

# How to Speak

PARKING  
MATTERS®

Do people ever look puzzled when you explain you work in parking? Nearly every day, parking professionals have the opportunity to talk about the many exciting developments in our industry, but information may not always be on the tip of the tongue. No doubt about it, there's a lot going on! As part of our mission, the International Parking Institute works to foster education and awareness of the varied products, services, and expertise our industry provides. That is why we developed the *Parking Matters*® program: to educate people about the importance of parking, the many positive changes taking place, and the value of the parking professionals.

Here are talking points that may come in handy when you are speaking to colleagues, clients, the press, community groups, and others about the profession.

*Advanced technology is revolutionizing the parking industry.*

*Parking professionals want to make parking easier, faster, and better. The goal is to help you get to the places you need to go.*

## Q&As

**Q.** “What exactly do parking professionals do?”

**A.** It's not always easy to distill what we do into a 30-second elevator speech. Parking professionals are responsible for the design, management, and operations of public and private parking. Today's parking professionals have a wide range of expertise in urban planning, public policy, transportation, architecture, engineering, law enforcement, and management. Parking professionals play a major role in improving parking through advanced technology, better design, and a focus on protecting our environment to create more livable, sustainable communities.

**Q.** “What's new in parking?”

**A.** Where do we begin? An explosion of new technologies for smart phones and mobile devices is making it easier to find, reserve, and pay for parking. In many cities, parking sensors on streets and in parking garages work with the latest in meter technology to feed data to an intelligent parking management system. Parking availability is literally at your fingertips: check your smart phone to find open parking spots or garage locations, complete with reservation and pricing information. Other apps let you pay for parking with a credit card. Forgetful or running late? You can actually extend meter time and receive a text message reminder when your parking meter is about to expire. Single-space guidance systems take you directly to available spots — no endlessly driving around.

**Q.** “Isn't driving and parking bad for the environment?”

**A.** Sustainability is one of the main focuses of our industry. All the new technology that helps you find parking faster saves fuel and reduces carbon emissions, which truly improves the environment. But that's just part of the picture. New and rehabilitated parking facilities have energy-efficient lighting, solar panels, innovative water and waste management systems, charging stations for electric vehicles, and bicycle facilities. Many are designed to integrate various forms of mass transit to encourage alternate transportation and reduce our carbon footprint.

**Q. “Does the parking industry really care about customers?”**

**A.** Parking professionals want to make parking easier, faster, and better. The goal is to help you get to the places you need to go, quickly and efficiently.

**Q. “I waited in line forever the other night exiting a parking garage/lot after the concert!”**

**A.** I sympathize with you! If only someone had consulted a parking expert in the design and planning phase of that garage/lot. One of our industry’s goals is to make urban planners, government officials, and architects aware of the advantages of involving parking professionals in the planning stages. Designing an efficient, sustainable parking facility is a lot more complex than one might think. The expertise a parking professional provides upfront prevents a lot of future problems.

**Q. “I hate getting parking tickets!”**

**A.** I know what you mean. But what many people don’t realize is that ticketing isn’t designed to be punitive – it’s about fairness and turnover. Think of it this way: if turnover wasn’t enforced, there would never be any spaces available. And imagine if someone blocked your driveway or access to your business and you lost customers because of it. Downtowns depend on available parking to allow customers to patronize shops and restaurants and get where they want to go. Did you realize that parking enforcement officers actually provide a safety function by preventing

and reporting street crime and accidents?

The International Parking Institute, together with

the Department of Homeland Security and the Transportation Security Administration, have developed a program called First Observer, which trains parking professionals how to spot and handle possible terrorist activity in parking garages and lots. And did you know that the money generated by parking ticket fines usually gets re-invested in community maintenance, beautification, and safety programs? In many ways, it’s a win-win.

*Everyone benefits when parking experts have a seat at the table early in the planning stages of a new project or renovation.*

**Q. “Why isn’t parking free?”**

**A.** Free parking really isn’t free. Places that offer parking at no cost often offset their investments in land or parking garages by charging in other ways – more on your restaurant bill, more for the movie, more rent for the apartment, more taxes from the city. But, even this so-called free parking often means no parking at all. Right-priced parking means there’s always some availability of spaces. Sounds fair, right?

*Parking isn’t about staying in one spot; it’s about getting where you want to go.*

*Parking is a lot more than meets the eye. It’s an integral part of transportation and mobility.*

**IPI INTERNATIONAL PARKING INSTITUTE™**  
Advancing the parking profession™

**Additional resources**

View and share the *Parking Matters*® video, read positive articles about parking that have appeared in the media, and keep up-to-date with new developments at the IPI website.

**[www.parking.org](http://www.parking.org)**