

What is SPARC BC?

- SPARC BC is a non-partisan, independent, charitable organization with a mission to work with communities to build a just and healthy society for all. Since 1966, SPARC BC has conducted public education and advocacy on accessibility, income security, and community development.

What is our interest in accessibility?

- SPARC BC works toward building accessible communities so that people with a broad range of disabilities are able to take an active part in community life.

- Designated accessible parking is one way of ensuring that people with impaired mobility, whether temporary or permanent, enjoy equal participation in our communities.

- SPARC BC is authorized to issue permits—and, if necessary, revoke them—that allow people with disabilities to park in designated areas.

- SPARC BC also advocates for other forms of accessibility, for example ramps and washroom facilities designed for individuals with mobility impairments, as well as large-print or Braille signage and volume-controlled pay phones for people with vision or hearing impairments.

- SPARC BC is every BC community's partner in advocating for and encouraging increased accessibility. For answers to any questions about designated accessible parking, please contact SPARC BC at 604.718.7744.

How do we promote income security and community development?

- SPARC BC promotes income security by focusing on adequate social assistance, affordable housing, and reduction of child poverty.

- SPARC BC promotes community development and capacity building by focusing on networking with other organizations, providing community development education, and encouraging citizen participation in communities.

Designated accessible parking



You can enforce the law!

What to Look For

Legally enforceable designated accessible parking should be indicated by the signage described in the Motor Vehicle Act and Regulations, BC Reg. 26/58, Schedule 2:

1. Signs include two circles, one above the other, on a white background with a black border.
2. The top circle is red with a slash through it and a black "P" (indicating No Parking) in the middle.
3. The bottom circle is green with the universal wheelchair symbol printed in black (indicating Designated Accessible Parking Only) in the middle.
4. Signage is placed on an upright post.



Many parking spaces are marked with the older, blue-and-white signs depicting the universally recognized wheelchair symbol. SPARC BC wholeheartedly supports efforts to encourage patrons to respect this signage and use these spaces appropriately.

A permanent parking permit depicts a wheelchair symbol in white on a square, blue background. Above it are the words "Recognized in the province of British Columbia until the last day of:" and above that is a rectangular space for a permit number.

The image is bordered on either side by small squares containing abbreviations for the months of the year, one of which is hole-punched when the permit is issued to indicate month of



expiry. At the bottom of the image are five small rectangles, each one containing a year, one of which is hole-punched to indicate year of expiry.

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You can enforce the law!

Why should I enforce lawful use of designated accessible parking?

In BC, over 84,000 people with disabilities hold permits for designated accessible parking, and that number is growing as our population ages. If you are a business person, that's a lot of customers.

But enforcing legal use of designated accessible parking is more than good business sense: it's upholding the law. Designated accessible parking exists so that people with both visible and invisible mobility impairments are able to park close to building entrances/exits, and where there is room for them to maneuver mobility aids, such as wheelchairs, in and out of their vehicles.

Unlawful use of designated accessible parking often means that people with disabilities must sit and wait for a space to become available—or simply go home.

Who should enforce designated accessible parking bylaws?

Owners and administrators of private parking lots are responsible for enforcing designated accessible parking on their property, while municipal bylaw-enforcement and/or police officers are responsible for enforcement in municipally owned parking spaces. Municipal bylaws vary; contact your municipality for specifics.

How can I identify legally designated accessible parking?

To be legally enforceable, a designated accessible parking space must be marked with a sign that conforms to specifications set out in BC Reg. 26/58, Schedule 2 of the *Motor Vehicle Act and Regulations*. An image of this signage appears on the reverse side of this brochure. Visit www.sparc.bc.ca for a colour picture.

Many parking spaces are still marked with the older, blue-and-white, wheelchair signs. SPARC BC wholeheartedly supports efforts to encourage patrons to respect this signage and use these spaces appropriately.

How can I know if designated accessible parking is being used legally?

According to the *Motor Vehicle Act and Regulations*, a vehicle parked in a properly marked designated accessible parking space must display a valid permit. If it does not, the space is being used illegally, even if it is "just for five minutes."

There are two types of permits: permanent and temporary. Both display the universal wheelchair symbol and hang from the rear-view mirror or are placed on the dashboard.

For a permit to be valid, its registration number and expiry date **must be visible** from outside the vehicle. If a permit has been altered, defaced, or duplicated, it is not valid.

The name and signature of the permit holder are displayed on the back of the permit. Each holder of a **permanent** permit also carries a wallet card with their name, signature, and permit number for verification purposes.

How can a legal permit be used illegally?

It is illegal for a permit holder to remain in the vehicle while a companion leaves the vehicle to run an errand, even if that errand is on behalf of the permit holder.

It is illegal to use a borrowed or stolen permit,

even if the person using another individual's permit also has a disability.

A permit holder need not own the vehicle or be the driver to use his or her permit, but **must be transported in the vehicle** and **must leave the vehicle** after it is parked.

Are non-BC permits valid in BC?

Valid permits from other provinces and countries are valid in BC. You can check the validity of non-BC permits at www.tc.gc.ca/pol/en/Accessibility/accessECMTagreement.htm, where you will find images of permits from all countries that have signed the *European Parking Agreement for Persons with Disabilities*.

What should I do when I KNOW a designated accessible parking space is being used illegally?

If no permit is displayed, if it is displayed incorrectly, or if it has expired or been tampered with, the vehicle should be ticketed and/or towed according to the bylaws of your community or the policies of the organization that owns the parking space. If the permit has expired or has been altered, record the permit number and notify SPARC BC at 604.718.7744.

SPARC BC publishes brochures on the correct use of permits. They are available in English, Spanish, Punjabi, Tagalog, and Mandarin, and can be obtained by contacting the SPARC BC office. SPARC BC also publishes educational flyers, which can be placed on the windshields of vehicles that are incorrectly parked in designated accessible parking spaces. To obtain copies of these materials, contact SPARC BC at 604.718.7744.

What should I do when I SUSPECT illegal use of a parking permit?

This can be difficult, given that some permit holders have invisible disabilities, such as cardiac or respiratory ailments, which prevent them from walking any distance. Try the following suggestions for dealing with typical situations sensitively:

- Approach the vehicle and take down the permit number and expiration date. Speak to the person in, leaving, or returning to the vehicle. Explain that you have been assigned to ensure lawful use of accessible parking and, if it is a permanent permit, ask to see the individual's wallet card.
- If the individual is a legitimate permit holder and is using the permit legally, he or she will probably be grateful that enforcement is taking place. However, **individuals have the right to refuse to show their identification**. If this happens, report the incident and permit number to SPARC BC. The permit could be cancelled.
- If the permit is being illegally used—for example, if the permit holder remains in the car while a companion runs an errand, or if the permit has expired—report the permit number and details of the incident to SPARC BC for appropriate follow-up action.

Any one of us can become disabled, temporarily or permanently, at any time.

Designated accessible parking exists so that those who need it have access to community businesses and services. Illegal use of parking permits works to the disadvantage of us all.

Designated Accessible Parking for People: Enforcement at a Glance

You can have a vehicle ticketed and towed if:

- the parking space is clearly marked with legally enforceable signage, and
- a vehicle parked in this space does not have a valid parking permit displayed, or
- a permit is displayed, but the registration number and expiry date are not visible, or
- the permit has been defaced or altered, or is a duplication, or
- the expiry date on the permit has passed, or
- the vehicle displays an out-of-province permit and you've found it to be invalid.

You can ask the driver to show you his/her wallet card and move the vehicle to another space if:

- the parking space is marked with either a legally enforceable sign, or one of the older, blue-and-white signs, and
- the vehicle displays a permanent permit, whether it is valid or invalid, but
- the permit holder has remained in the vehicle while a companion has exited.

(Please note that temporary permit holders do not carry a wallet card.)

You can report the permit number and details of the incident to SPARC BC at 604.718.7744 if:

- the permanent permit holder refuses to show you his or her wallet card, and/or

- the permit holder refuses to move the vehicle when asked.

You can ask the driver to free up the parking space for someone who needs it if:

- the parking space is marked with one of the older, blue-and-white signs, and
- the vehicle displays no permit at all.

Thank you for helping to make BC communities accessible to everyone.