



Kansas LTAP Fact Sheet

Parking Restrictions for On-Street Parking

By Anna Cohen and Lisa Koch, Kansas LTAP

Parking restrictions are tools used by cities to allocate parking to specific areas. Restrictions are often put in place to avoid overcrowding streets with parked cars and to ensure that emergency vehicles can access streets.

This article will focus on parking restrictions for on-street parking, including state standards for on-street parking, local examples of restrictions, and methods of enforcement/implementation.

On-street versus off-street parking

Space for parking can be made available in two forms, on-street parking and off-street parking. On-street parking provides space on the road for cars to parallel park, or to park at an angle forward-in or back-in. On-street parking is found on collector and local streets due to their lower speed limits and traffic volume. Off-street parking is land provided by a municipality, business, or residential unit that provides space for a vehicle off the street. Off-street parking can be large surface lots, parking garages, and driveways.

Street standards for on-street parking

Not all streets can handle on-street parking and also remain safe to all users. Streets need to be wide enough to support the flow of traffic on the street, provide enough space for emergency access, and provide enough space between moving traffic and parked cars. Streets also need a low enough speed for pedestrians to access their parked vehicle in the roadway.

A standard vehicle is six feet wide. A widely accepted width of eight feet is provided for on-street parking, giving enough room for a passenger to safely step out of the vehicle and for cars to pass without hitting another car.

Currently, there is no consensus for on-street width minimums for providing on-street parking. Some

cities allow on street parking for streets that are 29 feet wide curb to curb. This provides 20 feet for emergency access vehicles which is a commonly accepted minimum. The spacing for each car on the road is 7.3

feet, giving each car 1.3 feet between other vehicles. Other cities prefer on-street parking for streets that are 35-39 feet wide from curb to curb which then gives vehicles 2.8-3.8 feet between each vehicle. An illustration of varying residential street widths that provide on-street parking is provided in Figure 1.

On-street parking should be on streets with lower speed limits. Slower driving gives drivers more time to react to parked vehicles and pedestrians. Many cities suggest speed limits of 25mph-30mph for streets that provide parking.

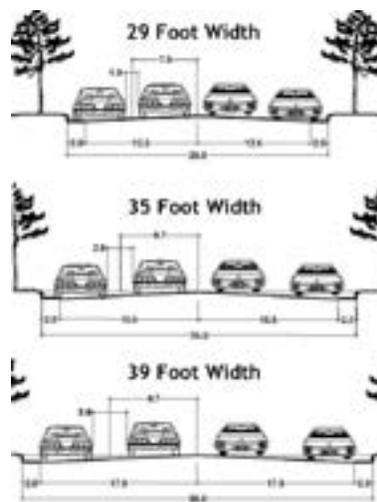


Figure 1 illustrates street widths for on-street parking.

Safety of bicyclists should be considered when designing on-street parking. On-street parking should be on streets that provide enough distance between vehicles for riders to feel comfortable. When designing bike lanes adjacent to on-street parking, the length of the driver's side door must be taken into account. The open door must remain in the parking zone and not in the bicycle lane.

Kansas on-street parking restrictions

The state of Kansas has standard restrictions for on-street parking. These restrictions can be modified within local jurisdictions to provide more safety on streets. Below are some of the on-street parking restrictions for residential streets.

Parking is not allowed:

- Within 15 feet of a fire hydrant
- Within 30 feet of a crosswalk at an intersection
- Within 30 feet of a stop sign or traffic signal
- Within 20 feet of a fire station or 75 feet if posted by the fire department
- Within 50 feet of a railroad crossing
- In front of a public or private driveway

At the local level, some cities use development codes to reduce on-street parking. For example, the City of DeSoto requires that developers of single family homes provide 2 off-street parking spaces per dwelling unit, and multi-family homes require 1.5 off-street parking spaces per bedroom. An added parking restriction in DeSoto prevents residents from parking in the bulb of the cul-de-sac to allow more space for emergency vehicle access.

Methods for Restricting On-street Parking

On-street parking can be restricted using a variety of methods, ranging from placing signs restricting the amount of time a vehicle can remain parked to physically altering the street and making it too narrow for parking. Permit parking restricts parking to those who have paid for a permit to park in the area. This is typical in residential neighborhoods with little off-street parking available for residents.

Metered on-street parking is a method for reducing the amount of time one vehicle remains parked on a street. Not only is the driver forced to pay to park on the street, meters can have maximum time limits. Creating time limits will encourage the driver to leave after their time has maxed out or require them to pay an additional amount to remain parked. A barrier to non-metered time limit parking is determining how long a vehicle has been parked. Some cities like Lawrence use a chalk system in which a city employee marks the tires of cars at certain time intervals to indicate how long cars are parking in time-limited spots.

Implementing Parking Restrictions

Parking restrictions can be implemented in varying ways depending on how much funding is allocated to enforcement. Using signs to inform drivers of restrictions is a common method for implementing parking restrictions. Signs can give detailed information as to when a vehicle can park on the street, for how long, where they can park, and the consequences of violating the parking rules. The Federal Highway Administration publishes the Manual on Urban Traffic Control Devices, which provides the national standard for road signage and traffic control devices. See sign examples in Figure 2.

Enforcing Parking Restrictions

Signs and meters alone may not be enough to enforce parking restrictions. Drivers need to be aware of the consequences they face should they choose to violate the rules.

A common method to enforce parking restrictions is to hire parking enforcement officers. The officers are tasked with walking around the city to enforce parking restrictions by writing citations for those who are parked illegally. Before a city hires parking officers

to enforce parking fines, punishments need to be established and apparent to all drivers. Cities need to



Figure 2: Example of signs restricting on-street parking. Images taken from the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

make certain that fines are high enough to discourage drivers from breaking the rules. Low fines may not prevent drivers from following restrictions if fines are comparable to paying for parking in a metered spot. Parking fines should not be used as a revenue source; it is a tool used to discourage people from parking in restricted areas.

Keeping detailed records of violators will help in dealing with repeat offenders. Cities can set higher fines for those who have been caught parking illegally more than once. Additional consequences for repeat offenders may include having the car booted or towed by a third-party company. This causes an inconvenience to the owner of the vehicle since they have to call the third party to remove the boot or retrieve their car; there is also a fee the owner will have to pay to get their car back. The benefit of using a third-party towing company is that it removes the cost from the City to hold the vehicles own tow trucks. It also removes any conflict between the car owner and parking officer.

Conclusion

Parking is a highly contested topic as some feel cities should provide parking everywhere while others feel it's wasted space or make streets unsafe. On-street parking is used when not enough off-street parking is provided in commercial and residential areas. While there is no clear standard for on-street parking, there is some consensus on street standards cities can use to frame their own parking situation.

Sources:

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