**How to Avoid a Parking Ticket**

Why is parking so confusing? Even native English speakers get parking tickets. There are so many rules and signs about parking. Some rules aren’t **posted**. For example, in many Canadian cities you can’t park on the street overnight. Some cities only have this rule in the winter. Make sure to ask about parking rules when you rent a car! Parking tickets are **pricey**.

**Automated Parking Garages**

If you’re looking for parking, search for a large **P**with a circle around it. Parking is often **automated.** The machines may be English-only. In a parking garage, you pay at a machine. Machines usually take cash and credit cards. “**Pay and Display**” means put your ticket on your **dashboard.** You don’t pay until you leave. When you enter the garage you will get a ticket with a time stamp. This ticket goes on your dashboard. When you leave you pay at the machine. You need your **ticket stub** to leave the garage! This is called “**proof of payment**“. Make sure to grab your receipt from the machine. Some machines are not located at the exit. Many airports have this system. You have about ten minutes to exit the garage.

**Parking Meters**

Some downtown areas have on-street parking meters. These are located at the curb. Use coins to pay for the amount of time you need. The meter will indicate how much time you have. If it is not enough time, you have to plug (or feed) the meter with more coins. Some parking meters only accept a specific coin such as a **quarter**. Ask someone nearby to help you make the correct change: “*Do you have change for a five/ten/twenty? I need quarters for the meter.*”

**Parking Words on Signs**

**Tow Away Zone** = A tow truck will take your car away. Don’t park here!  
**No stopping** = You can’t stop for a short time. You can’t park here.  
**2 hr limit** = You can only park for two hours.  
**Loading Zone**= You can’t park here. This area is for trucks to drop off items.  
**Reserved parking**= Only certain people can park here. (ex staff, people with a disability, or people with children) Don’t park here.  
**No Parking M-F** = You can’t park here from Monday to Friday.  
**Parking Prohibited**= You can’t park here.  
**Unauthorized Vehicles will be towed or ticketed** = You cannot park here without paying for or having a **parking pass**.

**Questions to ask if your car gets towed away**

* Where is the tow truck station?
* My car was towed away. Where can I retrieve it?
* Do you have the number for the nearest towing station?
* Can I get a ride to the tow station? (ask a taxi)

**Paying a Parking Ticket**  
It is important to pay your parking tickets in a foreign country. Unpaid tickets sometimes show up at a border crossing. Check for a due date and pay the bill on time.

**Wordchecker**  
**pricey:** expensive  
**posted:** placed where you can read them  
**automated**: by machine only  
**display:**show  
**dashboard:** panel inside the car (beneath the windshield) where dials and controls are found  
**ticket stub:** the receipt from your ticket  
**tow:** to remove a heavy item via a tow truck  
**unauthorized:**without permission  
**parking pass:** a paper that allows you to park somewhere as a visitor or guest (EX. at a hotel or friend’s apartment); display on your dashboard  
 **A Simple Act of Kindness**  
If you see a car parked at an expired parking meter, why not “feed the meter”? This simple act of kindness may only cost you a quarter. It could save a stranger one hundred dollars or more! Will you feed the next expired meter that you see? Share tips about parking in your own country.