

RV Parking Rights

Hand Book

<http://www.goodsamclub.com>

Residential RV parking rights are under attack in a growing number of communities across America. And more often than not, RV owners find the task of preserving their parking rights to be a battle they must wage on their own, with marginal support from the RV dealers or manufacturers who sold them their towable or motorized units to begin with. It's a frustrating situation, particularly when one considers the fact that most RV owners couldn't store their units in a public facility even if they wanted to. There are simply not enough self-storage facilities in many of the nation's cities to accommodate everyone's RV. And often, storage space can be very expensive. And even though RV parking opponents have yet to produce any verifiable evidence that RVs lower residential property values, as many of them allege, that hasn't stopped people in cities across America from demanding that RV owners park their vehicles elsewhere.

The anti-RV parking fervor has been fueled in part by the rise of homeowners associations, which often write RV parking restrictions into their Covenants, Codes and Restrictions (CC&Rs). CC&Rs are binding and cannot easily be changed, so RV owners who move into such communities usually have little or no recourse but to find someplace else to park their RV. RV owners have a much better chance of protecting their parking rights if they live in communities that are not governed by homeowners associations. In these situations, RV owners can make their case directly to city officials whenever their parking rights come under attack. But there are no guarantees. Unfortunately, growing numbers of cities are mimicking the RV parking restrictions of the homeowners associations within their midst. Cities often consider such restrictions at the request of homeowners' association representatives who would like to see RV parking restrictions uniformly imposed throughout their communities. Some cities have also been prompted to consider RV parking restrictions after reading press accounts regarding the imposition of RV parking restrictions in neighboring communities. It is therefore up to RV owners such as yourself to do your part to protect RV parking rights in your community.

The Good Sam Club has formed the Parking Rights Advisory Council comprised of volunteer club members who can provide information and advise. Keep in mind, however, that this is a battle that you must largely fight on your own, along with other RV owners in

your community. The Good Sam Club itself does not manage, orchestrate or finance local political campaigns because we recognize that the power over elected officials should and must come from you, their own constituents.

To aid your efforts, we have produced this Parking Resources Advisory Handbook, which highlights some of the strategies and tactics that Good Sam Club members have successfully used to defeat or mitigate proposed RV parking restrictions in various cities across the country. By perusing the case studies contained on our web pages, you can quickly learn from the experiences of other RV owners and potentially improve upon them.

These battles are by no means over. There are many tough fights ahead. But we plan to update this information on our website, **www.goodsamclub.com** on a regular basis as we learn about additional strategies and tactics that RV owners have successfully employed to preserve their parking rights in their communities. In the meantime, here are several tips that may be helpful as you consider launching an RV parking rights campaign in your own city:

Closely monitor discussions involving RV parking rights in your community:

Is your city proposing RV parking restrictions? Check with your city clerk's office to find out if new RV parking restrictions are being considered. You can also find out what's been written about RV parking in your community by running "RV," "recreational vehicle" and "RV parking" as keyword search terms on the website of your local newspaper(s) and also by checking the "Parking Rights" section of the Good Sam website. Online newspaper research may help you identify several RV parking opponents in your city as well as the nature of their complaints, which you will need to address to some extent in your meetings with city officials.

Determine your timetable for action:

If your city is considering revising the existing parking ordinances, how long do you have before a new RV parking ordinance is scheduled to be discussed? This information is critical because you need to know how much time you have to organize RV owners in your community to write letters, send E-mails, make phone calls and attend city meetings.

Recruit other RV owners to work with you in battling RV parking restrictions:

Fighting city hall often requires too much time and expense for one person to shoulder on his or her own, particularly when one considers the time and expense involved in contacting RV owners, creating a database of RV owners, or writing, printing and distributing informational fliers. But if you divvy up the workload and expenses among several volunteers, you can get more work done quickly and at a much lower cost to yourself and others. You may also be able to recruit RV owners who have professional expertise that may help you in your discussions with city officials or with your outreach efforts to other RV owners. RV owners in Orange, California, for example, were recently aided by a Web-savvy RV owner who set up a website to help them communicate with one another, while publicly countering their opponents, who had a website of their own.

Appoint a spokesperson or spokespeople:

Your group will need to have at least one or two individuals who can serve as point person for city officials and news reporters covering the RV parking issue in your city. If you can find someone who already has a good relationship with city officials, take advantage of the situation.

Establish a regular means of communication with other RV owners in your city:

This can be in the form of email newsletter, flier or web site. But regardless of which method you choose, you need to have a means of contacting RV owners quickly to keep them abreast of upcoming meetings, talking points and the status of city action on the RV parking issue.

Develop talking points that explain why your parking rights should be preserved:

Before making any presentations, you should compose at least half a dozen talking points that clearly and concisely explain why you and other RV owners should be allowed to continue parking RVs by their homes. One of your talking points should also address whether or not RV owners can find storage facilities nearby. RV owners have often been able to counter parking restrictions by providing city officials with documentation that illustrates a shortage of RV parking facilities. By providing this kind of documentation, you and other RV owners may be able to prove that you couldn't comply with a new ordinance even if you wanted to. To find out how much capacity there is in your city, simply contact self storage facilities listed in your local phone book and ask them how much capacity they have for RVs. Be sure to write their name and the name of their company as well as any comments they can share about the city's RV storage capacity.

Be proactive with news reporters:

Don't let the advocates of RV parking restrictions get the upper hand with the news media in your community. Put your spokespeople in touch with reporters and encourage them to use your agreed upon talking points in their discussions. Make sure you effectively counter every claim or allegation made by supporters of RV parking restrictions.

Create a show of force with other RV owners in public meetings:

Cities have been known to postpone immediate action on proposed RV parking ordinances if enough opponents show up at public meetings to voice opposition to such proposals. City officials often don't realize how many RV owners actually reside within their communities. It is critical that you work with other RV owners in your city to assemble as many RV owners and RV parking supporters as possible for every city council or planning commission meeting in which RV parking restrictions may be discussed.

If city officials are determined to develop a new RV parking ordinance, offer them a model ordinance for their consideration:

Sometimes, city officials cannot be dissuaded from implementing a new ordinance. But you can help influence the wording of the ordinance they adopt. Good Sam recommends that RV owners propose that their cities consider adopting the sample ordinance, which is currently in force in the city of Euclid, Ohio. Additional samples of other ordinances may be found on our website at: <http://www.goodsamclub.com>.

Supplement your meeting attendance with written correspondence:

Encourage RV owners to send city officials as many letters and e-mails as they can to supplement their presentations in city council or planning commission meetings.

Attend follow up meetings with as many representatives as you can:

Sometimes, RV owner participation in public hearings wanes after the first couple of meetings. This is a dangerous trend because any reduction in the number of RV owners attending public meetings reduces the pressure that city officials feel as they contemplate the imposition of new regulations that could restrict RV parking. By keeping RV owner meeting attendance at high levels, you will ensure that city officials continue to appreciate the importance of preserving RV parking rights in your community.

Contact members of the Good Sam Parking Rights Advisory Council for help:

They are available to answer your questions, to troubleshoot specific problems and to help connect you with other RV enthusiasts who may be able to help you fight RV parking restrictions in your community. A complete list of Parking Rights Advisory Council members is listed on our website at <http://www.goodsamclub.com> or members can be contacted at 1-866-360-1904 or email at parkingrights@goodsamclub.com. In sum, the above mentioned strategies and tactics have helped RV owners preserve their parking rights in several cities across the country, as demonstrated by the case studies contained in files on the Good Sam Web site. And while the use of the above mentioned strategies and tactics has not been uniformly successful in every city where they have been applied, you have nothing to lose by using them to your advantage and getting politically involved in your community. In fact, if you are successful in your efforts, you may help preserve RV parking rights in your community for many years to come.

Now that you have read some Parking Rights Handbook, please take a few minutes to review the information by completing this checklist. It will assist you in determining how to proceed with your RV parking rights problem. When you talk to your Parking Rights Advisory Council member, having this information handy will make it easier for him or her to assist you with your particular situation.

- How did you first learn about the RV parking restrictions in your community?
- Is there an existing ordinance or are your community leaders considering a new ordinance that would impose restrictions on RV parking?
- Do you have a copy of the existing or proposed ordinance? If not, you can obtain one from your local government.
- Have you or has anyone you know been cited for an illegally parked RV?
- Is the purpose of the ordinance to remove RVs from city streets or from your property?
- Are the restrictions being proposed for the purpose of aesthetics? If so, please check on the Euclid, Ohio case.

- Are the restrictions being proposed related to health, safety and welfare? If so, contact your local law enforcement and fire protection agencies to ask if there have been any problems concerning RVs in your community.

Good Sam welcomes your letters and input on the subject of your RV parking rights. Please address the letter or email to:

RV Parking Resources

Good Sam Club

P.O. Box 90020

Bowling Green KY 42102-0020

Email: parkingrights@goodsamclub.com

Don't forget to look for RV parking rights updates on our website at:

<http://www.goodsamclub.com>

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4/9/15: Changes telephone number.