

# Permit Parking Guidelines and the Pay Parking and Controlled Loading Zone Guidelines 2025

## *Explanation of proposed changes*

March 2025

## Introduction

The Permit Parking Guidelines (PPG) and Pay Parking and Controlled Loading Zone Guidelines (PPCLZG) are statutory documents issued by Transport for NSW (Transport) under section 120 (for the PPG) and sections 93 and 126 (for the PPCLZG) of the *Road Transport (General) Regulation 2021* (the Regulation).

They guide the issuing of parking permits and the establishment and operation of pay parking and controlled loading zone schemes by parking authorities (councils and declared organisation) under Division 1 of Part 8 (for permit parking schemes), Part 6 (for pay parking schemes), and Division 2 of Part 8 (for controlled loading zone schemes) of the Regulation.

Transport publishes the guidelines online: [Parking guidelines | Transport for NSW](#)

The Permit Parking Guidelines are being updated in two stages. The first was a minor update in July 2024 requiring that signage providing exemptions for permit holders must have a permissive parking limit of not less than one hour.

This second stage of the update seeks to:

- ensure equitable access for tenants and owners
- strengthen eligibility criteria for permits to prioritise on-street parking for those who need it most
- provide guidance – including pricing principles – for permits issued for the purpose of parking at beaches and destinations where the holder does not live or work (such as town centres)

In addition to revision of the text for user-friendliness and clarity, the draft PPG have a greater focus on fairness.

The Pay Parking and Controlled Loading Zone Guidelines address surcharges on users paying for parking. As with the PPG, the draft PPCLZG have also been restructured and edited to improve usability and clarity.

## Key proposed changes

### 1. Improving access to beaches and other attractions

Some councils issue parking permits for reasons beyond the standard purposes of residential or business parking, or parking for visitors or carers. Beach and foreshore parking permits are one example.

Councils with such schemes typically exclude non-residents or charge non-residents very high fees while charging locals low or nil fees. Those without permits must then abide by signposted time limits and often must pay high hourly parking fees.

The NSW Government is concerned that these schemes may inadvertently reduce community access to locations such as the beach and foreshore.

The draft PPG do not seek to ban either beach parking permits or permits that exempt residents from paying for parking anywhere in their council area. The draft PPG do, however, require that such permits be made available to any resident of NSW on fair terms. Principles are included to guide pricing.

The update will apply to permits such as those for parking at beaches, foreshores, other natural or tourist attractions, towns or local centres, or across the whole or a significant portion of a Local Government Area. It does not apply to standard permits used for parking near a home or business premises nor specific holder categories such as car share operators, providers of bona fide in-home support services, temporary visitors or tradespeople, or volunteer charity services. The changes will also not affect permits issued for parking by residents reliant on boat access.

Existing approach	Proposed change
<i>Not addressed</i>	<p>Any permit issued by a council and widely available to residents, ratepayers, or businesses for the purpose of parking somewhere other than at the holder's residential or business premises must be available to all residents of NSW on fair terms (e.g. eligibility, availability, priority, etc.) and be priced in accordance with the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The public have a right to access foreshore, beaches, and other natural attractions/destinations</li><li>• Pricing cannot be used to unreasonably disadvantage or deter any specific sub-group(s) of applicants from outside the council's area of operations</li><li>• Pricing is set to manage parking and transport demand, and encourage use of sustainable and efficient modes of transport</li></ul>

### 2. Ensuring availability regardless of tenure or housing type

Some councils operate permit parking schemes which exclude residents in apartments or townhouses, even where they are not recent developments. In other cases, landowners and owner-occupiers receive free permits but renters or tenants must purchase them.

These policies mean that neighbours are treated differently even if they have similar transport needs. Whether a resident rents or owns a house should not affect how much they pay for a permit, and residents of existing townhouses or apartments should have the same access to public street space as those living in houses.

The draft PPG propose to prohibit policy distinctions based on tenure, title, or housing type or size.

This will not prevent councils managing permit numbers in the busiest areas, nor determining the

boundaries of their parking precincts. It will also not prevent councils from ‘closing’ their parking schemes to new business or residential developments approved after a cut-off date. It ensures fair treatment and access for all members of the community.

Existing approach	Proposed approach
Not addressed	<p>Parking authorities must not apply different terms (e.g. costs, eligibility, availability, priority, etc.) on the basis of tenure (e.g. ownership v. tenancy of a premises), title-type (e.g. Torrens title, strata title, community title, etc.), or housing type or size (e.g. apartments, attached dwellings, multi-dwelling housing, number of bedrooms, etc.).</p> <p>This does not apply to short-stay accommodation, nor does it prevent the exclusion of households or premises in new developments from eligibility for permits on the basis of their date of approval or occupancy, as set by policy, resolution of council, or as determined through the development assessment process.</p> <p>A parking authority may determine how many permits may be issued per room of a lawful boarding house, but may not entirely exclude or otherwise discriminate against residents in boarding houses.</p>

### 3. Prioritising permits for those without on-site parking

Street space is a valuable resource for parking, as well as for other uses including travel lanes, bus lanes, tree planting, outdoor dining and activation, and walking and cycling. Prioritising on-street parking for those who need it most results in more efficient management of public space that enables all those other uses, relieves on-street parking demand, and improves local accessibility.

The draft PPG mandate that parking authorities must take on-site parking into account before issuing a permit. They will require that the quantity of permits available to a household is reduced by the number of on-site spaces.

Because parking spaces often vary in size and usability, parking authorities will retain the discretion to adopt their own criteria for determining whether an on-site space is available. Councils may choose to review architectural plans, consult aerial imagery, or rely on declarations from applicants. Councils will also retain the power to issue exemptions where warranted by an individual household’s circumstances, and parking authorities will be authorised to renew permits that have already been issued to an applicant.

Existing approach	Proposed approach
<p>Applications should be prioritised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No off-street parking space</li> <li>One off-street car space</li> <li>Two or more off-street car spaces</li> </ul>	<p>The number of permits available at a residential or business premises must be reduced by the number of on-site parking spaces.</p> <p>Parking permits must not be issued for vehicles for which on-site parking is available.</p>

### 4. Addressing surcharges associated with parking software or payment apps

Digital platforms and app-based parking systems (sometimes known as ‘ticketless’ parking systems) can reduce parking management costs, provide accurate real time data on demand and parking supply, and improve enforcement. They can benefit motorists by charging only for the time parked, allowing

on-the-go 'top up' of payment, or reminder notifications. However, these apps often come with transaction surcharges or separate fees.

Section 96 of the Regulation requires that the cost of administering the parking scheme must be borne by the parking authority. Surcharges in apps conflict with this requirement.

The draft PPCLZG clarify the requirements and implications of s96 to ensure that such additional surcharges, fees, and costs are no longer applied separately to users.

Existing approach	Proposed approach
<p><i>Section 96(1) of the Road Transport (General) Regulation 2021 states:</i></p> <p>The costs of administering a pay parking scheme are to be borne by the parking authority.</p>	<p><i>PPCLZG to highlight s96(1) of the Road Transport (General) Regulation 2021 as follows:</i></p> <p>Costs of administering a pay parking scheme are to be borne by the parking authority per s96(1) of the Regulation. This means that users must only be charged the parking fee and must not have any service fees, surcharges, or additional costs imposed upon them, including for functions such as saving user details, remote extensions of time, expiration reminders, etc.</p>

## Implementation

The updated guidelines are proposed to be released mid-year 2025.

Where a parking authority operates a permit parking scheme, it must comply with Division 1 (Parking permits) of Part 8 of the Regulation and the PPG.

Where parking permits have been issued prior to the updated version of the PPG for a vehicle for which on-site parking is available, a parking authority may continue to renew the permit only if the holder remains at that address – provided terms (inc. fees and application processes) are otherwise consistent with these guidelines.

Newly issued permits must be consistent with the updated PPG, as must any time controls on permit parking scheme signage – whether existing or proposed.

This approach ensures that the key outcomes sought through this update are delivered, but that flexibility is afforded to parking authorities that will need to make changes to transition to compliance with the updated PPG.

Where a parking authority operates a pay parking or controlled loading zone scheme, it must comply with Part 6 and Division 2 of Part 8 of the Regulation, respectively, and the PPCLZG.

### What does this mean for existing schemes?

Parking authorities retain broad discretion over scheme design. They can determine the purpose of parking permits, their costs, and their areas of operation. However, some schemes will need to be amended to ensure consistency with the updated guidelines.

#### Key proposed change #1

Existing beach permit schemes and other similar schemes affected by proposed change #1 may continue to operate at the discretion of the parking authority. The updated PPG do not prohibit such schemes. They must, however, be made compliant with the requirement that they be available to all residents of NSW.

**Example:** Council administers an existing beach permit scheme that is available only to residents of that council area.

Council could ensure compliance with the updated PPG by expanding the scheme to enable availability of permits to all residents of NSW. This could also involve changes to pricing, etc., but any changes would have to be fair and priced in accordance with the pricing principles set out in the PPG.

#### Key proposed change #2

Existing permit schemes which exclude or charge more to residents on the basis of tenure, title-type, or housing type or size must be made compliant with the requirement that parking authorities not differentiate on those grounds.

**Example:** Council administers an existing permit scheme for on-street residential parking that doesn't allow for permits to be issued to residents of apartment buildings.

Council could ensure compliance with the updated PPG by expanding eligibility for permits to all residents within the permit area to include those that live in apartment buildings. Council may choose to adjust pricing, reduce permit numbers per household, or use similar demand management techniques, provided they do not differentiate on the basis of housing type.

**Example:** Council administers an existing permit scheme that provides free or lower-cost permits to property owners/ratepayers but charges a higher fee for renters/tenants.

Council could ensure compliance with the updated PPG by amending the permit fees for renters/tenants to ensure they're the same as those paid by property owners/ratepayers. That could mean lower fees for renters/tenants, higher fees for property owners/ratepayers, or a mix of both to 'meet in the middle'.

### **Key proposed change #3**

New or additional permits (i.e. those issued to new applicants, or to existing permit holders for an additional vehicle) must be issued in accordance with the requirement that on-site parking provision be deducted from the number of permits for which the property is eligible. Existing permits issued without accounting for on-site parking spaces can be renewed for as long as permit holders remain at their address.

**Example:** Council has an existing permit scheme for on-street residential parking which grants all properties two permits regardless of on-site parking availability.

To comply with the new guidelines, Council could amend its application process to account for on-site parking provision. Properties with no on-site parking spaces will remain eligible for two permits. Properties with one on-site parking space will have that parking space deducted, remaining eligible for one permit if the on-site garage is occupied. Properties with two or more on-site parking spaces will no longer be eligible for any permits.

For existing permit holders at the same address, council may continue to issue renewals of existing permits.

### **Key proposed change #4**

Existing pay parking schemes which include any surcharge or fees associated with use of or payment for the parking must be made compliant with s96(1) of the Regulation. Surcharges or fees are costs of administering a pay parking scheme and therefore must be borne by the parking authority and cannot be charged separately to the user. This includes service fees, surcharges, or additional costs for features such as printing tickets, paying by phone, paying by app, saving user details, remote extensions of time, reminder notifications, etc.

**Example:** Council is operating a pay parking scheme in a local centre. Payment can be made either using the physical ticket machine or a digital application on a user's phone. Payment made through the digital application incurs an additional 8% transaction surcharge.

This additional surcharge supports administration of the pay parking scheme and is required, by s96(1) of the Regulation, to be borne by the parking authority. It cannot be charged separately to users, irrespective of the presence of other fee-free payment methods.

Council could become compliant with the Regulation by ensuring that users are only charged the adopted and advertised fee for parking.