

DISABLED PARKING FAQ'S

****Revised 9-1-09****



The following information will help you learn about disabled parking permits, including eligibility requirements, application instructions and penalties for misuse.

AM I ELIGIBLE FOR A PERMIT?

To be eligible for disabled parking plates or placards, a disability statement must be signed by a physician. A person's medical condition must meet the legal definition of a disability to qualify. "Disability" means a condition in which a person has:

- Visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting lenses;
- Visual acuity of more than 20/200 but with a limited field of vision;
- Mobility problems that substantially impair a person's ability to move around.

These problems can be caused by:

Paralysis
Lung disease
Cardiac deficiency
Wheelchair confinement
Arthritis
Foot disorder
Other medical condition causing a person to use a brace, cane, crutch or other assistive device.

WHERE DO I APPLY?

County tax offices accept disabled parking permit applications.

HOW LONG IS MY PERMIT GOOD?

Permits for permanent disabilities must be renewed every four years. Permits for temporary disabilities are valid for a period set by the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles.

WHERE CAN I PARK WITH MY PERMIT?

- Vehicles displaying disabled plates, disabled veteran plates or disabled placards (blue or red) are the only vehicles allowed to park or stand in spaces clearly marked for the disabled.
- No parking or standing of a vehicle is permitted where such parking blocks an architectural improvement designed to aid persons with disabilities, including an access aisle or curb ramp.

- A vehicle may be parked for an unlimited period in a parking space that is designed specifically for persons with physical disabilities if the vehicle is being operated by or for the transportation of a person with a disability and if the vehicle displays the appropriate plates or placard. A vehicle operated by or for the transportation of a person with a disability and displaying the appropriate plate or placard may park for free at a parking meter for an unlimited time.
- Texas law no longer allows individuals with disabilities who display a plate or a placard to park for free at government-owned parking lots (such as at airports or parking garages) unless the government entity passes an ordinance allowing such free parking.
- Texas law allows individuals to park using placards and plates from other states and foreign countries; and Texas placards and plates are recognized by all other states.
- Texas law allows parking placards to be removed and displayed in any vehicle used for transportation of a person with a disability. People with disabilities can apply for placards even if they do not own a car.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A VIOLATION OF THE DISABLED PARKING LAW?

It is a violation of Texas law to park or stand a vehicle:

- in an accessible parking space without displaying the appropriate plate or placard, even if a driver or a passenger of the vehicle has a disability;
- in an accessible space when neither the driver nor any passenger has a disability, even if the vehicle displays the appropriate plate or placard;
- with a placard or plate that is expired;
- with a placard or plate that belongs to someone who is not a driver or a passenger in the vehicle;
- in such a way that it blocks access to an accessible parking space, an access aisle, or any architectural improvement that provides access for people with disabilities, such as a ramp or a curb cut.

It is also a violation of Texas law:

- To lend a parking placard to an individual without a disability who used that placard to violate state law;
- To steal or counterfeit a parking placard or license plate.

PARKING ALERT!

Texas law provides that your disabled parking placard *must* be placed on the rearview mirror of the front windshield when parked in any designated disabled parking place. The placard does *not* entitle a person to park in access areas adjacent to disabled parking spaces!

WHAT IS THE RANGE OF PUNISHMENT FOR VIOLATIONS?

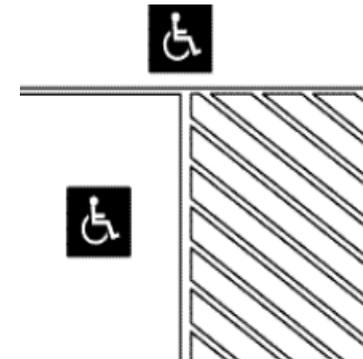
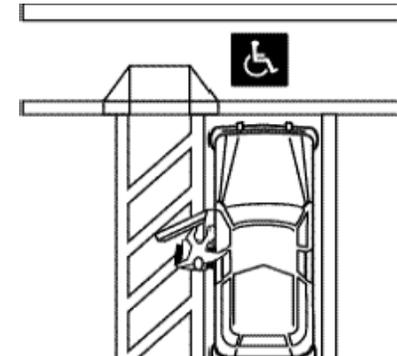
Fines have recently been increased by the legislature for these violations. Violations of these laws are punishable by the seizure of the parking placard and by fine, in the following amounts:

- First offense: \$500-\$750;
- Second offense: \$550-\$800 plus 10 hours community service;
- Third offense: \$550-\$800, plus 20-30 hours of community service;
- Fourth offense: \$800-\$1100, plus 30-50 hours of community service;
- Fifth offense: \$1250, plus 50 hours of community service.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A RED PLACARD AND A BLUE PLACARD?

- Effective 9-1-09, blue permits are for people with a permanent disability.
- Effective 9-1-09, red permits are for people with a temporary disability.

VIOLATION ALERT!



It is *never* legal to park in striped access areas adjacent to handicap parking spaces or in a striped access area in front of an entrance to a business adjacent to a disabled parking space. Striped access areas are for wheelchair lifts and may not be parked in even if you display a valid placard or plates!