

Official clarifies new parking law in Abu Dhabi

Drivers don't need to pay in designated spots after 9pm, on Fridays and public holidays

- By Samir Salama, Associate Editor
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Abu Dhabi: Starting on Sunday, parking laws will be enforced in the paid parking areas in Abu Dhabi round-the-clock, all year round, but drivers can still park for free after 9pm, on Fridays and on public holidays, a senior official said yesterday.

Najeeb Al Zarouni, General Manager of Parking at the Department of Transport, said the 24-hour enforcement of the parking rules is meant to prevent illegal parking. "But drivers will be allowed to use legal parking spaces marked by curbs painted blue and black and blue and white for free after 9pm, on Fridays and public holidays," he said.

Al Zarouni said motorists who park illegally are targeted to keep roads and passage ways clear for fire brigades, ambulances, police and municipality vehicles especially in the event of an emergency.

Inspectors of Mawaqif [the parking system in Abu Dhabi] started public awareness by distributing thousands of leaflets to encourage drivers not to park illegally and to abide by the law in order to avoid getting fines.

Fines ranging from Dh200 to Dh1,000 are handed out to drivers who park outside the designated parking spaces, which are indicated by turquoise-and-white or blue-and-black curb markings.

Al Zarouni urged the public to make proper use of the available surface and underground parking facilities and not park illegally specifically in the spaces allocated for special needs people or near fire hydrants.

The pay-to-park system rolled out in Abu Dhabi in October with fees being applicable to around 2,500 spaces located between Hamdan Street and Baniyas Street.

The move drew mixed reaction from residents.

Vinsan George, an Abu Dhabi resident said the new paid parking system is good "but enforcing it on Fridays and public holidays ...is not at all logic ...where would all the cars park?"

However, Emil Kazimli, praised the move as excellent, saying it should have been enforced a long time ago. "I'm tired of looking for a parking space around my living area. I hope the paid parking system will soon come to the Al Falah Plaza area."

Within two years, paid parking will be applied to around 75,000 parking spaces identified across 43 sectors of the city, including 5,000 spaces in underground car parks, Al Zarouni said. However, studies show that during peak times there is a need for more than 100,000 spaces.

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