



Risk Management Considerations for Parking Lot Safety

Parking lots are often overlooked for not being as hazardous as they have the potential to be. Both pedestrians and drivers may be distracted and off in their own world. The best deterrent to a parking lot motor vehicle/pedestrian collision and safety is awareness and preparedness.

Pedestrian Safety

- Stay alert and be aware of your surroundings when walking in a parking lot. Refrain from an activity (e.g. texting or checking email) which puts your attention elsewhere.
- Remember that vehicles have blind spots; drivers may not see you, even if you see them.
- Look both ways before crossing an aisle or main corridors, use crosswalks and always use sidewalks whenever possible.
- Walk down the parking lots aisles and not in-between vehicles when walking to and from your vehicle.
- Walk in groups, when possible, for greater visibility.
- When walking to your vehicle, be aware of vehicles that are running, look for back up lights. Ensure that the driver backing out of their parking spot sees you.
- Wear proper footwear during periods of snow, ice, or rain.

- Parking lots present other dangers such as robbery and car theft. Never leave valuables in clear eyesight, if you're alone and your vehicle is equipped with a remote door lock/unlock ensure that the driver's door only is unlocked.

Driver Safety

- Stay alert and be aware of your surroundings when driving. Always be aware of cars and pedestrians that might drive or walk into your line of travel.
- Whenever possible, pull all the way through the parking space to avoid backing out. Doing so reduces the number of blind spots for the driver.
- If you must back out of a parking space, before shifting into reverse look around; you must be aware of the clearances between your vehicle and the vehicles to either side, you must also verify that nothing is behind your vehicle.
- When maneuvering through any parking lot, drive slow (15km/h recommended) and watch for vehicles entering or exiting their parking spots.
- Drive even slower in the event of rain, snow, or ice or at any time of reduced visibility.
- Parking garages call for extra caution, due to factors like low ceilings, tight corners and reduced lighting.
- Drivers of motorcycles and bicycles are to follow the same traffic rules as drivers of a motor vehicle.

Tips for After Dark Safety

If you are accessing a parking lot alone after dark, consider the following:

- Be sure to move your vehicle to a well-lit parking space that is closest to the door by which you will exit before it gets dark.
- Do not leave valuables in view inside your car.
- Remember to back into your parking space allowing for a more rapid egress if a threatening situation develops.
- Leave the building with others, if possible. The buddy system leaves you less vulnerable.
- Refrain from checking your phone or texting, which puts your attention elsewhere.
- A small high intensity flashlight is helpful for illuminating the area around and under your vehicle, and allows you to check the back seat before unlocking your car to get in.
- Have your keys in your hands before you leave the building and remember to use the panic button on your key fob if you sense something is amiss.
- Try and walk down the middle of the parking aisle keeping as much distance between you and the parked cars on either side. Don't take shortcuts between vehicles.
- Always walk with purpose and scan your surroundings.
- Once in your vehicle, lock the doors immediately and get underway.
- Always trust your instincts. If you get a bad feeling about walking out to your vehicle, don't.

Parking Lot Inspections

Parking lots should be inspected on a regular basis for the following:

- The condition of the paved surface, looking for defects such as potholes, cracks, surface discontinuities, other distortions.
- The condition of the entrance/exit aprons.
- The condition of sidewalks and walkways.
- The condition of curbs and/or bumper blocks.
- The condition and adequacy of pavement markings and signs.
- The cleanliness of the parking lot i.e. litter and debris.
- The condition of light standards and whether or not luminaires are functioning.

Intact Public Entities has published, on the Centre of Excellence, [a parking lot inspection form](#) for use.