



## **New Law Requires Written Prescription for Disabled Parking**

Fraud and abuse has compromised Washington's special parking program for persons with disabilities. The state legislature recognized this during the 2013 session and again in 2014 by amending existing law to reduce the abuse of the program, among other things.

[HB 2463](#) takes effect July 1, 2015, and will have a significant impact on the program's application and renewal process. At that time a person applying for parking privileges for persons with disabilities must include a written prescription from a health care provider. This requirement is in addition to completing the standard application. Healthcare providers without prescriptive authority may write an authorization on office letterhead.

Healthcare providers are advised to protect themselves and their patients who rely on this program by not prescribing special parking to those who do not meet the required criteria.

### **Disabled parking privilege criteria**

- Cannot walk two hundred feet without stopping to rest;
- Is severely limited in ability to walk due to arthritic, neurological, or orthopedic condition;
- Has such a severe disability that the person cannot walk without the use of or assistance from a brace, cane, another person, prosthetic device, wheelchair, or other assistive device;
- Uses portable oxygen;
- Is restricted by lung disease to an extent that forced expiratory respiratory volume, when measured by spirometry, is less than one liter per second or the arterial oxygen tension is less than sixty mm/hg on room air at rest;
- Impairment by cardiovascular disease or cardiac condition to the extent that the person's functional limitations are classified as class III or IV under standards accepted by the American heart association;
- Has a disability resulting from an acute sensitivity to automobile emissions that limits or impairs the ability to walk. The personal physician, advanced registered nurse practitioner, or physician assistant of the applicant shall document that the disability is comparable in severity to the others listed in this subsection;
- Has limited mobility and has no vision or whose vision with corrective lenses is so limited that the person requires alternative methods or skills to do efficiently those things that are ordinarily done with sight by persons with normal vision;
- Has an eye condition of a progressive nature that may lead to blindness; or
- Is restricted by a form of porphyria to the extent that the applicant would significantly benefit from a decrease in exposure to light.

The changes in the law are, in part, the result of recommendations by the Disabled Parking Work Group. It was formed under the direction of the 2013 Legislature ([SB 5024](#)) to examine the use of placards and special license plates for persons with disabilities, and develop a plan to end program abuse. The work group included the Department of Licensing, the Department of Health, disabled citizen advocacy groups and local governments. It also accepted public input.

Other changes that are intended to help decrease abuse of the program include:

- A new application will be required upon renewal;
- Temporary parking placards are extended to up to 12 months;
- Illegally obtaining a placard, license plate, tab, or identification card has been upgraded from a traffic infraction to a misdemeanor criminal offense.
- New language on the application form includes a more detailed warning. It reminds applicants and healthcare providers that they are guilty of a gross misdemeanor if they knowingly providing false information during the application process. Healthcare providers may also be subject to sanctions under the Uniform Disciplinary Act.

More information is available at [www.dol.wa.gov](http://www.dol.wa.gov).

