

IPC Guidance on Covid-19 Vaccination Centres and subsequent enforcement

The Government and the NHS are now rolling out a mass vaccination programme to combat the threat posed by Covid-19. The NHS vaccination programme, the biggest in the health service's history, is being delivered as health service staff are treating record numbers of seriously ill patients with coronavirus, caused by rapidly rising infection numbers.

The first seven NHS Vaccination Centres have now opened at various locations across England. The seven large-scale sites, capable of delivering thousands of the life-saving jabs each week, will be followed by dozens more. Hundreds more GP-led and hospital services are also due to open, along with the first pharmacy-led pilot sites, taking the total to around 1,200. The new large-scale NHS Vaccination Centres – including one on the site of the London Nightingale Hospital, Bristol's Ashton Gate stadium and Manchester's Etihad tennis club – offer a convenient alternative to GP-led and hospital services.

The mass vaccination programme will mean that people will be required to travel to receive their vaccine. It is not feasible for operators to cease enforcement at all sites in and around vaccination locations.

Importance of Parking Management

To the general public, parking on private land is almost always associated with the operation and management of car parks. Parking management is about aiming the right people can park in the right places at the right time. During the pandemic that is increasingly important.

Parking on private land covers many more situations than just privately-owned car parks. It relates to all privately-owned land which includes:

- Disabled bays
- No Parking areas
- Privately owned roads leading up to airports
- Residential parking areas
- Lawn and garden areas
- Verges
- Office car parks
- Electric charge bays

As well as causing a major inconvenience for private landowners, unsolicited parking is a potential hazard for road users and pedestrians, especially on private land

adjacent to public amenities and schools. With the increasing need for social distancing rules some areas are now running with reduced capacity for vehicles which inevitably creates problems.

Parking enforcement to uphold the rights of landowners is commonplace nowadays. Many landowners would rather their land was respected by those not invited upon it, but many are forced to engage the services of a private parking management company as a measure to protect their land from unsolicited parking.

Finding the correct balance between the contrasting needs of landowners, private parking management companies and motorists is no easy task, especially when considering the ever-growing number of private motor vehicles on UK roads.

Guidance for Motorists

Avoiding a Parking Charge

Receiving a parking charge on the window of your vehicle or through the post can be upsetting, annoying and stressful. Here are the most important ways to ensure you never incur a charge at the outset.

Plan
Look
Read
Comply
Leave

Plan ahead – If you are travelling to a vaccination centre or an area where you have not travelled before then plan your journey. Do not assume there will be designated parking or free parking. Speak to the centre or look on the website. If there is parking look to see whether you will need to pay and how you are able to pay. Can you pay in advance and pre-book, do you need cash, card or a mobile app to pay? These are the questions you should consider. If there is no parking at the centre itself then look to see what facilities there are nearby and again see if you can book and how you will need to make payment. Failing to plan ahead can result in difficulties in finding a parking space. If you are stuck in traffic or delayed, then it could put pressure on you to park somewhere unfamiliar where you may be unauthorised to park.

Look for signs – All private land which is managed for parking will have signage. Where parking is allowed either for paying customers or perhaps free for a period there are likely to be signs at the entrance which give a clear indication the car park is private land and some of the key pieces of information such as that it is a pay and display car

park or there are 2 hours free. These signs will refer you to the full terms which will be located at signage throughout the car park. If there are payment machines, then it is likely there will be signs close to them.

Read the signs – It is important that having seen the signs motorists read them. The signs will set out what you need to do. For example, they will set out;

- The time you are allowed on the car park for free
- Whether there is a payment required
- If you need to display the ticket in the windscreen
- If you must be parked in marked bay
- Any special restrictions for certain areas such as accessible bays
- The need to enter a registration number into a payment machine and/or registration kiosk

Comply with the requirements – Motorists may feel it is ok for what appear small deviations from the terms such as not paying because they will only be 5 minutes, or that they are only in an accessible bay while they nip to the cash machine. However, these can cause difficulties and often what starts as a 5-minute trip to a shop can result in a longer stay. If you are parked in breach of the terms there is a chance you will receive a parking charge, either on the windscreen or in the post.

Do not park if you cannot or do not wish to comply with the requirements – If you park in breach of the terms you are taking a chance. The rules are in place for a reason and you are at real risk of receiving a parking ticket if you breach the terms and conditions.

TOP TIP

If there is no parking at the vaccination centre then look to see if there is a pay on exit car park. This can prevent you either paying for too much time or being caught out by staying longer than you had paid for.

Motorists Receiving a Parking Charge

Motorists should remember that a car park attendant or operator will only have issued a parking charge where they believe the parking charge should have been issued. They will not know of any circumstances that have occurred which may justify you asking them to cancel the parking charge. The only way they will know is if you contact them, tell them and provide evidence of what occurred.

A breach of the terms and conditions may result in a motorist being issued with a parking charge. The motorist will be notified in writing either at the time of the event with a notice on the windscreen, or soon after the event with the registered keeper being notified in the post

Parking Charges Correctly Issued

If a motorist receives a notice affixed to the windscreen or in the post and they think it has been **correctly** issued they should accept and pay the parking charge. A discounted fee is available for payment received within 14 days of the ticket being issued. If the charge remains unpaid after 28 days, it may increase by up to a further £60 and could result in enforcement through the courts with additional costs being awarded.

Parking Charge on the Windscreen

If a motorist receives a notice affixed to the windscreen and they think it has been **incorrectly** issued they should:

- Obtain evidence – keep the pay and display ticket or the parking permit
- and compile photographic evidence which supports their case.
- Follow the appeals procedure on the notice.
- Identify themselves as the driver.
- Provide their name and address.
- Produce their evidence.

If the operator rejects the appeal and the motorist still wishes to contest they should appeal to the Independent Appeals Service by following the process set out by the operator when they rejected the appeal. If the motorist appeals to the independent adjudicator they may lose their ability to pay at the reduced rate.

Postal Parking Charge

If a motorist receives a postal notification, and they think it has been incorrectly issued on the basis that they are not the driver they should:

- Identify the driver by providing the operator with the name and address of the person driving the vehicle at the time of the parking event. Details of how to do this will be on the notice.
- Once you have provided the correct name and address for the driver of the vehicle they will contact the driver.

If they were the Driver they should:

- Obtain evidence – keep the pay and display ticket or the parking permit and
- Compile photographic evidence which supports your case.
- Follow the appeals procedure on the notice.
- Appeal to the operator.
- Identify themselves as the driver.
- Provide their name and address.
- Produce their evidence.
- Keep the parking operator informed about any changes of address whilst the parking charge is in dispute.

If the operator rejects the appeal and the motorist still wishes to contest they should appeal to the Independent Appeals Service by following the process set out by the operator when they rejected the appeal. If the Motorist appeals to the independent adjudicator they may lose their ability to pay at the reduced rate.

Not dealing with the charge within the timescales allowed can cause motorists to lose any discounted rates applicable.

Not dealing with the charge can lead to enforcement of the debt and ultimately action through the Courts to recover it.

Top Tips

Don't be confrontational or misleading. If you were parked in breach of the terms and conditions and are asking a parking company to cancel a parking charge based on mitigation then be polite, follow the steps and provide evidence.

Parking companies understand the difficulties many people face. They find themselves needing to balance the needs and desires of land owners and users of the car parks or areas where parking is not permitted. If you are asking for a parking operator to consider cancelling the parking charge they have issued to you then provide as much evidence as you possible can. If you have been late returning to your vehicle then explain what happened and why you were late. Also provide evidence. It is hard for parking operators to consider appeals without evidence that can prove what you claim happened did occur.

If you had difficulties following your vaccination, or the appointment was delayed then provide evidence of your appointment and explain what occurred.