



The main purpose behind HB 598 is to update Montana code on what constitutes an accessible parking space and to clarify that an accessible parking space's access aisle is an integral component of an accessible parking space. This update is necessary due to the current code being so out of date and vague that many law enforcement agencies will not currently enforce accessible parking violations.

HB 598 in no way imposes any additional requirements for businesses or state or local governments in terms of what type or how many accessible parking spaces they need to provide. Nor does it dictate that they need to immediately bring their parking lots into compliance...the “readily achievable barrier removal” provisions of the ADA still apply for existing businesses and compliance only need be achieved when an alteration, such as restriping or resurfacing, takes place. HB 598 simply clarifies in Montana Code what businesses are already required to provide to more accurately clarify in MCA what an accessible parking space is to make it more understandable for law enforcement agencies to enforce.

HB 598 does several things:

- Updates language;
- Adds protection for the adjacent access aisle;
- Clarifies that it is unlawful to park in accessible parking space without a permit or plate and that no one can park in the access aisle;
- Permits someone to load and/or unload a person with a disability while momentarily parked in an accessible space without a permit;
- Removes outdated standards with cross-reference to federal ADA standards;
- Increases the grace period for showing proof of permit from 24 hours to 3 business days in order to avoid having to go to court.