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It's a Parking Lot, Not a Park

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Parking lot safety may not appear to be a very important aspect in our day-to-day activity. Most of the time, we believe accidents will not happen in parking lots because vehicles drive at a lower rate of speed. Did you know that one-fifth of motor vehicle accidents actually take place in a parking lot?

Hidden Risks in Your Church and School Parking Lots

Our church and school parking lots are often used as playgrounds for children and a place for small groups to socialize. One of the significant risks involved with parking lots are uneven or badly maintained surfaces lot, which can cause trips and falls. Additionally, parking lots often do not have speed limit signs and traffic flow signs, making them potentially dangerous places. Lastly, inadequate lighting can contribute to even more risks. Here are a few tips to make sure your church and school parking lots are safe:

PARKING LOT SAFETY TIPS

1. Parking lots plans should feature designs and construction according to building codes set by the respective county.
2. Traffic flow, speed limits, and designated reserved slots should be displayed using correct, visible signage.
3. Signs should show liability limitations. These notifications should clearly state that the church is not responsible for the loss of vehicle or its contents, and enforced towing after certain hours or if the vehicle is in unauthorized parking areas.
4. Provide adequate lighting. Trim trees and shrubs that obstruct any light regularly.
5. Paint each parking slot with clearly visible lines.
6. Provide handicapped slots, as per American With Disability Acts and other local county and city codes. Accessible parking should be close to the building.
7. Adequate areas and crossings for pedestrians should be clearly marked and painted.

Okay, my parking lot is safe. Now, what?

During opening and closing hours of the church or school activities, personnel should guide the children and elderly to and from the building through the parking lot. Encourage members and students that the lot not be used as a playground for games (such as basketball, skateboarding, rollerblading, etc.). If possible, provide an alternative play area for children other than the church parking lot.

Install a CCTV system and record all activities. The video will provide a record of any accidents in the lot. If the facility has an enclosed area, gates should be locked after hours to prevent intruders entering the facility.

Pedestrians should be cautious of their surroundings when walking in the parking lot. Be aware that drivers may not always see you. When crossing, look in both directions and be aware of the direction of the flow of traffic. In winter weather or in the case of rain, wear the correct type of footwear to provide adequate traction and avoid trips and falls. Take extra care if wearing shoes with high heels.

Drivers should look for a parking space where there is less pedestrian traffic. Whenever possible, pull all the way to the front of the parking slot or back into the parking slot to avoid being in reverse when leaving. Observe and respect speed limits, as faster speeds can result in fatalities to pedestrians. Reduce speeds in inclement weather. Wet weather provides a higher chance of skidding. Exert caution while parking in garages, as spaces and turning radius could be less.

Help your church and school drivers stay safe on the road with ARM's Distracted Driving Safety Tips.

References

[1]www.hsc.wvu.edu/general-safety/parking

[2]www.myparkingsign.com