

Facilities Management from A to Z

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C ar Parking

Facility managers are often responsible for the allocation of parking facilities at the sites under their control. This can be a challenging duty which calls upon key FM competences like sound administration, excellent communication, sensitive stakeholder engagement and the patience of a saint.

There are lots of reasons why a business needs to control parking at their sites. Often there are planning constraints and safety and security must be maintained. Demand usually outstrips supply and staff expect their employer to be fair. Consideration must also be taken of any impact vehicle movements may have on neighbours and the cost of parking to the organisation

Other concerns now include consideration of the organisation's impact on the environment. Green travel plans will be aimed at encouraging staff to use other means of travelling to work. The FM may also wish to consider future costs to the business now that local authorities have the legal powers to introduce road and user workplace parking charges.

First Come - First Served policies for space allocation may appear easier to manage than other approaches but such a free for all can lead to frustrated drivers, breaches of health and safety and a poor image to visitors. At the other extreme, restricting parking to a small group of staff makes it more likely that the asset will be underused and that staff will park instead in nearby streets.

If there is some form of barrier access control on the car park entrance the FM has the option of restricting access to certain times thus improving utilisation and spreading the benefit. Some employers only give part time staff access to their car park for 30 minutes before their shift is due to start. This means that an afternoon worker cannot park at 9am to go shopping. At one local authority, staff nominate a car free day when their card will not let them in the car park. This means that they have to find alternative means of getting to work on that day.

Some companies have a few "short stay" spaces to support workers whose role means they have to be "in and out all day". These spaces can be highly visible, close to the building, and allow for a high turnover of cars (allocating perhaps 6 cars per space for those staff with the highest mileage) Another way to target usage at those who need it more is not to allow car park access to anyone living within a two mile radius of the site. Those needing their car for work reasons can reasonably go home and fetch their car when needed.

Some employers use a points system to prioritise space allocation with extra points given to car sharers, those with childcare commitments, disabled drivers, those with the longest journey etc. A number of public sector buildings now charge for spaces. This can be more popular than might be expected if the charges are kept realistic and it frees up enough spaces to ensure that staff can park easily.

The British Parking Association www.britishparking.co.uk provides a lot of useful advice for those responsible for the management of parking facilities