

SAFETY BULLETIN

VALET PARKING OPERATIONS



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THE VALUE OF VETTING YOUR VALETS

Valet Parking operations is an often-overlooked component to a venue's Safety and Risk Management Program. Consider the escalating price tag of the vehicles that are left under the care, custody, and control of your valet parking staff. Today, the average price of a new vehicle is approximately \$36,000, with a used vehicle's average value rounding out at \$19,000.

Additional thought should be given to the contents inside the vehicle, as well as the potential for damaging property, or inflicting bodily injury, all while valets are in the control of guest vehicles. When considering these critical exposures, it becomes obvious that developing a sound Valet Parking Risk Management Program is time well spent.

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PRE-EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING PRACTICES

The following pre-employment and training practices should be considered when developing a Valet Parking Program:

- Conduct a pre-employment screening on all prospective valet staff. Such screening should include the following steps:
 - Verify candidate is 18 years of age or older
 - Verify candidate possesses a valid state driver's license
 - Active/not suspended
 - No pending Failures to Appear
 - Obtain Motor Vehicle Report (MVR) that is:
 - Clear of any major or capital violations
 - No more than one "at-fault" accident of any type in the last three years
 - No more than two moving violations in the last three years
 - Criminal background check
 - Credit history check
 - Drug screenings
 - Consider conducting a driving test of any prospective valet (including a backing demonstration of the vehicle)
 - Obtain personal/professional references
- Conduct annual MVR checks on all valet staff.
- Inform valets of requirement to notify their supervisor of any changes in the status of their license during employment, including "at-fault" accidents or moving violations.
- Institute a Safety Training Program that includes the following:
 - A written Safety Training Manual
 - Written company valet policies and procedures
 - Vehicle driving test – a supervisor should ride with each valet employee to validate their skill in driving vehicles with both automatic and manual transmissions
- Require valet staff to wear a uniform. Valet drivers should be high profile and professional in appearance.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR VALET DRIVERS

The following policies and procedures should be considered when developing a Valet Parking Program:

Prior to Operating the Vehicle...

- Identify and document any existing damage to the vehicle
- Only accept the key to the vehicle being valeted and ensure the guest maintains possession of all other keys
- Never accept a vehicle without issuing a Claim Check
- Request guest remove all valuables from their vehicles
- Fasten seat belt
- Adjust the seat, mirrors, and steering wheel as needed for safety requirements when operating guest's vehicle
- If unfamiliar with the features of a vehicle, valet should contact a supervisor prior to driving the vehicle
- Do not adjust radio, air conditioning, and other controls
- Check both right and left blind spots before proceeding

When Operating the Vehicle...

- Obey all traffic laws
- Drive within the speed limit
- Avoid sudden starts and stops (unless to avoid an accident)
- Never use cell phone when driving
- Use turn signals when turning
- Tap horn when rounding blind corners or exiting onto a street from a garage

When Parking the Vehicle...

- Avoid backing when possible. If backing is necessary, use a spotter. If spotter is unavailable, turn off all sources of noise, roll down the window, and listen while backing.
 - Special Note: Because most accidents occur while backing the vehicle, a demonstration of backing skills should be required as a component of the overall valet vehicle operating driving test.
- To prevent damage to valeted vehicles, leave appropriate safety zones between neighboring vehicles to ensure surrounding doors can be opened adequately without incident.
- When parking is complete, position wheels straight ahead.
- Always lock the vehicle after parking.

CLAIM CHECK PROCESS

Without fail, a Claim Check should be issued to each and every guest when accepting their vehicle. Inform guests not to lose their Claim Check, but in the event the Claim Check is lost, it should be reported immediately. The Claim Check should include the proper disclaimer language that is consistent with state law. Disclaimer wording should state that in the event of theft, collision, accidents, fire or any damage to personal property, the venue will assume no responsibility or liability for property left inside a vehicle. Legal counsel and/or your insurance company should review all Claim Check disclaimer wording. American Specialty is pleased to assist with any questions you may have regarding your Claim Check disclaimer.

Implementing a well devised Valet Parking Operations Program is an essential risk management practice that can help mitigate your organization's exposure to liability losses and maintain your valuable reputation.

For questions regarding your Valet Parking Risk Management Program, feel free to contact:



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