

Motorcycle parking

Contents

Introduction	2
Demand	2
Strategic context	2
Data collection	4
Order-making	4
Location.....	4
Security.....	6
Other security measures	7
Funding	8
Charges.....	9
Pay and display.....	9
Metered bays.....	9
Controlled parking zones.....	9
Types of use.....	10
Storage facilities.....	10
Traffic signing and information.....	11
Management	12
Checklist.....	12
Further information.....	13
Acknowledgements.....	13

Introduction

The last ten years have seen a resurgence in the ownership of motorcycles, scooters and mopeds, with increases in registrations of over 200% since 1993. This implies a corresponding growth in use and demand for facilities, including parking.

This Traffic Advisory Leaflet contains advice to Highway Authorities and other providers of parking facilities. It sets out how the needs of users can be met effectively by making available high quality, secure and accessible parking for motorcycles, offering a source of practical information, drawing on the experience of a number of UK local authorities.

An example of motorcycle parking



Demand

In 1999, there were 760,000 motorcycles registered in the UK, representing almost 3% of private and light goods motor vehicle registrations. The modal share of motorcycles, as a percentage of traffic on the road, is 1%. The modal share, and hence demand for motorcycle parking, may be expected to be greater in urban areas where congestion is acute. For example, in the City of Westminster approximately 35% of the number of parking spaces is dedicated for motorcycles, and this is generally over-subscribed.

Local conditions will vary, so it is recommended that local authorities and other providers carefully assess demand and consult with users prior to the provision of new parking.

Strategic context

The Guidance on Full Local Transport Plans advises highway authorities to "ensure that the relevant aspects of their LTP (including road safety, planning and social policies) take account of the needs of motorcyclists". They "should consider specific measures to assist motorcyclists in making integrated journeys, such as secure parking at public transport interchanges". The integration of parking into the LTP process and any local parking strategy will assist in effectively targeting the type and location of parking to meet the requirements of users.

Some authorities have supplemented their Local Transport Plans with an overarching Motorcycle Strategy that draws together a variety of issues relevant to motorcyclists, including consultation and road safety. A number of Highway Authorities, including Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Essex County Council and Birmingham City Council, have published such documents.

It is important that such strategic decision-making is informed by the views of users, including disability groups. National user groups frequently have local representatives who can be contacted via

Motorcycle parking

their parent organisation. One mechanism for ensuring regular access to users' views is a Motorcycle User Forum. This approach complements other means of consultation and has been successfully used by several Authorities - for example, Bristol City Council has a Forum that meets twice a year.

Data collection

Few authorities base decisions on motorcycle parking on data that has been specifically collected on motorcycle movements. The most frequent reasons for providing parking are either opportunistic - where other works are planned - or in response to user demand.

To clarify the pattern of motorcycle use in an authority's area, motorcycles can be included in traffic counts and in origin and destination surveys, particularly those that focus on key trip attractors. In the absence of reliable data, consultation with users can yield useful information about current activity and patterns of demand. This approach is pursued by Sandwell MBC, via their Motorcycle Users Forum.

Order-making

The powers of authorities in England, Scotland and Wales in relation to the provision of stands and racks for bicycles is set out in Section 63 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. This was amended by the Transport Act 2000 (Section 271 [2]) and the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001 (Section 75 [2]) to "The powers of any authority under this Act to provide parking shall extend to providing, in roads or elsewhere, stands or racks for, or devices for securing, bicycles or motorcycles".

On-street motorcycle parking provision requires local traffic authorities to make an Order under section 32 or 45 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Offhighway parking can be provided without making an order and can often be introduced in car parks as they are refurbished. However, making an order would allow local authorities to enforce parking in the spaces. A number of authorities have pursued a policy of introducing motorcycle parking, on a percentage basis, to all car parks as they are resurfaced or re-marked.

Location

Informal parking by motorcycle users can represent a hazard to pedestrians if pavements are blocked, or if cycle parking is misused. One strategy for minimising informal parking (which has been validated in relation to cycle parking) is to maximise the proximity of designated motorcycle parking to key trip attractors.

In Sandwell MBC, the use of parking facilities provided has not been as great as anticipated. The Borough believes that dispersing the parking among a number of locations has contributed to this by failing to provide a sufficient 'critical mass' to reassure users that the sites are secure and to provide a 'social' focal point for motorcyclists. Therefore, while close proximity to destinations is likely to increase motorcyclists' satisfaction with parking and assists disabled riders, the need to provide sufficient concentrations to reassure users should be borne in mind by practitioners.

Parking provision should be reviewed from time to time. User feedback will help identify sites for further parking provision or other changes.

In locating motorcycle parking, sites should be chosen that are well drained, particularly if ground anchors are provided. The surface should, as far as practical, have no, or only a slight, gradient. A nonslip surface should be provided, as oil spills can represent a hazard to users. Close proximity to uncontrolled carriageway crossings should be avoided, as people in wheelchairs may have difficulty seeing past densely parked motorcycles. Drain covers should also be avoided.

Some motorcycles in a line

Motorcycle parking



Security

Motorcycles can be extremely valuable vehicles that are prone to theft. They can be readily lifted into another vehicle, and hence may be subject to organised theft. Security should be one of the foremost considerations for those providing parking facilities for motorcycles. The availability of secure parking spaces is particularly important in areas such as public transport interchanges, workplaces and shopping and entertainment centres where medium to long-term parking may be anticipated.

There are 2 basic types of anchor points to which motorcycles can be secured to reduce the risk of theft. There are two basic types:

Ground level

The anchor point remains below the surface, often concealed by a hinged steel plate set flush with the road surface. The plate is raised by the user, allowing a loop to be lifted up and the user's own lock passed through. In selecting a design of ground level anchor, consideration should be given as to whether they are able to be left upstanding by users, or could jam in the raised position, thus constituting a danger and possibly an illegal obstruction of the highway. Anchor points require regular maintenance and can be dirty to use.

Raised

A horizontal bar is provided at a height of approximately 40-60 cm. This style is generally provided at the edge of the carriageway and again requires the user to use their own lock. This type can represent a trip hazard or impediment if installed along the edge of footways. Preferably, they should be integral with pedestrian railings or protected by other means to safeguard pedestrians, particularly people with impaired vision. Where high density parking is closely associated with pedestrian guard railings, users may need to put their hand through the vertical railings in order to reach the horizontal bar to use their locking cables. In such situations the width between the vertical bars of the railings should be approximately 160mm.

It is often not possible to pass a lock through a motorcycle frame. Hence any anchor point provided needs to be at a suitable height for locking the wheel.

Example of a ground level locking system



Example of a raised (horizontal bar) locking system

Motorcycle parking



Other security measures

Motorcycle users are prone to the same personal security concerns as other transport users. Good lighting of motorcycle parking will increase confidence in both personal and vehicle security. The level of illumination that is acceptable will vary according to the site, and security considerations must be balanced against the environmental impact of lighting. The British Standard BS5489, Part 9, gives guidance in this respect. Where possible parking should be located where it will be regularly observed by passers by.

Authorities should consider protecting motorcycle parking areas with bollards or similar restrictions. This will ensure that other vehicles do not conflict with the parked motorcycles, and that the spaces are not used by other vehicles.

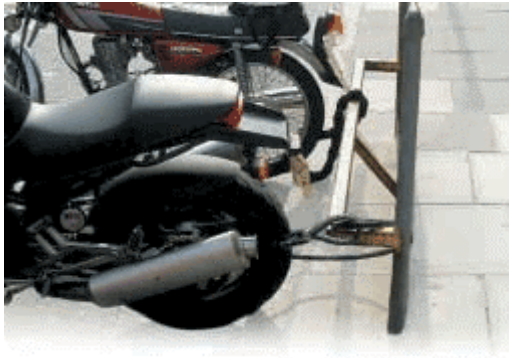
At medium to long-stay parking sites, consideration should be given to locating motorcycle parking in supervised areas, or near to points such as ticket barriers where staff supervision is possible. Unstaffed facilities may require CCTV. Where on-street parking is provided in town centres where CCTV schemes operate, it should be located within areas covered by the scheme.

Funding

Most authorities fund motorcycle parking from their own budgets, including LTP settlements. However, a few authorities also provide motorcycle parking that has been funded by third parties:

- the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) - a national user group - has funded the provision of a secure parking space in Hull;
- An insurance company funded another secure space in Hull;
- a local motorbike company has funded the introduction of a bay within a multi-storey car park in Stoke on Trent, in exchange for a plaque acknowledging their support;
- the Metropolitan Police crime prevention budget has funded the introduction of anchor points on a pilot basis at a site in the London Borough of Islington.

Another example of the raised locking system



The majority of these externally funded spaces have been on a comparatively small scale, which may suggest that the scope for this approach is limited and localised. However, the opportunity exists for authorities to raise funds to contribute to the capital costs of equipment, as well as generate publicity for the initiative.

Charges

Much on-street motorcycle parking is provided free, though a number of local authorities do charge, particularly where additional facilities are provided. There are three methods by which charges can be levied.

Pay and display

This has the advantage of permitting standard equipment to be used. There is potentially a problem with Pay and Display, in that tickets displayed on motorcycles can be stolen. Moreover, the adhesive backing may be on the wrong side of the ticket to permit display on the front of a surface, as opposed to inside a windscreen. One solution to these problems has been implemented by Birmingham City Council, who provide a secure box into which motorcyclists post their Pay and Display ticket, having written their registration number on it.

Metered bays

Westminster City Council, which has introduced equipment to allow users to pay for a space at the sites where new anchor points are provided, has adopted metered bays. This has necessitated the subdivision of existing parking bays into units suitable for one motorcycle each. Both Westminster and Leicester City Council provide 1metre per motorcycle. It should be noted that any signs or roadmarkings required for motorcycle parking bays not prescribed in Regulations, will require special authorisation. A potential problem with metered bay parking is that if a second motorcyclist arrives and parks in a bay that is already occupied, it is impossible for attendants to know which arrived first and paid for the bay. In order to overcome this, a system can be used where the user is required to 'punch in' the registration number of their motorcycle into the meter when they arrive. The subdivision of bays can reduce their capacity, and bays may need to be extended to maintain the same number of parking spaces. The subdivision can benefit disabled riders who can experience problems where parking is dense.

Controlled parking zones

A number of local authorities include motorcycles within Controlled Parking Zones or Residents Parking Schemes. For example, the London Borough of Islington charges £35 per annum for a motorcycle permit. One minor problem that can arise is that the standard permit may be square, and hence unsuitable for display in a tax disc-style holder. Westminster City Council avoided this difficulty by redesigning their permits to be circular.

Where parking has previously been free, there is an initial tendency for users to resist the introduction of charges, but it is not known how that affects use. Charges imposed by local authorities fall within a wide range, from 20p per day (Stoke on Trent City Council) upwards. Where charges are made, they tend to be levied at a lower level than the charge for parking a car.

Where parking fees are levied, consideration needs to be given to the minimum number of paid spaces that would be necessary to make the system of charge collection cost effective.

Motorcycle parking

Types of use

Different destinations will attract different types of use, and user requirements for each will differ. A suggested framework to assist decision-making is given below.

Length of stay	Typical Uses
Less than 30 mins	Shopping Dropping passengers off Delivery
30mins	Shopping 1 hour Leisure Personal business
1-3 hours	Shopping Employment Leisure
4 or more hours	Shopping hours Employment Rail or bus use Education

This framework offers guidance only, though it may assist in anticipating the lengths of stay that may be generated by different types of trip attractor, and can provide a basis for considering the types of security equipment necessary.

Storage facilities

At present, no UK highway authorities appear to provide lockers or storage facilities for users to stow helmets, waterproofs and other equipment. Nevertheless, such facilities can be valuable and should be considered by those providing parking to known users, such as in a workplace scheme.

Traffic signing and information

The standard parking sign (TSRGD 1994, diagram 801) is used to signify motorcycle parking. At present, signs signifying motorcycle parking require special authorisation, but it is expected that the current revision of the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions will include a supplementary plate to be used with diagram 801 to indicate a parking place reserved for motorcycles.

On the highway, carriageway markings may be used as set out in TSRGD diagram 1028.4, indicating a parking bay at the edge or centre of the carriageway. Bay markings can include "MOTORCYCLES ONLY", "M/CS ONLY", "SOLO MOTORCYCLES ONLY" or "SOLO M/CS ONLY".

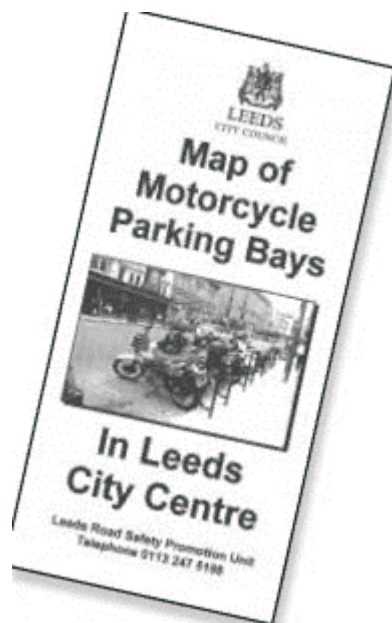
In car parks and other off-highway sites, other signs and markings may be used. These non-highway signs fall under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations, and are not traffic signs as defined by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. For example, Stafford Borough Council provides a specific marked route through a car park to the motorcycle bays. The signing for this facility is visible from the highway.

Additionally, information signing may be relevant. For example, sites provided by Stafford Borough Council have a sign stating that CCTV recording is in operation.

Birmingham City Council makes information about motorcycle parking available via its Council web site - www.birmingham.gov.uk

Information about parking can also be included in publicity leaflets. For example, a leaflet produced by Leeds City Council gives the location of all the motorcycle parking within the city.

Leaflet produced by Leeds City Council giving motorcycle parking within the city



Management

Most motorcycle parking is inspected informally for any maintenance problems by parking attendants or traffic wardens. 'Standard' on-street parking does not require additional inspection. However, where anchor points or other equipment are provided, it should be inspected regularly to check for problems caused by vandalism or wear.

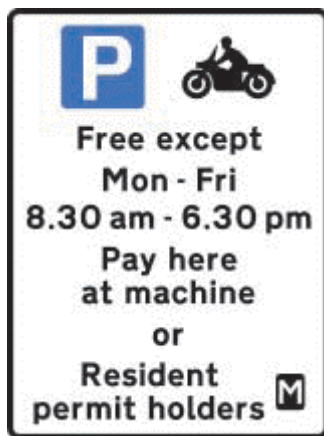
No authorities surveyed in researching this leaflet reported significant maintenance costs associated with motorcycle parking.

Checklist

In summary, the provision of new motorcycle parking facilities should be subject to the following stages:

- Strategic justification
- Funding
- Consultation
- Site selection
- Design
- Implementation
- Monitoring

Example of motorcycle parking signage



Further information

Policy and technical enquiries should be addressed to:

Traffic Management Division
Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions
3/22 Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DR
Tel: 020 7944 2149

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