

# Choosing Paper or Online Surveying

All employers affected by the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) law are required to survey their employees every other year to measure changes in their employees' commute patterns. Employers have the choice of conducting the survey using paper forms or online. For instructions on conducting the survey, please read Guide to Paper Surveying or Guide to Online Surveying. This document is intended to help employers decide with method to use.

## The Online CTR Survey

Asks the same questions as the paper survey

Is an Internet-based, text-based system

Is on its own server that is hosted and managed by the Washington State Dept of Transportation (WSDOT), the same agency that runs the CTR program

Can handle substantial simultaneous hits

Includes tools for the ETC to track progress and improve response rate

Has the ability to include custom questions

## Security

Survey software resides on a server behind a physical and electronic firewall

Server has virus protection with daily automatic checks for updates

Nothing is installed on your system

## Privacy

Employees enter email addresses to access the survey

ETCs access individual employee surveys via their email addresses

Link between email and survey is broken when survey is closed out

No other use is made of the email addresses

WSDOT does not make the addresses available to others

## Employee Requirements

A large majority of employees have access to the Internet

A large majority of employees have a unique email address

## ETC Requirements

A list of actual email addresses for all of the employees to be surveyed

Ability to sort employee email addresses by worksite (multi-site employers only)

Ability to send bulk email messages to employees

Ability to transfer data between email and spreadsheet programs

Approval from management to use the online survey

Ability to communicate effectively by email with employees

Good working relationship with your organization's technical support staff

Participating in WCOG training for the online survey

Preparation

## **Test the Online Survey**

Go to <http://www.ctrsurvey.org>

Enter a mock email address using @abc.com as the domain

Select the test site "Survey Training Site" from the drop down box

Click the "Select" button

Complete survey questions

## **Making Your Decision**

Many ETCs find that distributing and collecting a large number of paper surveys, and preserving them in good condition for machine scanning is a significant challenge (refer to the Guide to Paper Surveying). With the online survey method, the Internet does the work of distributing and collecting the surveys, which is a real advantage for most ETCs.

Another consideration is that both survey methods require a 70% or greater response rate. The key to achieving a high response rate is to track surveys as they are completed and follow up with employees who haven't responded. The online survey includes survey tracking tools that make it easy to identify and send follow-up email messages to employees who haven't completed the survey. Note that other methods of following up with employees (such as asking department supervisors to remind employees about the survey) can be just as, if not more effective than email messages.

Consider the challenges you face in distributing and collecting surveys and achieving a high response rate. If the online system would help you meet those challenges, and if you can meet the requirements for using the online survey, then you should choose the online survey method.