



# Valet Parking Operations

## The Value of Vetting Your Valets

Valet parking operations are an often-overlooked component to an employer's safety and risk management program. Consider the collective price tag of the vehicles that are left under the care, custody and control of your valet parking staff. 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 under the supervision of guest's vehicles.

When considering these critical exposures, it's in your best interest to develop a sound Valet Parking Risk Management Program.

## 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(Active/not suspended) state driver's license
  - 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

## Consider conducting:

- Criminal background check
- Credit history check
- Drug screenings
- Vehicle driving test – a supervisor should ride with each valet employee to validate their skill in driving vehicles with both automatic and manual transmissions (including a backing demonstration of a vehicle)
- Personal/professional reference checks

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 a written safety training manual
- Written company valet policies and procedures
  - Valet drivers should:
    - Wear highly visible uniforms or safety vests
    - Wear closed toe footwear
    - Minimize cash on hand
    - Refrain from running

## 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(s) remove all valuables from their vehicles.
- Fasten seat belt.
- Turn on headlights during evening hours if not automatic.
- Adjust the seat, mirrors and steering wheel as needed for safety requirements when operating guest’s vehicle - older vehicles may not have backing cameras.
- 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.
- Drive at safe speeds at or below the limit.

## 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.
- Be aware of surroundings to avoid injury to others, damage, theft/carjacking.
- Do not use a cell phone.
- Maintain low speeds.
- Avoid public streets and alleys, stay on private property.
- Avoid left turns if possible.
- To prevent damage to valeted vehicles, leave appropriate safety zones between neighboring vehicles to ensure surrounding doors can be opened adequately without incident.
- Position wheels straight ahead when parking is complete.
- Always lock the vehicle after parking.

## Claim Check Process

Without fail, a claim check should be issued to every guest when accepting their vehicle. Inform guests not to misplace 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. It’s suggested that 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.

## In Conclusion

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 reputation. Finally, remember to remove unsafe drivers that do not or poorly follow safe valet parking procedures.

For questions regarding your Valet Parking Risk Management Program, feel free to contact your Loss Control Consultant.

