



Community Concerns

Don't Risk A Ticket. Avoid Parking In Spots Reserved For People With Disabilities

In the harried competition for close-in spots, normally courteous drivers engage in all kinds of parking taboos, many involving the use of parking spaces designated for the more than 30 million Americans with mobility-impairing disabilities. Fortunately, there are people doing something about it and you can help.

WHO'S DOING WHAT

Through the nonprofit Accessible Parking Coalition (APC), established by the International Parking and Mobility Institute, a national effort is underway to eliminate disabled placard abuse and make accessible parking more accessible.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Here are seven reminders for every driver:

1. Remember that marked accessible parking spots are for people with disabilities (the term "handicapped" is outdated and offensive to many).
2. Unless authorized, never park in an accessible parking space—not even for a minute.
3. Never infringe on van-accessible parking spaces, which are designed for ramp- or lift-equipped vehicles. They are marked by signs that say, "Van Accessible" with the international symbol for accessibility. Many drivers using wheelchairs have nightmarish examples of waiting hours for the owners of a car parked too close to return so they could get in their vehicle.



PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES NEED ACCESS TO PARKING TO LEAD AN INDEPENDENT LIFE, A NATIONAL SURVEY FOUND.

4. Never park, block or leave a shopping cart in the cross-hatched, access aisle zones next to accessible disabled parking spots.

5. Don't borrow others' disabled parking placards or use yours after it has expired or is no longer truly needed.

6. Follow the rules, but don't be a parking vigilante. If you suspect illegal use of a spot, take a photo of the license plate and contact local law enforcement.

7. Remember that not all disabilities that affect mobility are apparent. Don't assume someone is parking in a accessible spot illegally. A person with a respiratory or other

ailment that makes walking difficult, for example, may be entitled to a disabled placard.

Eighty percent of people with parking placards agree accessible parking fraud is widespread. Disabled placard abuse and illegal use of accessible parking spaces are crimes that carry penalties. Many jurisdictions are cracking down, increasing fines—some more than \$1,000 per violation—and setting up sting operations to catch offenders.

LEARN MORE

For further facts, news and advice on this topic, visit accessibleparkingcoalition.org.