



AL VENEGAS, INTERIM CHIEF OF POLICE  
SANTA MONICA POLICE DEPARTMENT

# Public Information Bulletin

## HANDICAP PLACARDS AND LICENSE PLATES

Between September 2011 and February 2012, the Santa Monica Police Department's Traffic Section issued 399 citations for misuse of handicap placards. These violations were for vehicles that did not have valid placards, displayed expired placards, or did not have a placard. The following are rules as it pertains to parking in public places in Santa Monica with a handicap placard.

When parking in a private lot, it is recommended to check to see if there are restrictions for parking with a disabled placard.

**If you were issued a Disabled Person Placard (permanent or temporary), Disabled Person License Plate (DP) or Disabled Veteran License Plate (DV), then you are entitled to the following parking privileges:**

- May park in parking spaces with the International Symbol of Access (wheelchair symbol) either posted on sign or painted on the ground.
- May park next to a blue curb authorized for handicap parking.
- May park next to a green curb beyond the indicated time limit.
- May park in any parking zone restricted as to the length of time parking is permitted indicated by the sign.
- May park in any metered parking space at no charge and beyond the posted time limit. Make sure to read all posted signs and obey all "No Parking" signs, as disabled placards, DP and DV plates are not exempt.
- May park on streets where preferential parking privileges are given to residents.
- May park in long-term beach parking lots owned and maintained by the City of Santa Monica during daytime hours at no charge.

**There are limitations to where people who have DP placards/plates and DV plates can park.**

For example, you **cannot** park:

- In spaces marked with a crosshatched pattern next to a parking space with the International Symbol of Access symbol. These spaces are for wheelchair and wheelchair lift access.
- Next to red curbs, which indicate no parking, stopping or standing.
- Next to yellow curbs, which are for commercial vehicles to load and unload passengers or freight.
- Next to white curbs, which are for loading and unloading passengers or depositing mail in an adjacent mailbox.
- At a parking meter that becomes a Valet Zone after a posted time (please read the posted signs), or on the street during posted days and times for street sweeping.

People who are not entitled to the privileges often abuse the disabled parking spaces. The Santa Monica Police Department's Traffic Section conducts citywide enforcement of disabled parking placard abuse. People who abuse the disabled placard run the risk of being cited for the offense which carries a fine that can range anywhere between \$250 to \$3,500, or a jail sentence of up to six months. Placard



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abuse can also result in the cancellation and revocation of the placard and loss of the privileges it provides.

## It is illegal to:

- Lend your placard to another person or use someone else's placard.
- Possess or display a counterfeit placard.
- Alter a placard or placard identification card or display a cancelled or revoked placard.

## There is an exception:

A person to whom a disabled placard has been issued may permit another person to use the placard **only** while in the presence or reasonable proximity of the disabled person for the purpose of transporting the disabled person.

For example, you have a disabled relative who has trouble walking and you are going out to a restaurant for dinner. You park at a parking meter that is close by and hang the disabled placard from the rearview mirror without paying the meter. This is legal and you don't have to pay the meter because the person who the placard has been issued to is in the car with you.

Another example: Your grandmother (who has a placard) has just finished her physical therapy and you are going to pick her up. When you arrive, you cannot park at the front door of the building because the curb in front of the location is painted red. You look around and find an open parking meter space on the street next to the no stopping zone (red curb). You park your vehicle, hang the disabled placard from the rearview mirror and walk into the building to pick up your grandmother - without paying the meter. Again, this is legal because the person to whom the placard has been issued is in reasonable proximity to where you parked and you used the privilege (parking without paying the meter) for the purpose of transporting the disabled person.

## An example of how not to use the placard:

You have just dropped off your grandmother (who has been issued a placard) for her physical therapy and now you are going to do some shopping for the next couple of hours until her therapy is finished. After dropping her off, you drive about a mile to the closest mall and parking at an on-street parking meter. You hang the disabled placard from the rearview mirror and walk away without paying the meter and go shopping. This is illegal because the person to whom the placard has been issued is not within reasonable proximity of where you parked and your use of the placard was not for the purpose of transporting the disabled person.

March 9, 2012

Bulletin# P-12-002