

PARKING REQUIREMENTS AND PARKING EXEMPTION CRITERIA GUIDELINES FOR LEASED STATE FACILITIES

Employee Parking Requirements

Background

In 1997 the Washington State Legislature passed legislation providing state agencies direction on how the state will reduce its subsidization of employee parking. In addition, the legislation (RCW 43.01.240) provides guidance on an agency's allocation of employee parking. The law designates the Department of General Administration (GA) to administer the law.

RCW 43.01.240 (3): In order to reduce the state's subsidization of employee parking, after July 1997 agencies shall not enter into leases for employee parking in excess of building (*zoning*) code requirements, except as authorized by the director of general administration. In situations where there are fewer parking spaces than employees at a worksite, parking must be allocated equitably, with no special preference given to managers.

- ◇ **The parking requirements affect the renewals of new and existing leases.**
- ◇ **The law applies to all state-leased worksites not just those affected by the 1991 Commute Trip Reduction Law.**
- ◇ **Institutions of Higher Education are exempt from this section of law.**

Local zoning codes include parking ratios that are applied to buildings depending upon their use. The applicable ratio for agency worksites is either contained in "general office buildings" or "government office buildings."

In addition to reducing the state's subsidization of employee parking, reducing the amount of parking available to employees is a tool that helps reduce the number of single occupant vehicles commuting to a worksite and is consistent with the 1991 Commute Trip Reduction Law, RCW 70.94.521 (2). Where there is plenty of parking available to employees, there is no incentive for employees to use an alternative commute mode.

Renewal of Existing Lease

Prior to requesting a renewal of an existing lease or filing a space request, agencies must complete the following process:

1. Identify the number of parking spaces within the existing lease. Note the number of stalls designated for categories of parking such as employee, ADA, visitor, agency vehicle, etc.
2. Determine the local jurisdiction's zoning code requirements for parking for the location and type of facility being leased. For example, office buildings have different requirements than warehouses. In addition, the local code may differentiate between "general office buildings" and "government office buildings," and even further between "administrative offices" and "customer services facilities."

Note: Unless an agency can document that the worksite is **substantially** devoted to a customer service function (for example, a local Department of Licensing's Driver Services Office) the latter category cannot be applied. Staff in GA's Real Estate Services can provide the appropriate zoning codes.

If the worksite's existing parking does not exceed jurisdictional zoning code requirements and the worksite is not requesting additional parking, *the process is complete.*

If it is determined that the worksite's parking spaces exceed the local jurisdiction's parking code and are used for employee parking only, the agency may:

1. Reduce the number of parking spaces in the lease to the amount allowed by local jurisdictional code.
 - ◇ If the decision is to eliminate the additional parking lease(s), *the process is complete*.
Note: Eliminating additional employee parking spaces from the lease does not mean that employees cannot lease the spaces, just that the agency cannot. The agency could work with the lessor to set up a system whereby employees could lease parking spaces directly from the lessor.
2. Implement a parking fee program to eliminate the agency's subsidization of the additional employee parking. If a parking fee is already imposed, the fee collected must cover all the costs of the parking lease beyond the local code.
 - ◇ If the agency chooses to impose parking fees, the program must be implemented in accordance with RCW 43.01.240 (2). A parking fee program must involve all employees and pay for, at a minimum, the total cost of the additional parking spaces leased beyond code. The parking charge must be imposed as long as the additional parking spaces are leased by the agency. *Note:* Consult with any collective bargaining contracts that may apply to the worksite regarding imposing parking fees.
 - ◇ The cost of the additional parking must be identified as a separate line item cost in the worksite lease.
 - ◇ The Agency's parking program must be submitted to GA and be kept in the file with the lease.
3. Request an exemption to keep the additional employee parking spaces
 - ◇ If the agency chooses not to impose parking fees and to retain the parking spaces that exceed the local parking code, the agency must submit a formal written request for exemption. (See parking exemption criteria on the next page.)
 - ◇ If the additional parking is approved by GA, the cost of the additional parking must be identified as a separate line item cost in the worksite lease.

New Leases

Prior to requesting a new lease, agencies must determine the number of parking spaces allowed in the local zoning code and apply them to the proposed building size and type. Leasing agents located in Real Estate Services in GA can provide this information.

- ◇ If the total parking needs requested for the worksite do not exceed those identified in the local jurisdiction's parking ratios, *the process is complete* and no further action is necessary.
- ◇ If an agency/worksite wants to request additional employee parking (beyond that referenced in the local jurisdiction's parking code), then the agency must submit a formal written request for exemption.

Exemption Criteria for Parking at Leased Facilities

The purpose of the parking exemption criteria is to provide the director of the Department of General Administration (GA) guidelines to grant a parking requirement exemption to an agency or worksite in accordance with the requirements of RCW 43.01.240 (3).

When negotiating a lease for state worksites, staff in GA's Real Estate Services will be available to assist agencies in applying the exemption criteria below and, if required with completing a request for an exemption. The final decision to grant an exemption rests with the Director of General Administration and will be granted on a case by case basis.

Prior to a worksite being granted an exemption, the agency must consider a parking fee program in accordance with RCW 43.01.240 (2). If parking fees are implemented, they must pay for, at a minimum, the total cost of the requested additional parking. This will ensure that the agency is not subsidizing employee parking for the additional spaces. If a parking fee is already imposed, a review to ensure that the appropriate parking costs are being covered must be completed. If the agency/worksite has decided to not charge a parking fee, the reason(s) for that decision must be documented in the exemption request. *Note:* Consult with any collective bargaining contracts that may apply to the worksite regarding imposing parking fees.

Exemption Criteria for New or Renewal of Existing Leases

In order to request additional parking, an agency must fulfill all of the following criteria. Real Estate staff is available for assistance. Documentation is required for all criteria.

- ◇ The agency has a significant need or extraordinary circumstances requiring additional parking. For example, the need for customer parking is so great that all spaces included in the building lease are used for customers/visitors before employee parking is considered.
- ◇ The agency/worksite has an adopted a parking policy and has analyzed its parking situation in accordance with the *Parking Program Guidelines*, adopted by the Interagency CTR Board in November, 2006. The agency's parking plan, at a minimum, must include:
 - **Preferential parking** for carpools and vanpools
 - **Zoned parking** (including overbooking)
- ◇ The agency/worksite has explored other parking options. For example, **shared parking** with other worksites or nearby businesses, churches, or schools.

The *Parking Program Guidelines* can be found at www.ga.wa.gov/CTR/guide.html.

Exemption Requests

A completed *Worksheet to Determine Worksite Parking* (link) must accompany a request for a parking exemption. Real Estate Services Property and Acquisition Specialists will review the worksheet and determine if the requested additional parking meets the State Employees Parking Requirements criteria. The Director of the Department of General Administration has the final authority to grant a parking exemption. (RCW 43.01.240 (3))

DEFINITIONS

Parking Management: Parking management is an approach that makes optimal use of available parking resources through the implementation of strategies such as preferential parking for carpools and vanpools, shared parking and zoned parking (instead of individually assigned parking spaces) reserved areas to meet specific needs, and a registration and enforcement program. Parking management strategies can change costs, supply, or demand to improve traffic flow, ease congestion, and save agencies money. Many of these strategies work best when they are part of an integrated trip reduction program or combined with transportation demand

management strategies, such as carpooling, vanpooling and ridematching that reduce the use of single occupant vehicles.

Preferential Parking: Reserved and conveniently located parking spaces generally close to the building entrance for carpools and vanpools. This program element requires that a system be established to register carpool and vanpool vehicles, drivers and riders; that special spaces be designated; and that a monitoring system be implemented. This program element acts as an incentive by providing easy and highly visible recognition to carpools and vanpools.

Shared Parking: At multi-agency worksites, it is in the interests of the agencies and employees to “pool” the parking and establish one parking program for the entire complex. By instituting zoned parking at the same time, capacity is significantly increased for all participating agencies, regardless of the amount of parking specified in each lease.

Shared parking may also be based on sharing with other tenants than state agencies, and be based on time of day or uses. For example, agencies may pursue shared parking arrangements with churches, schools and other nearby businesses that use the parking facility at different times of the day or with a reduced need to use all of their available parking.

Zoned Parking: Rather than an assigned space for each individual, the parking area is open to all employees with no assigned spaces. Zoned parking areas can increase the actual capacity for parking between 20% and 40%. Such an approach allows more employees to park in an area because, on a daily basis, there are always employees who do not come to the worksite for a variety of reasons. Depending upon the size of the parking area, this program element may require that a system be established to register vehicles and drivers. It may also be necessary to develop a monitoring and enforcement system.