

Disability Parking



Michigan
Secretary of State

The Secretary of State issued the first disability parking license plate in 1974 and the first disability placard in 1977. Before 1977, Michigan State Police administered the placard program, which began in 1949 with the return of World War II veterans.

In 1995, the Michigan Legislature revised the guidelines for issuing disability parking placards and established a new certification process for obtaining free parking privileges to curb abuses of the program.

The Secretary of State is proud of its long tradition of administering the disability parking program and will continue to work with the traffic safety community, law enforcement officials, legislators, disability advocacy groups, businesses, and the public to maintain the highest level of program integrity possible.

Who qualifies for a disability parking placard or license plate?

Individuals who have a disability that restricts their ability to walk may qualify for a disability placard or license plate. Qualifying disabilities are defined in law as:

- Blindness
- Inability to walk more than 200 feet without having to stop and rest.
- Use of a wheelchair, walker, crutch, brace, or other ambulatory aid.
- Lung disease with deterioration in expiratory volume. (See application.)
- Cardiovascular condition. (See application.)
- Arthritic, neurological, or orthopedic condition that severely limits the ability to walk.
- Persistent reliance on oxygen sources other than ordinary air.

The disability placard and license plate display the international wheelchair access symbol and allow

you to park in any designated disability parking space. To park in metered parking spaces or public parking ramps for free, you must have a disability placard with a yellow free parking sticker affixed to it.

A disability license plate can also be issued for transporting a disabled family member residing in the same household. Organizations that transport individuals with disabilities also qualify.

How do I obtain a disability parking placard or license plate?

Applications for the disability placard and license plate are available at any Secretary of State branch office or may be printed from the department's web site: www.michigan.gov/sos

A physician, chiropractor, or vision specialist must certify an individual's disability before a disability placard or license plate will be issued. Practitioners who are licensed in other states must include a copy of their current license to practice

with the application. Once the application is completed, it should be mailed to the address shown on the application. Completed applications may also be returned to a Secretary of State branch office for processing. Placards can be issued at the branch but plates are mailed from Lansing. The Secretary of State reviews all applications and may defer to your physician or the department's team of medical specialists if there is any question regarding the medical information on the application.

What is the fee for a disability parking placard or license plate?

There is no fee for an original temporary or permanent disability placard or when renewing a permanent disability placard. Expired temporary disability placards cannot be renewed. Lost disability placards are replaced for a \$10 fee.

Applicants for a disability license plate pay only the annual vehicle registration fee. A van owned by a wheelchair user or by a person who transports a household member who

uses a wheelchair is eligible for a 50-percent reduction of the annual vehicle registration fee. Such vans may not be used for commercial purposes.

Who qualifies for a free parking sticker?

To qualify for a free parking sticker, you must have a valid Michigan driver license and be unable to do one or more of the following:

- Insert coins or tokens in a parking meter or unable to accept a ticket from a parking lot machine due to a lack of fine motor control of both hands.
- Reach above your head to a height of 42 inches from the ground, due to a lack of finger, hand, or upper extremity strength or mobility.
- Approach a parking meter due to the use of a wheelchair or other ambulatory device.
- Walk more than 20 feet due to an orthopedic, cardiovascular, or lung condition in which the degree of debilitation is so severe that it almost completely impedes your ability to walk.

To obtain a free parking sticker, you must have your physician, chiropractor, or vision specialist complete Part 3 of the application form. You must have a disability placard with a yellow free parking sticker on it to park free. A disability license plate does not authorize you to park free. Please note that private parking lots are not obligated to provide free parking.

How long is a disability parking placard valid?

Permanent disability placards are blue and are issued for a qualifying disability that is permanent. This means there is no medical expectation the condition will improve. Permanent placards are valid for four years from the holder's next birthday.

Temporary disability placards are red and are issued for a qualifying disability that is medically expected to improve over the next six months. Temporary placards are valid for up to six months. If a medical condition has not improved within that time, a new application must be completed.

How do I renew a disability parking placard or disability license plate?

Permanent disability placards and disability license plates may be renewed up to 45 days before the expiration date. Renewals may be processed at any Secretary of State branch office. Disability placards may also be renewed by mailing an application to the Department of State, Office of Customer Service, Distributed Services Unit, P.O. Box 30764, Lansing, Michigan, 48909-8264; by calling (888) 767-6424; or faxing an application to (517)322-1063.

Disability license plates may be renewed through the mail, and by telephone, Internet, or fax. For complete instructions, refer to your license plate renewal notice or visit the department's web site: www.michigan.gov/sos

May I obtain more than one disability parking placard at a time?

You may use your disability placard in any vehicle that you are driving or is transporting you. However, Michigan law allows only one disability placard to be issued to a person. The law does not limit the number of placards per family if other members also have a qualifying disability.

Additionally, if you have a qualifying disability, you may obtain a disability license plate for each of your registered personal vehicles. Disability license plates can also be obtained for personal vehicles used to transport a disabled family member residing in the same household.

When is the use of a disability parking placard or license plate illegal?

Disability parking laws enable people with severe mobility disabilities to utilize services and employment opportunities by providing accessible parking. The disability placard or license plate is intended for use only by the person with a disability or someone transporting the person with a disability. Under Michigan law, it is illegal to:

- Drive with a disability placard hanging from the rear view mirror.
- Use a disability placard or license plate when the person with a disability is not being transported.
- Lend a disability placard to another person.
- Alter or make a copy of a disability placard.
- Continue using the disability placard issued to a family member who has since passed away. Such disability placards should be immediately surrendered to the Secretary of State.

A disability license plate registered to the family member of an individual with disabilities who has since passed away remains valid until the expiration date of the plate. However, it is illegal to use the license plate to park in disability spaces since the disabled person is not being transported. When it is time to renew the license plate, the disability plate should be returned to the Secretary of State and a regular license plate will be issued.

Improper use may result in the immediate confiscation and cancellation of the disability placard or license plate. Furthermore, improper use, altering, forging, or copying a disability placard may result in fines up to \$500, jail time of up to 30 days, or both. Local fines may be higher and could include court costs. The Secretary of State may cancel the disability placard or license plate.

Is my disability parking placard or license plate honored in other states?

All other states and some foreign countries honor Michigan's disability placards and license plates. Before you travel, make sure to contact the local law enforcement agency of the community you will be visiting to find out if there are any special disability parking ordinances.

What is van accessible parking?

Van accessible parking spaces are wider than standard parking spaces to provide room for the van's wheelchair lift and ramp. It is illegal to park on the painted stripes next to a disability parking space or block any ramps or curb cuts. Violators may be ticketed and their vehicles towed.

I'm disabled and receive Social Security or Veteran's benefits – can I park in a disability parking space?

No. You must have a disability placard or license plate to park in a disability parking space.

What license plates are available in a disability version?

The Great Lakes Splendor, blue-and-white, veterans, and fundraising license plates are just some of the plates available in a disability version. For a complete list of license plates and fees, contact any Secretary of State branch office or visit the department's web site: www.michigan.gov/sos Disability license plates are issued to passenger cars, vans, and small trucks. Commercial vehicles are not eligible.

What should I do if I suspect someone is illegally parking in a disability parking space?

If you suspect someone is illegally parking in a disability parking space, you should notify the local authority responsible for parking enforcement – in most communities that would be either the police or parking enforcement bureau. They can investigate the situation and determine whether a violation has occurred. The Secretary of State does not have the authority to enforce disability parking laws and ordinances.

What can I do if I believe someone applied for a disability parking placard or license plate fraudulently?

The Secretary of State will investigate if there is reason to believe a disability placard or license plate was issued improperly. If

you have evidence to suggest a fraudulent application was made, please contact the Driver Assessment Support Section at (888) 767-6424. You must supply the placard or license plate number, along with your reasons for believing that fraud was involved.

Please keep in mind that not all disabilities require the use of a wheelchair, crutches, or other medical apparatus. Lung diseases, and cardiovascular and neurological conditions are a few examples of conditions that are not readily apparent or visible but still can qualify the individual for a disability placard or license plate.



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