

How to Report Illegal Parking

In large metropolitan areas and small towns across the US, parking regulations ensure that neighborhoods are safe and livable. An illegally parked car can interfere with emergency responders as well as disrupt the smooth flow of traffic....

Method 1 of 3:

Gathering Information

1.



Write down the make, model, color, and plate number of the vehicle. Identifying information about the vehicle will help parking enforcement officers spot the exact vehicle you reported. If the license plate was issued in another state, get the name of that state as well.^[2]

1. You might also want to note if the plate is expired. Many cities have different regulations for parking a vehicle with expired plates.
2. If the vehicle doesn't have a license plate, write down that information. In most cities, you cannot park a vehicle on the street at all unless it has a license plate. Lack of a plate might also indicate the vehicle is abandoned.

2.



Take a picture of the illegally parked vehicle. Particularly if you plan to report the incident online, you may be able to send parking enforcement your picture. Having a photo to go on can help them better pinpoint the vehicle.^[3]

1. Taking a photo of the license plate is an easy way to get that information down and transmit it to parking enforcement accurately, even if you aren't able to submit the photo itself.
2. If the car is parked next to an expired meter, or in a "no parking" zone, try to get some sign of the parking infraction in your photo.

3.



Identify the exact location of the vehicle. In most cases, an exact street address is sufficient. However, it's also possible that an illegally parked vehicle isn't sitting next to an exact street number. In that case, take down the cross-streets and the block where the vehicle is parked.^[4]

1. Note which side of the street the car is on. In some cities, this is designated by a direction. You can also note which direction the car is pointing.

2. For example, you might write "Car illegally parked in handicap zone on the south side of Sunshine Avenue, between 7th and 8th street."

4.



Log the date and time you observed the vehicle. Whether filing your report online or over the phone, you'll likely have to tell parking enforcement when you saw the illegally parked car. This information helps them determine whether the car was in fact parked illegally, as well as coordinate your report with others.^[5]

1. For example, in some cities, commercial vehicles cannot be parked overnight in residential areas. A car parked in a residential neighborhood at 4:00 p.m. wouldn't necessarily be a violation, while if it was parked at 4:00 a.m. it would be.
2. If the car has been there for several days, it's likely other people have also reported it. Parking enforcement may prioritize an incident if it was reported by numerous concerned citizens.

5.



Review local parking regulations. Unless the infraction is obvious (such as a car parked right in front of a sign that clearly says "no parking"), checking the actual regulations can help you determine if the car is, in fact, parked illegally.^[6]

1. For example, some cities may not allow a car to occupy a parking place for more than 3 days. If you know the car has been there for 2 days, you may want to wait a day before making your report.
2. If you can find a specific regulation number, write it down to include with your report. Parking enforcement may respond quicker if you can let them know exactly why the car is parked illegally.

6.



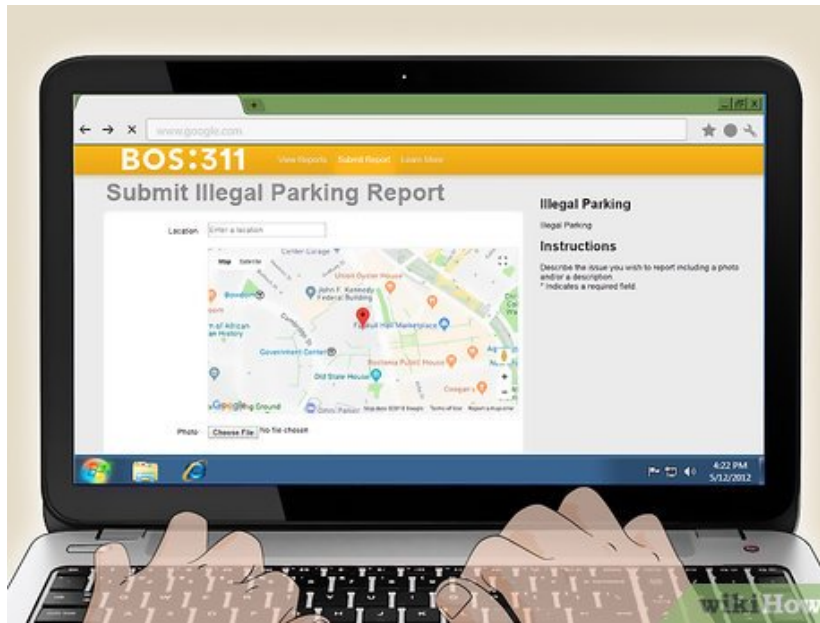
Take note of the condition of the vehicle. If the vehicle is damaged, doesn't have licensed tags, or appears inoperable, it may be abandoned rather than just illegally parked. The procedures for reporting an abandoned vehicle may be different.^[7]

1. Identifying details about the condition of the car can also help parking enforcement officers find the specific car you're reporting.
2. Also make note if the car appears to have been vandalized, such as broken windows or missing tires.

Method 2 of 3:

Filing a Report Online

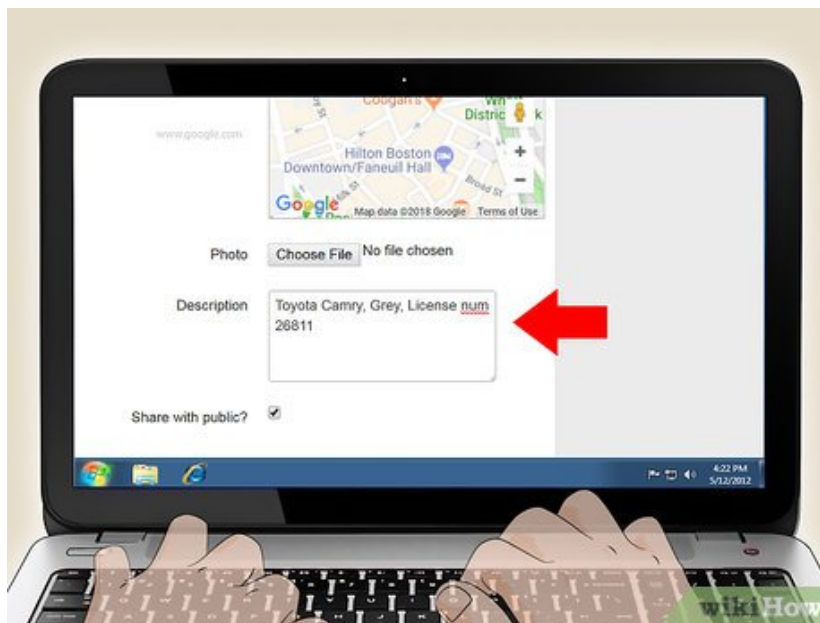
1.



Search for an online report form. Many cities, particularly larger ones, allow you to report illegal parking online with a simple form. Search "report illegal parking" with the name of your city and see what comes up.^[8]

1. Make sure the site you find is official before you submit any information. Most government websites for major cities end in ".gov" or ".us." If you're not sure, look for an "about" page.

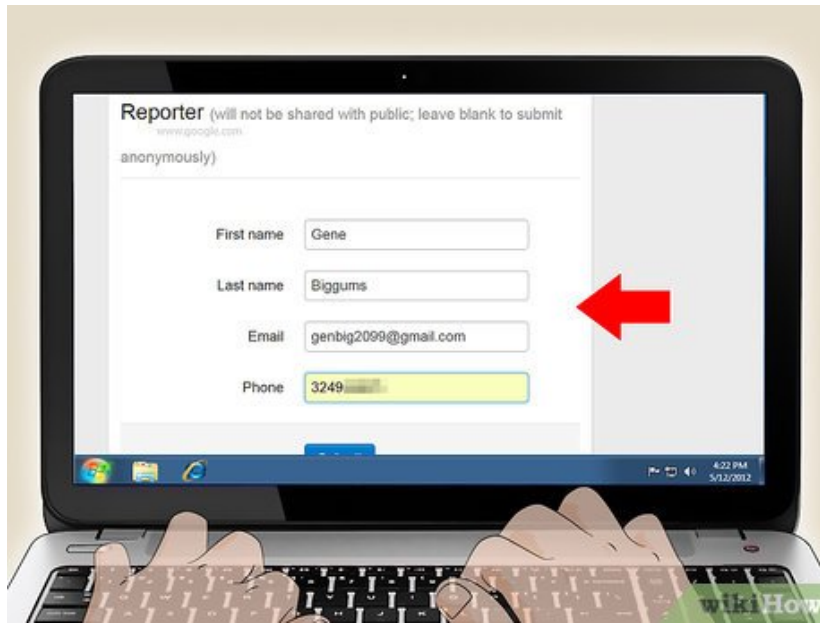
2.



Fill out the report form completely. Some forms may allow you to select information, while others will simply have a blank box for a description. Include as much information as you can. More specific information will allow parking enforcement officers to more easily locate the illegally parked vehicle.^[9]

1. At a minimum, include a thorough description of the car and its location. You should also include the date and time that you saw the vehicle. If you've seen it over a period of time, include that information as well.

3.



Provide contact information for follow-up. Even if you're allowed to report illegal parking anonymously online, contact information enables parking enforcement officers to reach out to you if they have questions, or want to update you on the status of your report.^[10]

1. Some cities require you to provide a valid email address when submitting an online report.^[11]

4.



Use social media to submit your report. Some cities maintain Twitter or Facebook accounts for their parking enforcement department. You may be able to report illegal parking by messaging to these accounts.^[12]

1. During regular business hours, reporting illegal parking on social media may actually result in a quicker and more direct response.
2. Keep in mind that you may not get an immediate response using this method, particularly if you're filing your report at night or on weekends. Parking enforcement social media accounts may only be monitored during regular business hours.

Method 3 of 3:

Reporting by Phone

1.



Contact parking enforcement. In many larger cities, the parking enforcement department has a separate phone number from the rest of law enforcement. Calling this number typically results in a faster response. [13]

1. Search for "parking enforcement" with the name of your city to find the number online. If your city has an information line, you also may be able to connect with parking enforcement through that number.
2. If your city doesn't have a dedicated parking enforcement line, call the police non-emergency number. Don't call 911 unless there are lives immediately at risk.

2.



Speak directly to a representative if possible. Enforcement officers may not be available 24/7. However, if you're calling during regular business hours, you typically have the option of speaking to a live representative.^[14]

1. Talking to an enforcement officer typically is more efficient. You can provide them your information directly, and if they have any additional questions they can ask you right then.
2. You may also be able to get some idea of when the car will be moved. This might be particularly important if the car is impacting you personally, such as if it's blocking your driveway or in front of your business.

3.



Leave a voicemail with the necessary information. If live representatives aren't available on the parking enforcement line, you typically have the option to submit a voicemail with all the information you want to report.^[15]

1. Provide as many specific details as possible, speaking in a clear, concise voice.
2. Some cities may allow you to report anonymously. Include your name and phone number or email address if you want them to follow up with you on your report.

4.



Follow up on your report. Parking enforcement typically responds to reports in the order they were received, trying to resolve all reports within 3 days. If parking enforcement hasn't done anything about your report in that time, call back.^[16]

1. Even if you didn't speak to a live representative the first time, try to get someone on the line if you're calling to follow up. Provide them with your case number, if your report was assigned one.
2. If you aren't getting any results from the parking enforcement number, you might want to try the police non-emergency line.

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