

# Motorists in Abu Dhabi who park indiscriminately will face fines

Cars of residents without permits will be towed away even during free period in the Capital

- By Samir Salama, Associate Editor
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Abu Dhabi: Starting December 1, authorities will use the full force of the law against motorists who park their cars in residents-only parking areas covered by the paid-parking system, a senior official told *Gulf News* on Tuesday.

"From the beginning of next month, only residents with permits will be allowed to park their cars during free time in the areas covered by the paid-parking system. Those who fail to abide by the law will get tickets and have their cars towed away," said Najeeb Al Zarouni, general manager of parking at the Department of Transport.

He added under the new scheme only residents with permits to park their cars during free time between 9pm and 8am will be allowed to avail of the privilege.

Residents have been complaining of having difficulty finding parking spaces during free time. They say they spend nearly an hour to find a place after 9pm in areas such as Al Khalidiya, Madinet Zayed and on Hamdan Street.

## Frustration

A *Gulf News* reader said one is lucky to get parking after 7pm.

"This is the reason that to date anyone can see that there are many cars parked at no parking areas, because they do not have any other option. After a tough daily routine I have to spend up to two hours searching for proper parking, then what is the use of a parking permit [worth Dh800]."

He recalled: "Yesterday, I reached home about 7pm and started searching but even after 90 minutes I did not find any space and also I could see the cat and mouse play by many other cars, I was very tired and fed up so [I] parked the car on one side at 8.30pm as we used to do previously. In the morning I saw a violation ticket of Dh500 at 9.01pm.

"Unbelievable, Dh800 for a one-year permit and a Dh500 fine for one violation which I never intended to [commit] but I was forced to since I have no other option," the reader said.

Al Zarouni said the scheme will also allow residents to park their vehicles in a specific area in case there are no available slots near his residence.

Al Zarouni spoke to Gulf News after he opened a third Mawaqif Customer Care Centre in the New Central Market in downtown Abu Dhabi.

"The paid parking scheme will roll out in 43 areas offering 75,000 spaces, of which 32,000 spaces in 19 areas will be covered by the end of this year," Al Zarouni said.

He said efforts are being made to increase Mawaqif parking capacity.

"Our aim is to implement this change gradually and in turn reduce congestion and wrong parking in high-density areas."

Standard spaces, marked with turquoise and black kerbstones, cost Dh2 per hour or Dh15 per day. Premium spaces, marked with turquoise and white kerbstones, cost Dh3 an hour for a maximum four-hour stay.

Paid parking is enforced from 8am to 9pm, except on Fridays. Individuals who live in an area where there are paid parking spots can apply for permits at Mawaqif customer service centres to park.

### **Customer care centre**

A third Mawaqif Customer Care Centre was opened yesterday in the Central Market area. It is located on the ground floor, shop number 63 and will operate from 7.30am to 10pm Saturday through Thursday, and from 10am to 11pm on Friday, said Najeeb Al Zarouni, general manager of parking at the Department of Transport.

He added customer service representatives are also available to assist the public at Customer Care Centre on Hamdan Street from 7am to 9pm Saturdays to Thursday and from 5pm to 9pm on Fridays and in Marina Mall, which is open from 7.30am to 6pm Sunday to Thursday. Both centres are closed during public holidays.

The Mawaqif Call Centre can be contacted at all times on 800 3009.