

The Blue Badge Scheme

Department for
Transport

Guidance for blue badge holders and their drivers on the power to inspect blue badges being displayed on motor vehicles



**This leaflet is available in large print,
braille and audio tape formats.
Contact 020 7944 2914
or see the back cover for details.**

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The Department for Transport has produced this leaflet with assistance from the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, the Disabled Drivers' Association and the Disabled Drivers' Motor Club (now known as Mobilise following merger), the Home Office, the Association of London Government, the Local Government Association, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), Transport for London and members of the Guidance Working Group.

What is this leaflet about?

1. This leaflet tells blue badge holders about changes to the law on blue badges. Whenever you display your blue badge on a vehicle, it can now be inspected. The people who are allowed to inspect your badge are police officers, traffic wardens, and people working for the local authority who check that vehicles are parked properly (such as parking attendants and civil enforcement officers). These people will be able to produce a photographic identity card or warrant card if requested to prove that they are authorised officers. If any of these people ask to see your blue badge, you should hand your badge to them so that they can examine it and make notes from it. If you do not, you will be breaking the law.



When can you use a blue badge for on-street parking?

2. The blue badge is used to help with parking on streets. The scheme does not apply to car-parks or on private land. You can use your badge if you drive a vehicle or if you are a passenger in a vehicle driven by someone else. If you are not a driver, you should make sure the driver knows these rules. Show them this leaflet. You should also show them the Department for Transport's leaflet 'The Blue Badge Scheme' which should have been issued to you with your badge by your local Council for information on the parking concessions. If not, contact your local Council for a copy. Copies are also available from the Department for Transport (see paragraph 19 for details).

3. Notices or signs will be displayed where restrictions are in place so you should always check what the rules are when you use your badge.

4. Where they are available, you should always try to park in spaces on the street marked for disabled people before parking on yellow lines. You also have to display your badge on the dashboard or fascia panel of the front windscreen of the vehicle even when you park in one of these spaces. When parking on yellow lines or where there is a time limit for parking in the space (as shown on the local signs), the blue parking disc (clock) must also be displayed showing the time that you arrive. Make sure your badge can be seen easily on the vehicle with the front of the badge (the side showing the wheelchair symbol) face up. You must ensure that the details on the front of the badge remain legible. If they become unreadable, the badge must be returned to your local Council for re-issue. People who park in these spaces who do not show a blue badge, and a parking disc (clock) where there is a time limit, are liable to pay a parking charge or fine.

5. Councils and private car-park operators have different rules about parking in their off-street car parks so you must always check what the rules are from the notices and signs on display before parking.



Why are there new rules on inspecting blue badges?

6. The new rules allowing people to inspect your blue badge are to make sure that the badge has not been changed in any way, that it is not stolen or that it is not being used by someone, other than you, who is not entitled to use it. For example, some people let their friends and families use their badge even though they are not travelling in the vehicle. It is important that badges are used properly so as to protect the rights of genuine badge holders.

7. These checks are not about whether you are entitled to a badge. That is for the Council who issued it. When you are asked to show your badge nothing will happen to you if your blue badge is being used correctly.

What constitutes misuse of the blue badge?

8. Misuse of a blue badge is an offence. Your blue badge must therefore be used correctly, so it is important that you know the rules about using it. They are in the leaflet you get when you receive your blue badge. When you use your blue badge always follow the rules. If someone else drives a vehicle that you are a passenger in, they need to know the rules too. Remember to show the leaflet to them.

9. Here are pointers about what you should NOT do:

- **Do not let someone else use your badge.**

You should never allow someone else to use your badge, even if it is to collect something for you, if you are not also travelling in the vehicle. For example, some people let their friends and families use their badge even though they are not travelling in the vehicle. Whenever you are not travelling in the vehicle you should take the blue badge out so no-one else can use it.

- **Do not let someone else use the blue badge to get free or better parking.**

The trip must be for your benefit. If the trip is for someone else and you are a passenger and staying in the vehicle, you cannot use the badge simply to allow them to benefit from free or better parking.



Someone who is not disabled who uses a blue badge could be breaking the law and could be fined up to £1000 (subject to specified exemptions).

- **Do not use your badge when it is out-of-date.**

You can only have a blue badge for three years at a time. When the three years are up you must apply to your local Council for a new one. You have to wait for your new badge to be issued to you before you can use the parking benefits. So remember to apply for a new one before the three years runs out. And remember to send your old badge back to the Council. If you no longer need a blue badge, it should be sent back to the Council.

- **Do not use your badge when information on the badge is wrong or illegible.**

You cannot change any information on a badge. People who inspect badges must be able to read all the information on your badge. If the information becomes illegible, send the badge back to the Council and ask for a new one.

- **Do not reproduce or allow anybody to reproduce your badge.**



11. If you do not display your badge correctly you could receive a parking fine. If there is no dashboard in your vehicle you must still show your badge in the front windscreen. Put it somewhere where it can be seen easily. Remember that people who inspect badges must be able to read all the information on the front of the badge. You must also display the blue parking disc, with your badge, to show the time you arrive if you are parking on single or double yellow lines or if you are parking in a space where there is a time limit.

How will you be affected by inspection of your blue badge?

12. When someone who is allowed to inspect your badge asks to see it, you must show the badge to them. If you do not, you will be breaking the law. You could be fined for not showing your badge.



What could happen if you are not using your badge correctly?

13. If someone who is allowed to inspect your badge thinks you have not been using it correctly, they can write down the information shown on it, such as the number of the badge and send this information to the Council that gave you the badge. They will tell the Council that they think you were using the badge incorrectly and this information will be kept on file.

When could your blue badge be taken away from you?

14. If you are the genuine holder, then the people who inspect your badge cannot take your badge away from you when you are using it. However, your badge could be seized if it is being used by someone else. If the Council that gave you the badge is told that you used it incorrectly, they will write to you to warn you to follow the rules and use it correctly. It is important that you reply to the Council if you receive such a letter to explain to them what happened. If you continue to use your badge incorrectly and receive parking tickets, then the Council could take the badge from you. Also, if someone else is the driver of a vehicle and they receive parking tickets for using the badge incorrectly, you could have your badge taken from you by the Council.

What can you do if you are unhappy with how you have been treated?

15. ■ What if you are given a parking ticket?

This might happen even if you think you were using your blue badge correctly. If you think it was wrong, you can ask for the decision to be looked at again. You do this by following the advice on the penalty charge or fixed penalty notice.

■ What if the Council that gave you the badge writes to you to warn you about using the badge incorrectly?

This might happen even if you think you were using the badge correctly. If you disagree with the Council, you can ask for the decision to be looked at again. Write to the Council and tell them how you were using the badge at the time it was inspected.

What training should people who inspect blue badges have had?

16. People who inspect blue badges have been told about these changes in the law and the new rules on inspecting blue badges. They have been told how to inspect blue badges and the action they should take if they think a blue badge is not being used correctly. They have been made aware of the needs of disabled people and have been asked to think about these needs when inspecting blue badges.



How can you get this information in a way that suits your needs?

17. This information can be given to you in different ways that meet your needs. You can ask for this leaflet in braille or in large print. You can ask for an audio tape of this leaflet or for it to be sent to you by e mail or on a computer disc. Please ask for a copy of this leaflet from the Department for Transport in the way that meets your needs.

Who should I contact for inquiries?

18. As the Blue Badge Scheme in England is administered by your local Council, (the issuing office is stamped or written on your badge - ask for the section dealing with Blue Badges) they are the people to contact if:

- you need an application form to apply for a badge;
- your application was unsuccessful but you do not know why;
- your badge needs to be renewed;
- your badge is lost or stolen;
- you move house;
- you no longer need a badge; and
- a badge needs to be returned because the holder has died.

19. For inquiries about the new power to inspect Blue Badges, you should write to the Department for Transport at the address below:

Department for Transport, Mobility and Inclusion Unit

Zone 4/22, Great Minster House, 76 Marsham Street,
London SW1P 4DR

tel: 020 7944 2914 fax: 020 7944 6102

email: blue.badge@dft.gsi.gov.uk

20. For enquiries about the Blue Badge Scheme in **Wales**, **Scotland** or **Northern Ireland** turn to the back cover.

Welsh Assembly Government

Sustainable Travel Unit,
Transport Planning and Administration,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff CF10 3NQ
tel: 029 2082 6501
email: blue.badge@wales.gov.uk

Scottish Executive Enterprise Transport and Lifelong Learning Department

Aviation, Ports and International Division,
Area 2-F, Victoria Quay,
Leith, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ
tel: 0131 244 0860/0861

Department for Regional Development Northern Ireland

Roads Services Headquarters,
Clarence Court,
10–18 Adelaide Street,
Belfast BT2 8GB
tel: 02890 540434