

The Complete Guide to Accessible Parking – Information for Law Enforcement

United Spinal Association represents our nation's 5.5 million wheelchair users. We proudly trace our roots to the paralyzed World War II vets who came home to an inaccessible nation and made it their new mission to create a fully inclusive society. United Spinal Association's [Advocacy Department](#) offers popular working groups to provide opportunities for advocates to organize around the issues that matter most to them. The [Accessible Parking Working Group](#) advocates for improved accessible parking and increased awareness and education regarding common barriers encountered by the disability community. It also examines accessible parking laws and regulations and enforcement of those laws and regulations.

Enforcement is essential in upholding the laws that were designed to maintain accessibility and discourage future violations. Illegally parking in an accessible parking spot is not a victimless crime, and consequences for these violations can help with emphasizing the critical need for these parking spots remain available for those with disabilities. Law enforcement takes on the crucial role of enforcing accessible parking laws in order to help maintain accessibility for the disability community and uphold the legal protections that are in place for them.

According to the [Accessible Parking Coalition](#): 69% of people with disabilities have problems finding accessible parking, 96% say parking availability is important to leading an independent life, and 52% have decided not to make a trip because of concerns about finding parking.

WHAT ARE WE ASKING LAW ENFORCEMENT TO LOOK FOR:

- All vehicles using an accessible parking space must have a valid state issued accessible placard and/or plate
- That parking spaces and access aisles for accessible parking spaces are not blocked by other vehicles or things such as grocery carts corrals, snow, delivery vehicles, etc.
- All parking lots have the proper striping, signage, and number of accessible and van accessible parking spaces according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Be mindful of people with not just physical disabilities, but also people with hidden (invisible) disabilities who may need accessible parking spaces

WHAT ARE WE ASKING LAW ENFORCEMENT TO DO:

- Issue warnings and citations for violations of the State Disabled Parking Permit Statutes on public and private property
- Prioritize and incentivize citing officers' traffic court appearances at violators' hearings to substantiate the citation so violators have to pay their fines
- Create patterns (times, locations, etc.) of citations as part of the patrol officer's routine
- Team with groups of people with disabilities to educate the public about the proper use of accessible parking spaces and the harm caused by misuse
- Include regular sharing of reports and officer experiences about accessible parking violations during duty calls prior to patrol shifts
- Crack down on placard fraud and the ability to "purchase" a placard online
- Penalize doctors for improperly providing misleading or fraudulent statements on certifications that allow the acquisition of disabled parking permits
- Create volunteer enforcement programs in their department
- Ask their judicial system to become strict with imposing penalties or diversion (education) programs and recommend a portion of the fine be dedicated to the enforcement and diversion programs.
- Be welcoming to people with legally acquired permits who provide "leads" (locations of violators, license plates of violators, etc.). Law enforcement should have a strategy to let people with disabilities know they are heard, and their leads will be investigated

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Each state can vary with specific accessible parking regulations and mandates, and at United Spinal Association we encourage advocates to build relationships with their local law enforcement and continue to raise awareness about accessible parking rights and responsibilities. Please visit the [United Spinal Association Accessible Parking](#) webpage for more information and to download The Complete Guide to Accessible Parking.