

Handicap Parking

Many of us have family members or know of others that have a physical condition that permits them to receive a handicap placard or handicap license plate. As you frequent locations do you find yourself looking at the handicap parking spaces and looking for proper license plates or a hanging placard? How often have you asked yourself, they don't look like they have a physical impairment?

The regulation for the design of handicap parking spaces is found in the American Disability Act of 1990. In addition to the ADA, the City and State have statutes concerning parking in a handicap spot. The Tennessee code, 55-21-108, sets out a fine not to exceed \$200 and up to 5 hours of community service for violations of the handicap parking ordinances. The code even allows for the towing of the vehicle. There are three methods of designating a vehicle for handicap parking; a license plate with the universal wheelchair design, a hanging placard issued to the disabled person for use while a passenger or operator of another vehicle, or a disabled veteran that meets the criteria may be issued a disabled veteran license plate. There is also a provision for a temporary hanging placard available through the county clerk.

The presence of the hanging placard or the license plate(s) does not automatically authorize the parking in a handicap spot. The state statute is very clear that the disabled driver or the disabled passenger, to whom the license plate or the placard was issued, must be in the vehicle. The statute permits a law enforcement officer to confiscate the placard if it has been used unlawfully. The handicapped parking spaces are designed for those people needing assistance and should not be abused. Any questions concerning this or other Police activities should be directed to Chief Paul Blackwell at (931) 455-0530 or pblackwell@tullahomatn.gov .