



Office of the Inspector General Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Inspector General's Office Conducts Follow-up Investigation of Parking Placard Abuse, October 2010

On March 18, 2010, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) initiated its second investigation involving allegations of misuse of disability parking placards in the downtown Boston area by able-bodied individuals. The first investigation, which began in the summer of 2006 and spanned several years, was a joint investigation conducted by this Office in conjunction with the Massachusetts State Police, the Registry of Motor Vehicles, and the Boston Transportation Department. That investigation resulted in this Office issuing a report of its findings on August 13, 2007. However, this Office continued to conduct periodic short term reviews of the problem through the fall of 2009. In addition to the initial 17 citations being issued for improper use of disability placards by able-bodied individuals, these periodic reviews discovered such additional abuses as a prominent local attorney using his deceased mother's placard and the discovery and conviction of an individual who was found guilty of attempting to sell a stolen placard (to an undercover officer from the State Police and OIG Investigators) after placing an advertisement for it on Craig's List.

The more limited 2010 investigation was initiated to determine whether able-bodied individuals were continuing to use disability parking placards belonging to others in an attempt to avoid paying for parking at city meters or improperly using parking spaces set aside for the disabled community. Throughout the spring and into the summer of this year, OIG Investigators recorded placard numbers, registration numbers, vehicle descriptions and parking locations in an attempt to obtain a target group of parkers who might be abusing disability parking placards.

On July 7, 2010, OIG Investigators, working with the Boston Police Department conducted a surveillance operation, covering many city blocks. A Boston Police Officer stopped motorists observed using disability placards and asked them to demonstrate that the placard holder was in the vehicle. If the placard holder was not present, or known to be within a 10 minute radius of the vehicle, the placard was seized and a citation for misuse of the placard was issued. Three citations and two parking tickets were issued during this operation.

On July 14, 2010, OIG Investigators, working with the Boston Police Department conducted a surveillance operation, again covering many city blocks. As before, the Boston Police Officer stopped motorists observed using disability placards and asked them to demonstrate that the placard holder was in the vehicle. If the placard holder was not present, or known to be within a 10 minute radius of the vehicle, the placard was seized and a citation for misuse of the placard was issued. Two citations and two parking tickets were issued during this operation. Also on this date, representatives of WBZ-TV 4 were present to record the proceedings on film for later broadcast.

This 2010 focused investigation demonstrated that disability placard abuse by able-bodied individuals continues to be a problem in the downtown Boston area.

For more information, see:

Disabled Person's Parking Placard Abuse – A Multi-Agency Investigation, August 2007.