

Parking at your scheme

A guide to our parking system

INSIDE PAGES

Our parking control system

This booklet explains how we control parking at the Octavia Housing schemes where we have car parks, or car spaces on estate roads.

Please note that this leaflet does not apply to you if we do not manage your parking.

Why we control parking

In most of our areas, there is not enough parking for everyone who wants it. This is particularly a problem in London, where local authorities are making parking more difficult because they want to encourage people to give up their cars.

At our schemes and estates, we control parking so that:

- spaces are allocated fairly
- we deal effectively with nuisance parking.

We offer parking spaces only to residents and as fairly as we can, putting disabled residents first. Where parking is limited, we either hold a waiting list or, at a handful of schemes, we run a yearly lottery to decide who has a space for the following year.

We use parking contractors to enforce this use of our parking spaces. This means we can prevent non-residents from parking. We can also stop cars from being parked in the wrong places. Poor parking can cause problems to other residents and may risk safety, for example by blocking access in an emergency.

Parking at your scheme

If you wish to park at your scheme, phone Customer Services on 020 8354 5500 or email parking@octaviahousing.org.uk.

Customer Services can tell you how many spaces there are at your scheme and whether any are vacant. They will also tell you if there is a waiting list, or if we run an annual lottery.

How to get on the waiting list

To put your name on your scheme's waiting list, ask Customer Services for an application form.

When spaces become available, we offer them to the next person on the list, giving priority to anyone who is disabled. Unfortunately, we can't guarantee when you will get a space. You may have to wait as long as several years.

If you no longer need a space, call Customer Services. They will ask you to complete a form to confirm that you wish to come off the waiting list.

How to take part in a parking lottery

At one or two of our smaller schemes, we run a yearly lottery for car parking spaces, which is drawn by our Customer Services Manager. Before the lottery is held, we write to everyone living at the scheme, inviting them to apply.

We always offer a space to someone who is a disabled blue badge holder.

How to apply for a parking permit

When we have a space available for you, we will write, inviting you to apply for a parking permit.

We will ask you to complete a form and return it, together with photocopies of your:

- V5 vehicle registration document
- car insurance certificate or cover note
- current MOT test certificate – please note that your car must be roadworthy while you park at our scheme, and you must be able to produce a current MOT certificate, or any other proof we ask for, on request
- your blue badge, if you are disabled, and
- if your car is owned by your employer, we will need a letter from your employer confirming that you need this vehicle for your work.

You can send us these details in the prepaid envelope we supply, or by email to parking@octaviahousing.org.uk, or by calling in to the reception desk at Emily House.

When you pay for a parking permit, we also offer the option of buying a visitor's permit, which allows your visitors to park in your space. If you are a shared owner or leaseholder and have a space that comes with your home, we may let you buy a visitor's permit without applying for a full parking permit. However, you are not allowed to sublet your space and we will take back the permit if you do so.

You can pay for your permit/s by sending a cheque with your documents, by calling in to reception, or by phoning Customer Services to pay by debit or credit card.

When we will refuse a permit

We think it is fair to keep parking spaces for tenants who keep to their tenancy agreements. So, before issuing you with a parking permit, we will check if:

- you owe us rent or other charges
- your annual gas check is overdue because you have failed to give us access to your home
- you have broken your tenancy agreement in any other way.

If any of these apply, we will refuse you a permit and write to say why.

We will also refuse you a permit if your vehicle is not registered to you at your home address.

How much we charge

Our aim is to cover the costs of running our parking scheme. To do this, we have to charge more at some of our schemes than others – for example, to cover the cost of parking barriers and lighting. In addition, we charge a refundable deposit for any transmitter you need to operate a barrier. Call Customer Services to find out what we are currently charging to park at your scheme.

If you are a disabled blue badge holder, there is no charge for your yearly or six-monthly permit, however we will charge for your visitor's permit.

Please note that if you are a shared owner or leaseholder, your charges may be set out in your lease or agreement.

Using your permit

When you apply for a permit, we ask you to sign up to our terms and conditions.

They include that:

- you must display your parking permit clearly at all times – this also applies to your visitors, who must display a valid visitor's permit
- your car must be roadworthy and have a current tax disc displayed
- if you are a blue badge holder, you must display your blue badge at all times, and
- you accept that if you fail to do these things, you may be clamped or towed away by our parking contractor and you will have to pay their charges in full.

We also expect you to be a good resident in all other ways and we will consider taking back your permit if you aren't.

Renewing your permit

Our renewal dates are 31 March and (if you pay six months at a time) 30 September. We will write to you two weeks before your permit is due to run out, to remind you to renew it.

We will ask you to complete the same form and send the same documents as when you first applied. We will apply the same rules about refusing you a permit. We will also refuse you a permit if we find you have been subletting your space, or misusing it in any other way.

Temporary codes

If you don't receive your permit in time, we will give you a temporary code. We can also give you a temporary code if you are using a courtesy car because yours is being repaired, or if you are waiting for an updated permit because you have bought a new car. Call Customer Services to ask for a code.

You must display your temporary code in your windscreen exactly as you would your permit. If you don't, you may be clamped or towed away by our parking contractor and you would have to pay their charges in full.

Your temporary code will last for two weeks and it is your responsibility to call Customer Services to renew it if necessary.

Giving up your space

If you no longer need your parking space, call Customer Services, so that they can offer it to someone else. We will send you a refund for the outstanding days.

Our parking contractors

Having your car clamped or towed away is very frustrating and expensive. Not surprisingly, when this happens to one of our residents at one of our schemes, they can be very annoyed.

Unfortunately, we have to have some way of enforcing our parking controls and using a parking contractor is the best solution we have found. At our Bourbon Lane scheme, around 60% of the cars clamped belong to non-residents who are shopping at Westfield. If we didn't have parking controls, it is likely that residents would rarely get a chance to park.

How our parking contractors operate

We select our car parking contractors carefully and only use contractors who meet the standards of the British Parking Association and the Security Industry Authority.

Under the contract, we require them to:

- clamp vehicles that are parked in the wrong place or that aren't displaying a valid parking permit – this includes blue badge holders and motorbike owners

- remove vehicles that were clamped at least two hours earlier – but this only applies from 9am in the morning till 10pm at night
- remove vehicles that we have previously identified as abandoned, dangerous, not roadworthy, or lacking a tax disc
- put up clear notices explaining how they operate, how to contact them and how much they will charge
- handle appeals and complaints about the action they take.

Reporting someone in your space

If there is a vehicle in your space that shouldn't be there, you can call our parking contractor, or Customer Services during office hours. You will need to park in the street until the vehicle moves.

However, you should first check that the vehicle isn't one of our staff or repairs contractors, working at your scheme. These vehicles display a clear permit. In these cases, you should call the number left on the dashboard, or call Customer Services, so that the vehicle can be moved straight away

What happens if you're clamped

If you are clamped, you must call our parking contractor to come and release you. They will charge you a fee, which is currently £100, plus an extra £5 if you pay by credit or debit card.

To avoid your car being towed away, you must contact the parking contractor within two hours of being clamped. However, towing doesn't apply between the hours of 10pm and 9am. If you are towed away, you will be charged £265 and £30 per day for storage.

Tips to avoid being clamped or removed

Don't forget, you can avoid being clamped or removed by:

- parking only where you have a permit
- always displaying a valid permit or temporary code
- always displaying your blue badge if you have one
- not ignoring any notice we have put on your vehicle – for example, because it appears to be abandoned, not roadworthy, or it lacks a tax disc
- never leaving your car while you offload shopping or go to collect someone – unless your scheme has a special drop-in bay
- never parking a motorbike on verges or pavements, or in any shared areas such as the bin area or stairwells, where you are causing an obstruction.

Making a complaint

If you are not happy with our parking system, you are welcome to make a complaint.

You should contact Octavia Housing if your complaint is about:

- a waiting list or parking lottery draw
- how we decided who to give spaces to
- how we handled your permit request
- our parking policy.

Call Customer Services and ask for our Complaints booklet to find out more about our complaints process.

However, you should contact our parking contractor if your complaint is about:

- being clamped or removed
- the charges made
- the way their staff behaved.

You will find the contractor's contact details on the signs at your scheme.

Our parking contractors are required to respond within 14 days of getting your complaint. Please note that we will not usually get involved in a complaint about the contractor unless you have taken your complaint to the end of their complaints process.

CONTACT DETAILS