

## Difficulty Parking?

It's not unusual for people to receive parking fines from private car parks when they think that they have done everything possible to avoid one.

This is likely because they are unaware of the regulations that exist in some private car parks, which are regulated independent companies.

Such companies are known to operate in the following places:

- Asda supermarkets
- Lidl supermarkets
- Hospital car parks (including the Aldershot Health Centre)
- Matalan
- Retail Parks
- McDonalds

## The regulations

It's important to know the parking regulations when parking in a private car park. Some private companies use an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system in their car parks. These systems detect entries and exits into a car park – any cars that stay longer than the permitted time their ticket allows are automatically issued a Parking Charge Notice for up to £100.

Therefore, you are actually being charged from when you enter the car park, not from when you purchase the ticket. Don't assume that you have until the time stamped on the ticket as you may have already used up 10 minutes of the paid time finding a space. In order to use the system accurately, you must calculate how much time you want, including the time already spent inside the car park before a ticket was purchased.

Another regulation that may trip people up is that you must input your full registration number when you buy a ticket. If you miss out a digit or input it incorrectly then the parking regulators will claim that your ticket is invalid and will fine you.

If you are a blue badge holder, you may assume that you are exempt from time limits. However, with private car parks you must report to reception or the manager and tell them you hold a blue badge, otherwise you run the risk of getting a fine even if you display your badge.

In some car parks, such as the one at the Aldershot Health Centre, it will say that you have 15 minutes free parking. However this 15 minutes starts when you enter the car park, not when you actually park your car.

## What can you do?

The easiest way to avoid a fine is to make sure you pay for enough hours that you will need, including the time spent getting in and out of the car park.

It may be a good idea to get an extra hour just to be safe in case you are delayed.

Always ensure that you know your registration number when buying a ticket. You could write it down or take a picture of it before you leave.

If you are a blue badge holder, ensure that you tell someone who works at the organisation you are visiting, even if you aren't staying long.

If you have received a fine which you feel is unfair, visit your local bureau to get some help with the appeal process.

## Free, confidential advice, whoever you are....

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Registered Charity number: 1090669  
Company Limited by Guarantee number: 4354628  
Registered Office: Elles Hall  
Meudon Avenue, Farnborough, GU14 7LE

# A Guide to using private car parks!

