



Accessible Parking: Everything you need to know

Everyone recognizes “handicapped” parking spaces, correctly known as accessible parking for persons with disabilities, by the sign with the universal symbol of accessibility. We know that they are reserved for certain persons with disabilities, but we may not be sure about the details.

The Harford County Commission on Disabilities receives many inquiries about accessible parking, such as:

- Who is eligible to park in the spaces?
- How do I apply for the special parking placard and registration plates?
- Do I have to feed a parking meter if I have a special parking placard for motorists with disabilities?

The Commission encourages all motorists with disabilities to learn more about parking accommodations for persons with disabilities, the use of special parking placards and registration plates, temporary disabilities, etc.

“Accessible parking is critical to many motorists with disabilities,” said Commissioner Bob Coen. “But they need to know all the rules and conditions that apply.”

The following information from the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) website’s “Everything You Need to Know,” for motorists with disabilities, provides extensive information and answers many of these questions.

Maryland drivers with disabilities who qualify for special parking placards and registration plates have several parking accommodations available to them:

- Maryland’s registration plates and placards for individuals with disabilities display the wheelchair symbol and are recognized nationwide.
- You are exempt from paying parking meter fees in Maryland if the parking meters do not meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and can park up to twice the maximum allowable time shown on the meter (not to exceed four hours). **Please note:** Areas outside of Maryland, including the District of Columbia, have different parking meter exemption laws. Please check with their local government to obtain parking meter exemption information.

Note: The Americans with Disabilities Act does not prevent payment of parking meter fees by an individual with a disability. Therefore, you should verify requirements of feeding parking meters and the time limit allowed in the jurisdiction you are visiting.

How do I apply for a disability placard or plates?

- Request an application for “Maryland Parking Placards/License Plates for Individuals with a Disability” – form number VR-210 - by calling the MVA at any of the numbers listed below, visiting your local MVA full-service and express office (for placards only) location, or downloading it from the MVA web site.
- Call MVA’s Fax on Demand System at 410-424-3050 and request Catalogue #15
Call MVA’s Customer Service Center at 1-800-950-1MVA(1682)
TTY for the hearing impaired at 1-880-492-4575
Visit any MVA branch office (excluding Oakland)
- Have your doctor complete the *Disability Certification Information* section of the application.
- Visit your local MVA office (except Oakland) to receive your placard or plate in person. Or mail the completed form along with appropriate fees to the MVA, Disability Unit, Room 202, 6601 Ritchie Highway, Glen Burnie, Maryland, 21062. Do not mail cash.

Displaying the Placard and Plates

Placards must be hung on the inside rearview mirror. If the vehicle does not have an inside mirror, or the inside mirror is not visible from the rear, you may display the placard on top of the dashboard on the driver’s side. Make sure that the placard side displayed shows the expiration date of the disability placard.

Note: You must remove all hanging placards from the rearview mirror while your vehicle is in motion.

You must always have your copy of the medical certification in your possession whenever you use the placard or plates. This certification must be presented to law enforcement upon request.

Van Accessible Parking Spaces

Some disability spaces are marked “van accessible.” These spaces are designed with extra wide access aisles (eight feet wide) to accommodate vans with lifts and minivans with ramps, which require more space. Drivers with a disability placard or plate who do not have these special vehicles, should park in regular disability spaces first and only park in van accessible spaces if all other disability spaces are filled.

Temporary Disabilities

If you have a temporary disability that's expected to last at least three weeks, you may apply for a temporary parking placard. It must be certified by a licensed physician, nurse practitioner, optometrist, podiatrist or chiropractor. This placard may be valid for up to six months.

Penalties for Misuse of Parking Accommodations for People with Disabilities

Anyone committing fraud or misrepresenting themselves when applying for or using a parking placard for people with disabilities is subject to a fine of up to \$500. If disability conditions are not met, the plate/placards may be revoked.

For more information and the complete "Everything You Need to Know" for Maryland Motorists with Disabilities, visit the MVA website at <http://www.marylandmva.com/AboutMVA/DISABILITIES/default.htm> .

In June 2009, the Sheriff's Office and the Department of Community Services' Disabilities Commission began a month-long Disabled Parking Awareness campaign. Beginning June 8 and running through July 4, increased emphasis is being placed on patrolling parking spots for people with disabilities.

During the Disabled Parking Awareness Campaign, deputies with the Sheriff's Office check to make sure that vehicles either display the parking placard or designated license plate. Failing to display the parking placard and license may result in a \$120.00 fine. It is important to note, in addition to the placard or license plate, drivers are also required to produce their MVA issued ID.

The Harford County Commission on Disabilities was established in 1995 to serve as the voice of the disability community in Harford County. Members are appointed by the County Executive, with the approval of the County Council. The Commission meets on the fourth Monday of the month at the historic "Bel Air Colored High School, 205 Hays Street, Bel Air. For more information, contact Disabilities Coordinator Sharon Grzanka at 410-638-3373 voice/TTY or visit the Commission's webpage at www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/disabilities .

The Harford County Department of Community Services was established in 1979 via Executive Order and works daily to meet the needs of our seniors, youth, persons with disabilities and those struggling to overcome addiction. The Department works with federal, state, local and private agencies to ensure our county continues to evolve and remains dedicated to providing the best possible services for our citizens and community.