

August 31, 2022

## September OC parking permits now available for purchase

### What are the changes being made to how campus parking works at Okanagan College?

Most parking lots at the Okanagan College's Kelowna campus will no longer be designated exclusively for staff or for students, but will now be open to all users. Similarly, OC parking in Penticton and Vernon will now be open to students, staff and visitors.

In Kelowna, parking lots nearest to College buildings will be designated paid parking lots. Students, staff and visitors will be required to have paid for parking to park in these lots.

Employee taxable benefit parking in Kelowna will be designated at the Evangel Church lot on K.L.O. Road and Gordon Drive.

### Why is Okanagan College implementing these changes?

Overall, there are four main factors that have been considered:

- 1) **Rising costs:** The expenses related to maintaining parking is rising for all organizations and businesses. At Okanagan College, parking on campus has not been reviewed or changed since 2017. The fee structure changes support ongoing parking lot maintenance and renewal.
- 2) **Students first:** The previous two-tier system treated students differently from employees and had potential to create a barrier to students when they could not find parking on campus.
- 3) **Flexibility:** More and more people are coming to campuses on irregular schedules, due to online courses and work-from-home. The new structure increases the options available to users when purchasing parking permits.
- 4) **Environmental sustainability:** We recognize the need to reduce our collective impact on the environment. Pay parking structures prompt all of us to consider alternatives to driving to campus.

### Why is Okanagan College changing the way parking operates at its Kelowna, Vernon and Penticton campus and removing dedicated staff and student lots?

We are taking a more equitable approach to parking. For many years, OC students in Kelowna have raised the issue of how challenging it can be for them to find available parking on campus and referred to it as a barrier to their learning experience when they can't find a parking spot. These changes make access to parking more equitable across all groups, including students, staff and visitors.

**Will OC Parking permits be valid at all sites?**

People who purchase parking permits for the Kelowna campus are purchasing an OC-wide campus parking permit. This means it will be valid in Vernon and Penticton, although it can only be used at one site at a time (e.g. two members of the same family cannot use the same pass in Kelowna and Penticton at the same time.)

Parking passes purchased for the Vernon or Penticton campuses are specific to those sites. For example, a Vernon campus pass cannot be used to park at pay parking lots on the Kelowna campus. Valid employee taxable benefit parking permits can be used by staff from any OC campus to park at Evangel Church, which is designated for taxable benefit parking.

**Is parking guaranteed for people who purchase an annual parking permit?**

No. Every effort will be made to monitor parking demand and to make access available to as many people as possible, however spaces cannot be guaranteed.

**What should students and staff do if there is no available parking at any of the OC designated parking lots?**

As is the case now, if all the parking lots are full, individuals will need to find parking elsewhere.

**What is the process for staff who require accessible parking and who choose taxable benefit parking?**

Students, staff or visitors who have a valid SPARC BC permit and who have paid to park may park in any of the parking stalls at OC that are designated as accessible parking.

Staff who have a valid SPARC BC permit and who have registered for taxable benefit parking are also eligible to park in any designated accessible parking stall.

[SPARC BC permits](#) are available in temporary (one month to 12 months) and ongoing (three years, renewable) formats.

Individuals who have a short-term (less than one month) accessibility challenge should contact [parking@okanagan.bc.ca](mailto:parking@okanagan.bc.ca).

**Do I still need to display a pass on my car?**

No. The new online parking system, when it is operational (September 2022) will make it easier to purchase permits which are linked to an individual's licence plate and pay-and-display passes will no longer be required.

**I work at multiple OC campuses. How will the changes work for me?**

Staff who chose to park in most lots on the Kelowna campus must pay for parking, unless they register for taxable benefit parking at the Evangel Church.

New Flex Pass options will be available to OC employees who are visiting Kelowna or who are in Kelowna part-time.

In Vernon, Penticton and Salmon Arm campuses, employees will continue to have taxable benefit parking.

Employees who purchase an annual parking pass in Kelowna will also be able to use their pass at other OC campuses as they do currently. Employees who have a parking pass at other OC campuses can use their parking pass in the Evangel Church lot in Kelowna.

Where there are exceptional circumstances or special events, we will work with those situations on a case-by-case basis as required.

### **NEW: Annual parking permits purchased through payroll deduction (Kelowna)**

#### **Who is eligible for payroll deductions?**

Employees who are permanent or who have a contract term greater than one-year, and who receive continuous biweekly pay are eligible for payroll deductions for the annual parking permit. Employees may purchase only one annual parking permit.

#### **How do payroll deductions work? When does payroll deduction start? Can an employee withdraw?**

Once an employee signs up to purchase an annual parking permit through payroll deduction, you commit to making biweekly payments on a purchased permit until March 31 of that fiscal year. Payroll deductions will begin in the first full pay period after the employee purchases the annual permit.

It is not possible to withdraw from the annual permit payroll deductions mid-way through the year unless your employment with the College ends, in which case your parking permit will be cancelled.

Annual parking permits by payroll deduction are based on the fiscal year; employees can opt to withdraw from payroll deduction in March, cancelling their permit effective April 1.

#### **Are payroll deductions pro-rated for the first pay period?**

No. Payroll deductions will not be pro-rated within a pay period. Your parking permit will be activated when you sign up and your payroll deduction will come into effect the first day after the next pay period end date.

#### **How much will be deducted from my pay?**

The amount that will be deducted from your biweekly pay will be equal to the annual parking permit cost divided by twenty-six (26) pay periods.

### **Why are staff in Kelowna being required to pay for parking, while staff at other OC sites do not have to pay?**

Staff in Kelowna continue to have the option to access taxable benefit parking, in accordance with collective agreements. The designated staff taxable benefit parking lot is at Evangel Church. Alternatively, staff have the option to purchase a parking permit in Kelowna.

### **NEW: Taxable benefit parking permit (Kelowna, Vernon, Penticton campuses)**

#### **What does “taxable benefit parking” mean?**

OC staff are eligible for taxable benefit parking, which means they can register to receive an annual parking permit at no up-front cost, but they will pay taxes on its value when they file their income tax return. The value of the taxable benefit will show up on an employee’s paystubs and annual T4 (Employment Income Box 14 and Taxable Benefit Box 40).

Once registered, employees can choose to opt-out of taxable benefit parking at any time (but they will not be able to opt back in until the following March). Taxable benefit parking permits are terminated if/when a staff member’s employment with OC ends.

#### **Who is eligible for the taxable benefit parking permit?**

All employees are eligible for the taxable benefit parking permit.

#### **How do I cancel my taxable benefit parking permit?**

Once registered, employees can choose to opt-out of taxable benefit parking at any time (but they will not be able to opt back in until the following March). Taxable benefit parking permits are terminated if/when a staff member’s employment with the College ends.

#### **When do taxable benefits start?**

Taxable benefits will show up on the employee paystub the first full pay period after signing up for a taxable benefit period.

### **General FAQs**

#### **What is the procedure for using the electric car chargers on campus?**

Electric vehicle (EV) car chargers are available to any OC student, staff or visitor for use. Cars must be plugged in and charging to be parked in the designated EV charging stalls. The cost to charge is a competitive rate.

#### **Can departments still obtain complimentary parking passes to provide to special guests, etc.?**

Complimentary guest parking can be provided through College departments using a validation code assigned by Parking Services. Each department will be invoiced monthly by parking services reflecting the number of guest passes issued.



**What safety supports are available in the evening/night for people walking to and from parking at the Kelowna campus, including at Evangel Church?**

The *Safe Walk* service is offered and available through Campus Security, and accessible as well through the OCSafe app. Okanagan College has also installed additional lighting at the parking lot at Evangel Church.

**Will city sidewalks between College buildings and the parking lots, including the lot at Evangel Church, be maintained in the winter so that they are not unsafe (slippery)?**

Okanagan College will continue to maintain walkways at the College; if City of Kelowna sidewalks are icy or blocked by snow, they can be reported to the City for clearing.

**Can staff who have chosen the taxable benefit parking in Kelowna, park in any OC campus parking lot on evenings and weekends, or are they required to always park at the Evangel Church lot, even in “off-hours”?**

After 4 p.m. and on weekends, taxable benefit parking is extended to any of the Kelowna campus lots. However, Monday to Friday, from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m., staff who have taxable benefit parking passes must park in the designated lot at Evangel Church.

**Does Okanagan College pay for parking at Evangel Church in Kelowna?**

Yes, the Evangel Church lot is leased by Okanagan College. An agreement has been in place since 2017.

**For more information:**

Contact [parking@okanagan.bc.ca](mailto:parking@okanagan.bc.ca)