](http://www.ebcflex.com) to manage contributions to their transit account. Contributions are loaded onto the Benefits Card, a prepaid debit card that can be used to make eligible purchases wherever MasterCard is accepted. They can swipe their card or use it to pay for eligible expenses online.

### Parking

The parking account allows employees to pay for certain parking expenses for parking at or near their place of employment or expenses incurred to park at a location from which the employee commutes to work.

The IRS establishes a maximum amount of money that may be payroll deducted and reimbursed on a pre-tax basis in any given month.

Participants log into their account at [www.ebcflex.com](http://www.ebcflex.com) to manage contributions to their parking account. Contributions are loaded onto the Benefits Card, a prepaid debit card that can be used to make eligible purchases wherever MasterCard is accepted. They can swipe their card or use it to pay for eligible expenses online.

If an employee's parking provider doesn't accept cards, they can submit a parking claim online to get reimbursed from their parking account.

### Parking Claims

If the employee's parking provider doesn't accept cards, they still schedule contributions through the same online account and funds are put into their parking account. Once they have incurred out-of-pocket qualified parking expenses, they complete a parking claim online and submit it along

with receipts, if the provider provides receipts. If the parking provider does not provide receipts, the employee can certify that the expense was eligible and we can process the claim without a receipt.

Receipts must clearly indicate that the expense was for parking and include the provider's name, date of expense, and amount of the expense.

We can only accept parking claims for expenses incurred after the individual's CommuteEase effective date. If participants have parking expenses for reimbursement prior to that date, they must file their parking claim with the prior administrator.

We accept parking expenses incurred within the past 180 days as long as all other reimbursement requirements are met; however, we recommend that participants submit parking claims monthly to avoid missing a submission deadline.

### **Employer-Provided Parking**

Employer-provided parking accounts are used when the employer provides parking to its employees. This type of account allows employees to pay for parking with pre-tax salary reductions. The employer keeps those deductions to pay for onsite parking. Employees have no other additional steps with this option.

## **FAQs**

### ***Q. Are taxi expenses eligible?***

A. Taxis are not considered mass transit and are therefore not an eligible commuter expense.

### ***Q. Can participants use the transit account to pay for an EZ Pass or other toll pass?***

A. Participant expenses to drive their own vehicle or to carpool are not eligible under CommuteEase. Since the cost of the toll pass is an expense associated with driving, and not mass transit, this is not an eligible expense.

### ***Q. What commuter expenses can participants pay for with pre-tax dollars?***

A. Public transportation, vanpools or commuter highway vehicles, and parking at or near their place of employment are all eligible pre-tax expenses. In addition, parking at a location from which participants commute to work, including by public transit, vanpool, or carpool, is also an eligible expense.

### ***Q. What expenses are not included in CommuteEase?***

A. Under the law, mileage, tolls, fuel, and carpooling are not part of this program. Business travel and other reimbursed expenses are not eligible.



# CommuteEase Contributions

## About CommuteEase Contributions

Employees use a simple online tool to schedule contributions to their CommuteEase accounts. Employees then use their Benefits Card to pay for eligible commuter expenses. With CommuteEase, you don't have to maintain a supply of physical transit passes.

## Contributions

CommuteEase is unique because the employee's contributions are set up for one-month periods of coverage. An employee can choose to have their contribution carry forward and remain in effect from month to month by setting the recurring option in their online account.

Contributions to CommuteEase are set up through the participant's online account at [www.ebcflex.com](http://www.ebcflex.com). This is different from many other benefits where you must first complete an enrollment form and make an annual election prior to the start of the plan. With CommuteEase, both the enrollment process and the contribution scheduling process are completed in one easy step.

Statutory limits are established by the IRS and generally change on January 1st. During the year, participants may increase or decrease the amount of pre-tax money they set aside for commuting costs as long as they do not exceed the IRS established limit. Employers are notified annually if there are changes to the indexed amounts.

## Post-Tax Contributions

In some metropolitan areas, the cost to commute to and from work may exceed the monthly pre-tax statutory limits set by the IRS. Employers may allow participants to set up post-tax contributions to their CommuteEase accounts to pay for eligible transit and parking expenses. Please refer to your *Plan Adoption Agreement* or *My Company Plan* for your plan details.

Employers who choose this option deduct pre-tax contribution amounts up to the monthly limit. Excess amounts must be withheld on a post-tax basis. Both the pre-tax and post-tax amounts are transferred to Employee Benefits Corporation and loaded onto the participant's Benefits Card.

## Deadline to Schedule Contributions

All contributions must be scheduled no later than 11:59 p.m. Central time on the 13th of the month prior to the benefit month. If the participant doesn't meet this deadline, they will not receive commuter benefits for the upcoming benefit month.

**Example 1:** Sally uses her local metro system to get to and from work. She needs to order her transit pass for May. Sally must set up a contribution in her online account no later than 11:59 p.m. Central time on April 13th to load her Benefits Card by May 1st, which she can then use to buy her transit pass.

**Example 2:** Frank pays for parking in a lot near his place of employment. Frank's next month of parking benefits is for August. Frank must place his order no later than 11:59 p.m. Central time on July 13th to have payment loaded to his card, which he can then use to pay his parking provider.

If an employee forgets to set up a contribution by the 13th of the prior month and does not have a balance on their Benefits Card, they will not be able to use CommuteEase funds to pay for their commuter-related expenses for the upcoming benefit month. The employee will need to pay for eligible commuter expenses using after-tax dollars paid from their own personal account.

Benefits Card balances roll over each month. If an employee has a balance in their account, they can use previous months' contributions to pay for eligible commuter expenses, regardless of whether they set up a contribution for that month.

### How To: Schedule a Contribution

To schedule a contribution, participants log into their online account and click *Manage CommuteEase Contributions*. They are taken to the flow to schedule their contribution. They simply select the CommuteEase account(s) they want to contribute to, enter the amount they need for the upcoming benefit month, and submit!

### How To: Edit Recurring Contributions

Your employees also have the option to edit their recurring contributions. To edit a recurring contribution, they go back into *Manage CommuteEase Contributions*, and edit the amount and/or change from recurring to one-time as needed.

### How To: Delete a Scheduled Contribution

An employee may realize they made an error when setting up their contribution, or they may not need a recurring contribution for the upcoming benefit month. They simply go back into *Manage CommuteEase Contributions*, uncheck the box next to the account that they don't want to contribute to for the upcoming benefit month, and submit their contribution for \$0. Should they need CommuteEase funds in the future, they can go in and set up a new contribution at any time.

## FAQs

### Q. Do my employees have to select how much they want to put aside for commuter benefits during open enrollment?

A. No. The commuter benefit is a monthly benefit and eligible employees can enroll or decide not to participate at any time during the course of the year. There is no annual election amount to decide upon because the pre-tax limits set by the IRS are the maximum amounts that participants can use during the course of one month.

### Q. How do my employees load their Benefits Card?

A. Participants load their Benefits Card for the upcoming month by scheduling a contribution online. Once the scheduled contribution is processed, it is loaded onto the Benefits Card and ready to use.

### Q. Do my employees have to remember to schedule their contributions each month?

A. Your employees can set up a recurring contribution, meaning the same contribution amount will automatically process each month until the employee cancels it in their online account or is no longer eligible for the benefit. We send the employee an email each month to the email address on their account reminding them that they have a recurring contribution, and prompting them to log in if they need to make changes.

### Q. What happens if an employee misses the deadline to schedule a contribution?

A. If your employee has a rollover balance from a previous month, they can use that money to pay for this month's expenses. If they don't have an existing balance, they will have to make a purchase with after-tax dollars on their own. They won't be able to take advantage of CommuteEase that month.

### Q. Who pays a service fee if one is charged by the transit authority?

A. The participant is responsible for paying any service fees.



# CommuteEase Invoicing and Payments

## About CommuteEase Invoicing and Payments

Throughout our administration of CommuteEase, you receive invoices that request the funds needed to administer CommuteEase and fund your participants' contribution elections and reimbursements.

Comprehensive invoice details and payment information can be found in your online account.

## CommuteEase Invoicing and Payments in Detail

### Monthly Administration Fee Invoices

We charge a monthly administration fee for services provided to participants. A participant is defined as someone who meets one or more of the following requirements:

- Has a current parking or transit balance on their Benefits Card
- Scheduled a CommuteEase contribution at any time in the current calendar year
- Recently lost eligibility but is within their 90-day parking claims runoff period.

See the *Fees* section of your *Service Agreement* for the monthly participant administration fee amount.

We generate a *Monthly Administration Fee Invoice* around the 15th of every month which reflects charges for participants as defined above for that benefit month. For example, the invoice that generates on January 15th reflects charges for participants who meet the above definition of a participant for the benefit month of January (e.g., employees who scheduled a contribution for January prior to December 13th). Payment is due on the first day of the following month. Failure to pay this invoice could result in participants not having access to their CommuteEase contributions.

### CommuteEase Funding Invoice

On or around the 15th of each month we generate a *CommuteEase Funding Invoice* that reflects charges for the contributions employees have scheduled for the upcoming benefits month, as well as adjustments. An email notification of the invoice is sent to an address specified by the employer.

Invoices can be found in your online account by opening the menu and clicking *Invoices > Funding Requests*.

## Submit Payment to Employee Benefits Corporation

### Payment methods

**Auto-Debit:** We automatically debit your bank account for the amount of the invoice. Auto-debit is a convenient method of payment that ensures we receive your payment on time. Before each auto-debit, you will receive an email notification that indicates the date and amount of the debit. This option is available for *CommuteEase Funding Invoices* and *Monthly Administration Fee Invoices*.

**Check:** You may submit payment to us in the form of a check. This option is available only for *Monthly Administration Fee Invoices*.

## CommuteEase Invoices and Payments Online

### How To: Access CommuteEase Funding Invoices and Payments Online

1. Log into your [www.ebcflex.com](http://www.ebcflex.com) account
2. Open the menu and click *Invoices > Funding Requests*

The *Funding Requests* page lists the different types of funding invoices your company receives for any and all plans. If you have multiple plans, click *CommuteEase Funding*.

For any paid invoice, select the funding invoice in the table and see payment details in a drop down. Any outstanding invoice are highlighted in red. You can also access an invoice PDF or an invoice details report from this page.



## Leaves of Absence

### About Leaves of Absence

There are several different types of leaves of absence that may affect an employee's employment and eligibility for benefits. If a participant is on an extended leave of absence, they may lose eligibility for CommuteEase.

### Leaves of Absence in Detail

Regardless of the type of leave, you must notify us when an employee is no longer eligible for commuter benefits. Unlike many other employer-sponsored benefits, CommuteEase is not affected by the type of leave. Since this is not a medical benefit, leaves covered by the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) do not receive different treatment from leaves not covered by FMLA.

### Loss of Eligibility Due to Leave

When an employee is not eligible for CommuteEase due to a leave of absence, the employer must notify us. Failure to address employees on leave could result in the employer covering expenses that were incurred due to recurring contributions, but not utilized by the employee.

Once we are informed that an employee is on leave, the employee is considered inactive and is unable to schedule contributions.

### How To: Notify of Leave of Absence

1. If you have an employee who will be taking a leave of absence, you must notify us as soon as possible.
2. Email or call our Client Services team. You will need to provide the employee's name and the date the leave will begin. If you know the date the employee will return from leave, you may include that as well.
3. If the employee's return date is unknown, it is important you contact us as soon as you have confirmation of the employee's return-to-work date. Failure to notify us could result in the employee's inability to leverage CommuteEase for their eligible expenses upon their return.
4. Once you have provided notification of an employee's leave, it can take up to two business days to process the leave.

### FAQs

#### *Q. Why do I have to notify Employee Benefits Corporation of an employee's leave?*

- A. Failure to notify us could result in an employee receiving benefits they were not entitled to. Once notified, it may take up to two business days to process the leave and adjust

any pending contributions. Contributions that have already been processed cannot be stopped.

#### *Q. If I forget to notify Employee Benefits Corporation of an employee's leave and a contribution is processed, who is responsible to pay?*

- A. The employer is responsible to notify us of any participants who are on a leave of absence. Once notified, we cancel recurring contributions and stop any upcoming contributions that are not yet processed.

In some cases, the employee's scheduled contribution for an upcoming benefit month will have processed prior to notification of a leave. These funds will be returned to the employer.

#### *Q. What happens if the employee returns to work after the purchase deadline to schedule a contribution for the next benefit month?*

- A. All contributions must be scheduled by the 13th of the month prior to the benefit month. If an employee returns to work and is unable to set up a contribution by the 13th, the employee will not be able to have a CommuteEase contribution processed for the following month.



## Comparison to Other Benefits

### Comparison to The BESTflex<sup>SM</sup> Health Care Flexible Spending Account (FSA)

CommuteEase works differently than many other benefits you may offer your employees. To provide an illustration, we have provided a comparison to the BESTflex Health Care Flexible Spending Account (FSA).

The BESTflex Health Care FSA	CommuteEase
12 month period of coverage	<b>Monthly</b> period of coverage
Reimbursement based on incurred date	Reimbursement based on incurred <b>or paid date</b>
Uniform coverage rule	<b>No</b> uniform coverage rule
Possible carryover of unused funds	<b>Can carryover</b> unused funds as long as the plan is active
Elections are irrevocable	<b>Can change</b> contribution amounts monthly
Health Care FSA subject to HIPAA, COBRA, and ERISA	<b>Not subject</b> to HIPAA, COBRA, or ERISA