

Long Distance Travel

Why we care

Carbon Dioxide emissions from commercial aircraft are on a pace to triple by 2050. For most people who board an airplane, flying is the biggest part of their personal carbon footprint. Flying allows us to conveniently travel far more miles than we otherwise would. Two people flying 5,000 miles have the same carbon impact as more than half of the average household's driving per year in the US. Even though it is about ten years old, the chart below gives an indication of the impact of different modes of travel. *(The airplane mode includes the impact of nitrogen oxides and water vapor at high altitudes but does not include emissions related to takeoff, landing, and ground operations.)*

Mode	Lbs. CO ₂ or equivalents per passenger mile
Bus	.17
Hybrid (2 occupants)	.28
Amtrak	.45
Typical car (2 occupants)	.56
Typical SUV (2 occupants)	.71
Boeing 747 (coach)	.84
Typical car (1 occupant)	1.09

Simple, positive steps

- Avoiding air travel forces us to travel less, to be more selective, and to get more out of the trips we take.
- Consider renting a high mileage car for a family trip. Avoid peak travel periods that keep you stuck in traffic.
- If you do travel by plane, choose coach. First class takes twice as much space and has about three times the carbon impact. Choose nonstop rather than connecting flights because takeoff and landing produce a lot of carbon.
- Vacation close to home. You'll save money and avoid stress.
- Use technology, such as Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime to stay in touch with friends and family.

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at jeanne@ecoschoolnetwork.org