

Thank you for downloading this toolkit. Please be advised, this is a work in progress (v1.1) and we really value your input and feedback to make it even better.

Pregnant Parking

Thank you for helping to make Pregnant Mother Parking a reality in more places.

Why do we need Pregnancy Parking?

Parking Lots are Dangerous

- Driver road rage:
 - Few things are as frustrating as not being able to find a parking spot, especially while shopping or visiting a trendy restaurant. Once you finally see that dream spot, you focus in and go for it, accelerating and focusing only on the parking spot. This explains how parking lots can be extremely dangerous, not only for cars, but also for pedestrians carrying precious cargo.
- Montgomery County, Maryland was able to shed some light on the hazards of parking lots when they reported that 22% of their total pedestrian-automobile accidents between January 2006 and June 2008 occurred in parking lots.
 - Additionally, 19%, almost 1-in-5, of all pedestrian-related parking lot accidents resulted in incapacitating injuries, which underscores the importance of parking lot safety.
 - Pregnant woman are also more susceptible to minor injuries turning serious. They are also carrying extremely special cargo!
- According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, 20 percent of all auto accidents happen in commercial parking lots.
- Walking conditions may also be hazardous because of pot holes, ice, and weather.

Who is it for?

- Pregnancy Parking is available for all pregnant woman. They have the power to choose whether to use these designated spaces or not.
- Some woman feel like they are not “legit” enough or pregnant enough to use the spaces.
 - While many expectant mothers wait until they are uncomfortable or in their third trimester to use pregnancy parking, the service can be used by any pregnant woman.

The Benefits

Pregnancy is an amazing miracle of the body. Unfortunately, sometimes it can bring with it everything from minor aches and pains to extreme pain that could take a toll on the body. Not only that, there are extra demands placed on pregnant women (like frequent Doctor Office appointments) that make life even busier.

Let’s make life a little easier, safer and more convenient for women who are expectant.

- Health: Having less distance to walk may help pregnant women who might be experiencing some of common symptoms of pregnancy:
 - Fatigue
 - Nausea or Vomiting
 - Frequent Urination
 - Dizziness (Feeling Faint)
 - Difficulty Sleeping
 - Pregnancy Hemorrhoids
 - Leg Cramps
 - Shortness of Breath
 - Swelling in the Feet and Legs
 - Backaches
 - Abdominal Pain or Discomfort
- Efficiency: Pregnant mothers often, especially the late stages of pregnancy have many doctors' appointments scheduled throughout the various times of the day or the morning. Because of this many pregnant mothers arrive to work at odd times or later in the day, and therefore get even worse spaces than normal.
 - If they had a reserved parking spot they could return from their appointment and know they have a spot waiting for them.
- Safety: We already spoke of the natural dangers of parking lots. Why would we put babies at even more risk?

Many companies are also improving their parental leave policy, showcasing an ever more heightened awareness of the benefits of supporting mothers with children.

Solution

- Create one or a small number of Pregnant Parking Spaces (sometimes called Expectant Mother Parking) at a close, convenient location.
 - Allows for closer parking, limiting the amount of time a pregnant woman might spend in dangerous parking lots.
 - Closer parking also allows convenience and health benefits for those struggling from adverse side effects from pregnancy.
 - Pregnant women will now have designated spaces at work for their busy schedule which can include doctors' appointments, checkups or late meetings.

Some Objections We've Heard

Some say that pregnant woman can just get temporary handicap permits.

- In some instances pregnant mothers have been recommended to get temporary handicap parking privileges, while this does provide a mother some of the benefits of parking closer, it also carries with it a number of possible issues for pregnant mothers.
 - Pregnant mothers may not know or think to go and request handicap spaces, because they believe those spaces and permits are heavily restricted.
 - Pregnant mothers may not want to go get handicap parking space privileges, because they do not believe pregnancy is a handicap.
 - Applying for the permit would take the consent of a doctor as well as an additional trip to the DMV.

Exercise is good for pregnancy

- While in some cases exercise can be good for pregnant woman, each case is different. In fact, many woman are told by their doctor to limit movement and rest.
- A store or business should not be in charge of deciding if a pregnant woman should walk more by not having pregnancy parking spaces. It is the woman's choice if she is able enough to make a longer walk.

If they can walk around a store, they shouldn't need closer parking.

- Excluding the risks of a parking lot, just because they can walk through a store does not mean they should be doing anything extra. It is not right to question the intent of the shopping trip, it may be essential to keep the household running. Often times and in many stores and malls, there are benches to rest if needed.

These spots are always empty, it is a waste of space!

- Although pregnancy parking spots can sometimes be empty, with more education and knowledge of benefits for pregnancy parking we believe more woman will take advantage of the use of these spaces.
- Many pregnant woman worry that someone more pregnant or more in need will need the space after them, therefore they do not use the space.
 - The main purpose of the pregnancy parking spaces is for safety and convenience. When more woman learn about the dangers of parking lots, they will be more inclined to use the spaces.
 - When the visibility and saturation of these spaces is more common usage rates will likely rise.
- If the space gets used 1 time over the course of a year, and it was the one time – during a snow storm – that a pregnant woman needed the space, isn't it worth it.

The Tool Kit

How do we make this happen?

What places are appropriate for Pregnancy Parking?

- We believe pregnant parking spaces can work in almost any environment, here are a few that come to mind.
 - Doctors' offices, places of employment, malls, department stores, shopping centers etc.

How do I go about creating a pregnancy parking space?

- Do you own the parking lot and do you have the rights to do this?
 - Yes:
 - Answer: Pick any parking space that is close that will benefit a pregnant mother and put up a sign and this is now a pregnant mother's parking space.
 - No:
 - We do not advocate making a pregnancy parking space on property you do not own, however we do advocate working with the property owner in order to make this accessible or available.

How many pregnant parking spaces do I need to have?

- How many do you currently have? If you have zero, even one is better.
- While you can never fully and accurately estimate how many you need, starting with one is going in the right direction. Adjust as you understand usage patterns.

This isn't my responsibility, it should be the law.

While there are no national laws yet, the intent is to start a national movement to help get it in more places. A lot of this is common sense and is something we should all have.

- The intent of this movement, at this moment is not to necessarily make this a law or political issue, but to make this an opportunity to do what's right even though it's not the law. Plus there will be more flexibility in how we roll this out if we do not try to go the legal route.
- If you would like to help make this a law, in your area contact any local law representatives.

What does it cost?

- This could cost next to nothing, in fact it could be as easy as putting up a sign, possibly painting lines around that parking space a special color to coordinate with the sign.
- Should be extremely easy, low-cost and the low time investment.
- There are many websites that offer signage at low costs
 - <http://www.safetysign.com/categories/s220/expectant-mother-parking-signs>

Thank you, and we hope you'll help.