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Moscow Lifehack: I get lots of parking tickets. What am I doing wrong?

By The Moscow Times

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I get lots of parking tickets. What am I doing wrong?

Join the party! Despite the thousands of signs on every street for no parking, disabled parking, paid parking, and free parking, you can still violate the parking rules even when you think you aren't. Here are a few things to watch out for.

First, parking is allowed where not specifically prohibited, or after a "parking allowed" sign, not before it. So on that vast empty street with a parking sign in the middle, you can only park your car on the far side of the sign, not the vast empty space before it. No, we don't know why.

Second, the parking signs have pictograms that show you how to park: parallel to the curb, perpendicular to the curb, up on the sidewalk, or even halfway up on the curb — yes, there really is a pictogram of a car with two wheels on the curb that looks like it's about to tip over. Think of it as a citywide game of Simon Says and do exactly what the pictogram shows.

Third, if there are circles with the numbers 10, 25 and 50, that means it's paid parking. Use one of the hard-to-find pay stations or your cell. If you find a pay station, follow the directions on the screen and use your credit card. To use your cell phone, find the parking zone number — on one of the parking sign poles — and then send a message to 7757: zone number*your full license plate number* how many hours you want to park. It should look something like this: 4014*p1230a197*3, which means that in zone 4104 a car with license plate p1230a197 is parking for three hours. You'll get a reply asking you to confirm by sending any message in reply except the numeral zero (that cancels it).

And finally, there is a disagreement between the law on paper and the law used by the tow trucks. Even though the law is that signs take precedence over painted lines, the guys hauling your car away don't see it that way. So check to be sure there is no yellow line in front of the spot you want to park in, and be sure it's not a disabled parking space, often only drawn on the road under slush, snow, and dirt. And don't ever park on the sidewalk, unless allowed by a pictogram.

And remember: A sign with a big X and a pictogram of a tow truck hauling away a car means this is no joking matter. Unless you fancy an evening of phone calls, cab rides across the city to impound lots, and massive fines, don't park there.

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