

13 Disabilities and Parking

This chapter provides information on disabilities and parking. Laws for parking vehicles and issuing disability parking placards and license plates are intended to allow persons with ambulatory disabilities or blindness easier access when conducting business, shopping, or enjoying the many attractions Michigan offers. All drivers must be aware of Michigan's disability parking laws, which are enforced by local municipalities.

License Plates for Individuals with Disabilities

If you have a disability that significantly limits your ability to walk, or are legally blind, you can obtain a disability license plate at no extra cost. The license plate allows you, or someone driving your vehicle while transporting you, to park in any disability parking space.

A household member may also apply for a disability license plate if he or she is responsible for providing your transportation.

Disability license plates are also issued to facilities serving and transporting persons with disabilities. Disability license plate applications may be printed from the Department of State website and are available at Secretary of State offices. Your physician, physician's assistant, optometrist, chiropractor, or nurse practitioner must certify your disability license plate application.

Reduced Fee Registration for Certain Vans

Under state law, if you use a wheelchair and own a van with a disability license plate, or if someone in your household owns the van and uses it to transport you, then the standard vehicle registration fee is reduced 50 percent.

Disability Parking Placards

A disability parking placard allows you, or someone transporting you, to park in any disability parking space. Use the placard to park in a disability parking spot when you are in a vehicle that does not have a disability license plate.

Never loan your placard to someone else – the placard is issued in your name for your use only.

The Department of State issues two types of disability parking placards. A temporary disability parking placard is issued for up to six months, usually to people who are temporarily disabled because of injury such as a broken leg, surgery, or a medical condition that is expected to improve. A temporary placard may not be renewed when it expires. A new application must be completed before another placard can be issued.

A permanent disability parking placard is issued for four years to people with a disability that is medically not expected to improve. A permanent placard may be renewed for an additional four-year period at any Secretary of State office. This renewal can be done up to 45 days prior to a placard's expiration. No additional application needs to be completed.

Applications for disability parking placards are available at Secretary of State offices, by calling (517) 322-1473 or from the department's website. Your physician, physician's assistant, optometrist, chiropractor, or nurse practitioner must complete and sign the application before you submit it to the Department of State.

Do not drive with a disability placard hanging from your rearview mirror. This reduces your ability to see clearly. Display the disability placard after parking your vehicle and remove it before driving.

Free Parking

Free parking is offered to persons with severe disabilities and requires the use of a free parking sticker.

A person with a disability must have a valid driver's license to qualify for a free parking sticker.

Free parking at public ramps and parking meters is limited to those people who have the free parking sticker attached to their disability placard.

Free parking is issued only if a physician, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, or chiropractor certifies that the person with a disability lacks the manual dexterity to put coins in a meter, cannot walk more than 20 feet, or cannot access a meter due to use of a wheelchair or other device.

Persons with a disability who qualify for free parking must display a disability placard with the free parking sticker attached. A disability license plate alone does not qualify for free parking.

Disability Parking Spaces

It is illegal to park in a disability parking space if you do not have a valid disability license plate or parking placard, even if you have a disability. It is also illegal to park in a disability parking space – even with a disability license plate or placard – if none of the occupants in the vehicle have a disability.



Van Accessible Parking

Van accessible parking spaces are wider than standard parking spaces. This provides space for the van's wheelchair lift and ramp, allowing the person with a disability room to exit and enter the vehicle. For this reason, it is extremely important not to park within the painted area of the van accessible parking space, including the access aisle (painted area on either side of the disability parking space). Doing so may prevent the person with a disability from exiting or entering the vehicle.



Under state law, law enforcement or a governmental agency designated by law enforcement may issue tickets and tow away vehicles of drivers who:

- Park, stop, or stand in a disability parking space.
- Park in a defined access aisle or access lane adjacent to a van accessible disability parking space.
- Park in a manner that interferes with a ramp or a curb cut used by persons with disabilities.

Penalties for Misuse of a Disability License Plate or Parking Placard

Improper use, forging, or copying of a disability license plate or parking placard may result in a fine of up to \$500.

Misuse of a disability license plate or placard deprives a person with a disability the use of a parking space. Not only is this a great inconvenience for people with disabilities, it may prevent them from conducting their business.

Pregnant Mother Parking Permits

“Pregnant mother” parking permits are issued as a courtesy by businesses and private industry for the convenience of their customers. The Department of State **does not** issue these permits. Pregnant mother parking permits are nonbinding and are not recognized under state law.