

As an interested party, I would like to provide some information on how difficult it is for law enforcement officers in my city to enforce the current regulations in place for accessible parking. Currently, Ohio Revised Code 4511.69 and our own city ordinance that mirrors that section of law makes it extremely difficult to enforce an accessible parking violation as the law currently cites, "The locations shall be designated through the posting of an elevated sign, whether permanently affixed or movable, imprinted with the international symbol of access and shall be reasonably close to exits, entrances, elevators, and ramps. All elevated signs posted in accordance with this division and division (C) of section 3781.111 of the Revised Code shall be mounted on a fixed or movable post, and the distance from the ground to the bottom edge of the sign shall measure not less than five feet. If a new sign or a replacement sign designating a special parking location is posted on or after October 14, 1999, there also shall be affixed upon the surface of that sign or affixed next to the designating sign a notice that states the fine applicable for the offense of parking a motor vehicle in the special designated parking location if the motor vehicle is not legally entitled to be parked in that location." This is significant because whereas most places have the "standard international symbol signage," often times, signage will meet some but not all of the criteria for us to be able to enforce a violation. For example, places may have the proper international symbol of access signage, which is clearly visible, but the sign may be posted on a wall or post at a height just under five feet. Others may have signage that meets all of the criteria except the fine may not be posted. Simply put, whereas the signage may clearly indicate this is an accessible parking space, often times we are not able to enforce a violation because the signage is missing some small nuance listed in the law.

Upon reviewing the new law, it appears as though steps have been taken to remedy this. Specifically, the suggested section that cites "If a person is charged with a violation of division (A) of this section, it is not a defense to the charge that the sign posted does not comply with the technical requirements of section 4511.691 of the Revised Code, if a reasonable person would know that the parking space is reserved for a person with a disability that limits or impairs the ability to walk," would definitely assist us in the reasonable enforcement of this law. Moreover, of greater significance, when would-be violators know that the law can be enforced, it should increase compliance and result in these spaces being more available to those who actually need them.

Scott A. Rotolo

Assistant Chief of Police

Wooster Police Department