

MISSION
ZERO

Reimagine your journey

Mission Zero's Low-carbon Commute Workbook

A guide to cutting carbon while looking after your employees

what is low-carbon employee commuting?

Low-carbon commuting refers to travelling to and from work using transport modes that produce little or no greenhouse gas emissions.

This includes walking, cycling (or other wheel-based active transport), public transport, carpooling, or using an electric vehicle. Working from home also counts, as it avoids commuting emissions altogether.

Compared to driving alone in a petrol or diesel vehicle, these alternatives significantly reduce the carbon footprint of daily travel. Low-carbon commuting also supports improved air quality, reduced traffic congestion, and better health outcomes.

For businesses, encouraging low-carbon commuting can cut Scope 3 emissions, reduce parking and transport costs, and demonstrate climate leadership. It's a practical, everyday way to contribute to a more sustainable, low-emissions future whilst also looking after your employees' wellbeing.

Why should organisations
care about how their
employees get to work?

why swap to low-carbon commuting?

Climate change is a fact.

Temperatures are rising, extreme weather events are becoming more frequent, and the future feels uncertain. What *is* certain is that we all need to cut our carbon emissions – fast.

For the average Nelsonian, commuting to work accounts for around 70% of their direct carbon emissions.* That means the daily trip to and from work is one of the biggest opportunities for change.

The good news? Switching to low-carbon commuting not only cuts emissions – it also improves health, saves money, reduces traffic, and strengthens communities.

For businesses, it's a win too: cutting Scope 3 emissions, an area of growing focus as organisations face new regulations and seek to reduce their full climate impact.

*Source: * rep.infometrics.co.nz = average Nelson household emissions p/p 1.3TCO₂e | MISSION ZERO 2024 commute survey = 0.92TCO₂e commute emissions p/p

“The air will be cleaner, you
will be healthier, there will be
less cancer, we will spend
less money on healthcare...
we will be safer”

John Kerry, former US special presidential envoy for climate change (2021-2024)

where are the opportunities?

Mission Zero's surveys – canvassing around 10 per cent of Nelson's paid workforce – show that 65% of commuters rely on high-carbon transport to get to and from work.

This presents a clear opportunity for businesses to support meaningful reductions in work-related emissions.

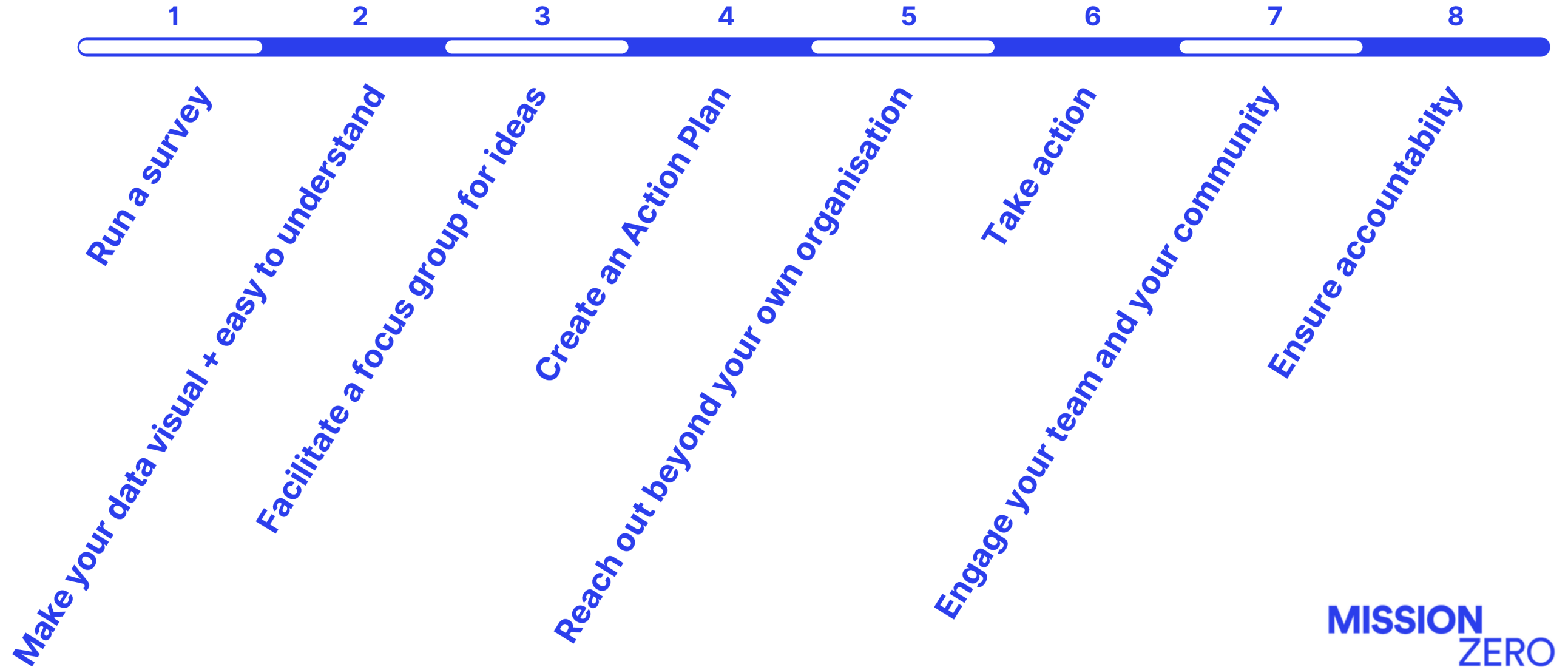
By encouraging employees to swap just one high-carbon commute per week for a low-carbon alternative, organisations can help significantly reduce individual carbon footprints.

Collectively, small changes like this can make a big difference – helping us work towards the 9% annual emissions reduction currently required under the Paris Agreement to stay on track through to 2030.

How do organisations encourage low-carbon commuting?

8 Steps to Success

8 Steps to success



1. Run a survey



Contact us for help
to run your employee
commute survey

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Understanding employee commuting in your workplace is critical for making change.

Start by asking some basic questions:

- How do you travel to work in a typical week?
- How far do you live from your workplace?
- If you drive to work, what type of vehicle do you use most?

Then go a little deeper to understanding barriers and solutions:

- What do you love about your current commute to work?
- What stops you from carpooling, taking a bus, walking or cycling more?
- What could we do to help you switch to a low-carbon commute?

Ask us: We have templates (see the end of this Workbook) or we can help you run your survey!

“If I could charge an
electric car at work I
would consider
buying an electric car
when I replace my
current hybrid.”

Survey feedback

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2. Make your data visual and easy to understand



Contact us for
copies of our
Commute Tools

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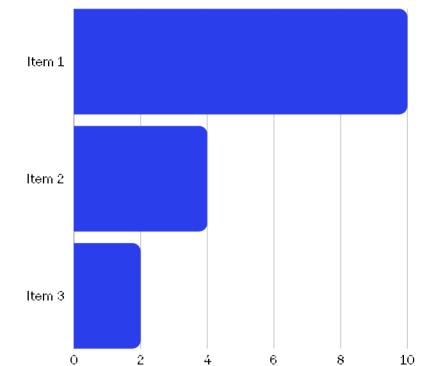
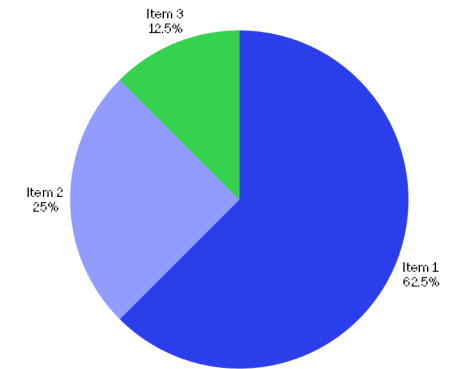
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Big data can be hard to process. Use our Commute Tools to generate simple graphs and friendly slides.

Contact us if you'd like a copy of our Excel-based Data Processing Spreadsheet and Report Template to help you process your data.

We can also share an example of a PowerPoint presentation with you, for ideas on how to showcase this data.

Ask us: *If it's feeling overwhelming, get in touch and we will help you.*



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3. Facilitate a focus group for ideas

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Prepare your data in a format that's easy to share – whether that's bullet points, graphs, a slide deck, or something else that suits your audience.

Bring together the right people: senior leaders, like-minded colleagues, key influencers, and anyone with insight into low-carbon commuting at your workplace.

Use the data to spark discussion. Explore the barriers, identify practical solutions, and agree on timelines for action.

Be sure to capture key points and outcomes, and share these notes afterward to keep momentum going and ensure accountability.



4. Create an Action Plan



[Download an
Action Plan
template in
Word format](#)

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Action planning is all about noting down your current status and adding future goals.

It can be as simple as a one-page outline, responding to the following questions:

- What are you already doing? What are your lessons learned?
- What will you do in the next 3 months? What do you need to make it happen?
- What will you do in the next 1–2 years? What can you do to generate momentum?

Write up your Action Plan, share it with decision-makers, gain approval and take action.

Ask us: *Our Action Plan template is as easy as this. You will find it at the end of this Workbook.*

5. Reach out beyond your own organisation

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Employee commuting offers common ground between organisations.

By connecting with others who share your goals and motivations, you can spark fresh ideas, gain new perspectives, and uncover opportunities to collaborate or pool resources – building momentum and amplifying impact.

You might wish to engage with transport providers and your local council – they may be able to offer support, infrastructure, or insights that make low-carbon commuting easier for your team.



6. Take action!

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There are many ways to make low-carbon commuting easier and more rewarding for your employees. See our action plan template for examples of practical steps you can take.

Aim for a balanced approach that includes both upstream — changes to infrastructure, options, and financial support — and downstream — information, education, and engagement. Providing knowledge is important — but so is making it easier for people to act.



“For us, supporting low-carbon employee commuting has given us a framework to build on and a network to grow with.”

Annabel Scaife, Public Affairs &
Communications Manager, Sealord

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7. Engage your team and your community

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Consider your employees' behaviour change journey:

- Do they know what to do?
- Have you reduced the barriers to uptake?
- Are you offering the right incentives and support?

Meeting people where they're at — and addressing both mindset and environment — will help create lasting, meaningful change.

** Watch a presentation on employee commute-related behaviour change by Professor Lorraine Whitmarsh, Environmental Psychologist at the University of Bath - see link top right of this page*

An example:

Bike-to-work Breakfasts are a great way to raise awareness at your workplace.

- Allocate a specific day to celebrate low-carbon commuting.
- Invite bikers to join you for a hot breakfast and log numbers.
- Hand out prizes and (recyclable) info flyers.
- Record videos of bikers on their journeys to work.
- Take photos showing empty carparks and roadways.
- Capture feedback via participant surveys or anecdotal commentary.
- Share content and introduce a competitive goal - such as an increase in participant numbers - for next time around.



8. Ensure accountability

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Building in accountability will ensure follow-through.

- Incorporate key actions into the KPIs of relevant employees, and include progress in routine performance reviews.
- Reconvene your focus group at key milestones to review progress, share insights, and re-energise efforts.
- Establish a working group to maintain momentum and drive action on employee commuting.
- Advocate for leadership to include commuting emissions in annual climate reporting, ensuring visibility and accountability.



“We want to strengthen
[our commitment to a
sustainable, prosperous
Nelson Tasman] by
encouraging staff to
walk the talk with us.”

Adrian Ferris, CFO, Nelson Airport

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Key insights

Nelson insights*

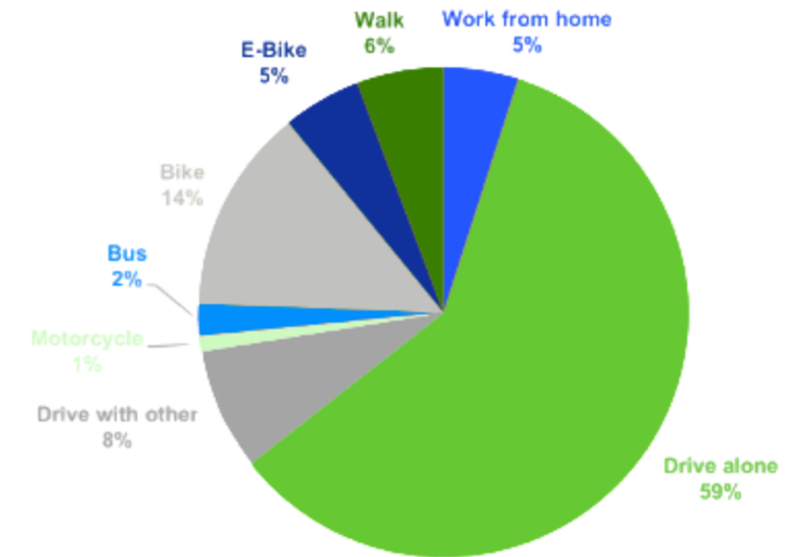
The **median commuting distance** for Nelson-based employees is **7.5 km**.

The estimated **annual carbon footprint** from commuting across surveyed businesses is **3,040 TCO₂e**.

The **carbon emissions per full-time equivalent** (FTE) employee stands at **0.92 TCO₂e/FTE**.

35% of trips to work are already low carbon and employees are **saving 774 TCO₂e carbon emissions a year** by working from home, biking, or walking.

** Based on a survey of just under 3,300 employees (10 businesses) located in the Nelson region (Oct 2024)*



"Commute by mode"
MISSION ZERO Low-carbon
Commute Initiative Survey
(2024)- Consolidated report

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Common barriers to low-carbon commuting

- Lacking or unsafe cycling and walking infrastructure.
- Limited public transport options.
- Early or late working hours not compatible with public transport.
- Health and fitness limitations.
- Distance from work.
- Family and childcare responsibilities.
- Weather and safety concerns.

“There is a need
to connect up
cycleways better.”

“Shared paths [for
walkers, bikes, cars and
trucks] do NOT work.”

“For me, the risks
outweigh the benefits.”

Survey feedback

Possible solutions to low-carbon commuting

- Financial Incentives.
- Flexible Work Arrangements.
- Enhanced Bike and EV charging Facilities.
- Support for Public Transport.
- Promote Carpooling.

“Subsidize e-bikes to make them more accessible for employees.”

“Flexible work hours would help me avoid traffic and allow for personal tasks.”

“Provide free bus passes and charge for car parking.”

Survey feedback

“One of the most valuable aspects of accelerating this work has been the increased internal engagement it has sparked”.

Adrian Ferris, CFO, Nelson Airport

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Case studies

Follow someone else's journey



NELSON AIRPORT
Good things start here.

“We’re aiming to promote sustainable commuting as a collective effort.”

Adrian Ferris, CFO, with Kurt Clayworth, Management Accountant, both Nelson Airport

Nelson Airport

Nelson Airport's vision – to become a world-class airport that supports zero-emissions aircraft operations - includes finding ways to help their employees get to and from work using low-carbon forms of transportation. They see their role in encouraging staff to walk the talk with them as a way to strengthen that commitment.

The team tracks staff commuting as part of their broader climate reporting, participates in the Aotearoa Bike Challenge, offers convenient EV charging and undercover bike parking close to the office, supports flexible working from home where possible, and are rolling out the WorkRide programme to help staff access bikes for their daily travel.

Nelson Airport is exploring ways to support carpooling more formally. While informal ride-sharing is already happening, they see value in a coordinated system – perhaps via internal communications or a dedicated app – to help scale up participation.

They're also interested in collaborating with other organisations focused on employee commuting, whether through shared events, regional carpooling networks, or communication tools that help staff across businesses connect and plan low-carbon travel together.

Their view is clear: by making low-carbon commuting easier and better supported, there's real potential to shift behaviour – and deliver benefits for people, organisations, and the region.

“Supporting low-carbon employee commuting has given us a framework to build on and a network to grow with.”

Adrian Ferris, CFO, Nelson Airport



“Be curious, reach out, ask questions,
explore what’s already set up.”

Annabel Scaife, Public Affairs & Communications Manager, Sealord

Sealord

Sealord are acutely aware of the impacts of climate change on fisheries' health and consequently on their business. They know they must play their part. Since 2019 they have managed to reduce their emissions by 25%.

While this has required strong commitment from the whole team, these were easy wins compared to the challenges that lie ahead. They're now looking beyond their own operations and towards the wider value chain - Scope 3 emissions. Employee commuting is one of those Scope 3 emissions which offer some synergies with other things they value.



The Sealord team get behind low-carbon employee commuting



After surveying their team's commuting habits, Sealord developed an action plan to identify key areas of focus.

They had already introduced WorkRide, which helps employees purchase bikes for commuting, and The Wheel Deal, offering access to e-scooters. Their next step is to launch a Bike-to-Work breakfast – designed to encourage cycling and bring together staff from across the organisation.

They're also planning a Bus-to-Work month, which will include subsidised Bee Cards and clear communication around routes and schedules.

Another focus is raising awareness of “low-carbon commute friendly” infrastructure – highlighting bike parking, showers, and locker access in staff communications to ensure everyone knows what's available to support their commute.



Recognising that habits can be hard to shift, Sealord has taken the initiative to support the creation of a region-wide CEO Forum, aimed at encouraging senior leaders to walk the talk on low-carbon commuting.

Since publicly committing to low-carbon employee travel, they've seen strong interest from staff across the organisation keen to get involved.

This wider sharing of responsibility has been critical to turning ideas into action – helping lighten the load for time-poor influencers and building momentum from the ground up.

“Encouraging low-carbon commuting is a great opportunity to raise awareness and gain buy-in for wider sustainable practices within your organisation, as well as work with other businesses in the region who are also trying to reduce their emissions.”

Annabel Scaife, Sealord



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A close-up, over-the-shoulder view of a person's hands typing on a silver laptop keyboard. The laptop screen displays a complex spreadsheet with many columns and rows of data. The person has long dark hair and is wearing a grey sweater. In the background, a white coffee cup sits on a saucer on a dark table. The overall lighting is warm and slightly dim, suggesting an indoor office or meeting environment.

Tools

Your kit for action



Employee Commute Survey

What to ask...
How to report...

Survey: Questions for employees

- How do you travel to work in a typical week?

	Work from home	Drive alone	Drive with others	Motorcycle	Bus	Bike	E - Bike	Walk	Other	Don't work
Monday	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tuesday	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wednesday	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thursday	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Sunday	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- How far do you live from your workplace? (Under 2km, 2-5km, 5-10km, 10-20km, 20-30km, 30-50km, 50-100km, 100km+)
- If you drive to work, what type of vehicle do you use most? (Petrol, Diesel, Hybrid, Plug-in Hybrid, Full electric, Never drive)
- What do you love about your current commute to work?
- What stops you from carpooling, taking a bus, walking or cycling more?
- What could we do to help you switch to a low-carbon commute?

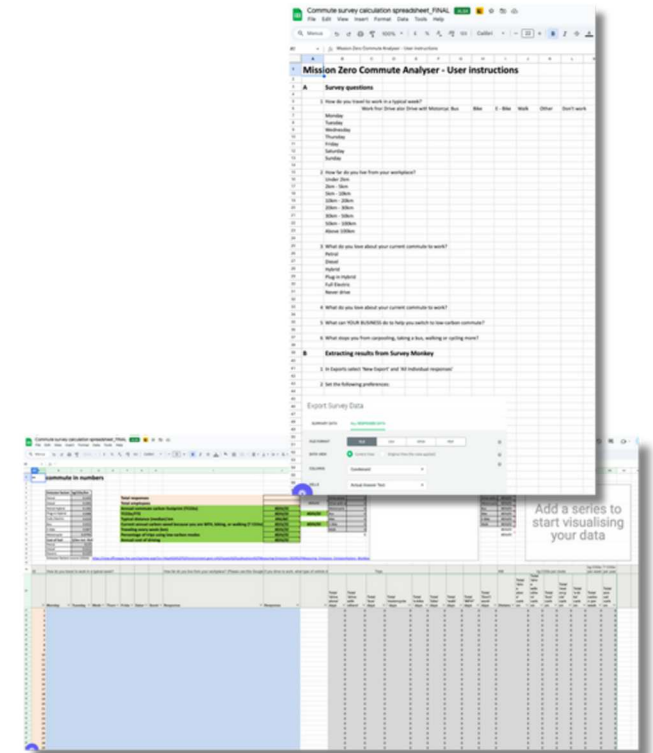
Survey: Data processing spreadsheet and report template



Contact us for
copies of our
Commute Tools

We have developed an easy excel tool to help you process the survey data, calculate carbon and generate graphs. You can then use our report template slides to share the results with your management and employees.

Request your copy by e-mailing us at action@missionzero.nz



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Simple Employee Commute Action Plan

Your template and inspiration...

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Simple commute action plan template

Populate the template on the following page by picking relevant initiatives from our Inspiration Menu*.

- An action doesn't sound right for your business? Ignore it.
- A new idea that is not on our menu? Great! You are ahead. Add it in and let us know.
- Be realistic – aim for what you feel you can achieve.
- Once you've built a list of actions you want to commit to, have a conversation with your team and record their reflections.
- Sign this off with the boss and get them to walk the talk.

• A list of actions proposed during a Mission Zero employee commute hackathon (Nelson, Feb 2025)

Simple commute action plan template

Consider:

- Employee engagement - education, events, ambassador scheme or 'commute groups'
- Infrastructure - Car/ bike parking, electric charging, shower facilities, employee shuttles, car-pooling, alignment of shifts with bus timetables, walk/ cycleways, emergency travel options, online meetings, access to low cost active transport gear
- Health and wellbeing - Safety training, active meetings, flexible work hours, working from home (encourage + fund office set up/ ongoing costs), paid health checks
- Incentives - Competitions with prizes/ salary benefits, bus pass discounts, active transport gear purchasing subsidies, WorkRide and The Wheel Deal, low-carbon corporate vehicle benefits, corporate sponsorships of low-carbon charities
- Public reporting - alignment with your strategic goals, employee KPIs, customer awareness, behaviour-related rewards



**Download an
Action Plan
template in
Word format**

What are you already doing?	What will you do in the next three months?	What will you do in the next year or two?
<i>E.g. A sustainability working group is in place</i>	<i>E.g. To introduce guidelines for sustainable practice at work – including low-carbon commuting – into induction packs</i>	<i>E.g. Create a bike safety video for induction-stage education</i>
What are your lessons learnt?	What do you need to do to make it happen?	What can you do to generate momentum?
<i>E.g. The working group needs to include senior decisions makers in order to have meaningful impact</i>	<i>E.g. We need to plan out our requirement and secure resources to deliver</i>	<i>E.g. Film in-house, with team involvement to support high engagement</i>

Commute Inspiration Menu

1

Carpooling initiative in the organisation

- Larger organisations offer shuttles on common routes
- Set up a frame-work for ride-sharing/ car-pooling

3

Emergency transport/ Guaranteed ride home

- Set up an emergency taxi/ uber fund for non-driving commuters in case of need

2

Health as the incentive

- Sneaky exercise for busy people
- Annual staff/whānau health checks paid for

4

Provide info/ educate

- Easy to access up-to-date info for staff
- Visual data/ displays around workplace
- Travel planning days/ 1:1 sessions with experts
- Advantages of busing: emails, social media, knitting, writing, reading, chatting
- Promote the key message: 94% of household emission are from transport (Stats NZ figures), so everything else is just noise!

5

Flexible working to encourage low/no-carbon commuting

- Investigate options to adapt departmental rosters to support commute-related emissions reductions
- On bus commuting time – count this time as part of the work day if staff are checking emails on laptops/ working
- Encourage working from home/ provide incentives to reduce emissions while working from home (low-carbon heating, efficient appliances)
- Align shifts with bus timetables
- Encourage online meetings to avoid travel
- Offer funding to enable greater work-from-home take-up

6

Make carpark difficult in a positive way

- Put bike parks nearest entry to buildings/ car parks further away
- Charge for car parking
- Reduce the number of car parks that are available, replace with bike racks
- Reserve best car park for car-poolers and people with health issues
- Car park levy reinvested into sustainable travel fund
- Prioritise bike racks over parking – upgrade racks

7

Financial incentives

- Recognise & reward (prizes, salary bonus, coffee vouchers) target behaviour – make it fun
- Corporate sponsorship/donations prioritise organisations which enable people to commute via low-carbon transportation means
- Discounted or free public transport
- Reduce SLT salaries to incentivise staff emission reductions programme
- Offer bike purchase subsidies and free safety gear (helmets, high-vis, lights etc.), discounts at shoe stores (for walkers) or coffee vouchers in relation to commuting achievements (eg. 1 minute of low-carbon commuting = \$1 in gear)
- Offer e-bike subsidies e.g. through Workride
- Explore innovation funds/ alternative funding sources
- Generate friendly competition
- Build sustainable commute into IEAs/ CBAs
- Donations to organisations enabling sustainable commute
- PT/ Bike contributions

8

Biking infrastructure

- Bike repair tools available
- More bike stands – possibly sell this to SLT as a cheaper option over more car parks
- Secure bike storage (look for funding opportunities)
- Charging stations for EVs, E-Bikes, E-scooters with reserved parking
- Drying rooms for wet commutes
- Create or promote facilities which support low-carbon commute (eg. showers, changing rooms, bike racks) through better visibility, signage, pathways and info to new staff members
- Secure bike cages/ stands
- Adequate changing facilities
- Arrange discounts or bike mechanics to service bikes on site
- Work-from-home electricity subsidies
- Create or promote facilities (visibility, signage, paths, travel information for existing and new staff, showers and change rooms)
- Allow staff time to change from bike-commute gear

9

Make active transport social

- Create “Commute Groups” for cyclists and/or a walking club
- Initiate regular staff riding events (could be mountain bikers) to encourage people to bring their bikes in and get creative
- Starter kits for low-carbon commuters (eg. a pre-loaded bus pass, good bike locks and lights)
- Bring together internal advocates and co-create an engagement plan for behaviour change

10

Public reporting on emissions’ goals

- Organisational goal to support worker well-being – e.g. through active transport
- Report employee commute emissions
- Aim at 10% emissions reduction each year

Communication for behaviour change

- Believe in people
- Morning tea provided to teams that commute with the least emissions
- Retail businesses reward customers who come to their premises via public or active transport
- Celebrate success, share widely
- Talk about how active transport allows you to appreciate our beautiful part of the world
- Talk about travelling fresh through e-biking – no need for a shower on arrival to work
- Create inter-office competitions (for businesses with multiple/ nationwide offices)
- Strong, positive communication – but not too pushy