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## Establishing and Maintaining Safe Alternative Parking Sites

As we all are aware, finding the perfect parking space is a challenge when attending mass or other parish activities. If you don't arrive an hour early, the parking spaces under the shade tree quickly become elusive. And if you arrive late, you will most likely have to park in the overflow area.

For parish personnel, overflow parking has become the norm rather than the exception. In an attempt to make your parish's overflow parking as safe as possible, please consider the following safety tips:

- Make sure the surface area is as flat as possible and not subject to flooding from rainstorms.
- Designate a separate entry and exit, and clearly mark these areas with signage to help with congestion and confusion.
- Inspect the ground to ensure the surface does not contain holes, protruding lawn sprinklers or other trip-and-fall hazards. Also ensure that fire ants, wasp nests, snakes or other biting or dangerous animals are not present in the parking area.

- For special events or first-time use of an overflow lot, have trained staff or volunteers on hand. Equip staff and volunteers with reflective vests and flashlights (especially if the event is taking place at night) to guide cars into designated parking spaces.
- Parking vehicles on an angle is preferable to parking straight up and down. This helps limit separation distances from the next row of parked vehicles.
- Parking areas should be set up so that vehicles are facing at a 90 degree angle to where the Church building or event will be. This allows for people to walk behind parked cars and not through them.
- If concrete parking stops are used, make sure they are set with some kind of footer. Footers are a foundation designed to keep the parking stop from sinking into the ground when bumped by vehicle tires. Footers can be another parking stop inverted and placed into a small trench with a second parking stop on top. These can be fastened together with round head bolts rather than rebar. Footers can also be 2x6 inch wood, cement blocks or even bricks. If footers are not being used, take care to routinely inspect each parking stop. If the stops have sunken into the ground they must be reset.

*The information contained in this report was obtained from sources, which to the best of the writer's knowledge are authentic and reliable. Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Services and Arthur J. Gallagher & Co. make no guarantee of results, and assume no liability in connection with either the information herein contained, or the safety suggestions herein made. Moreover, it cannot be assumed that every acceptable safety procedure is contained herein or that abnormal or unusual circumstances may not warrant or require further or additional procedures.*



Poor overflow parking areas that could lead to an injury.



Safe and effective overflow parking areas.

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- Parking stops can also be made of railroad ties, cement light poles and brightly colored rope. The use of chains is not recommended.
- The minimum separation distance between rows measured from the back of the parking stall to the back of parking stall of the adjacent row is 24 feet for angled parking and 16 feet for straight parking.
- If a lake, small pond, sidewalk, building, trees or other peril is present, a solid barrier must be erected to prevent the vehicle from striking, plunging, or otherwise hitting the peril. If this cannot be done, do not allow vehicles to park in or near that area.
- The use of loose fill or gravel is not recommended as surfacing material for parking areas.
- If operating a parking lot at night, it is recommended that portable, self-contained lighting trailers are rented.
- Prior to each use, carefully inspect the overflow parking area to ensure that it is safe for use.
- If there are trees in the parking area, make sure branches are routinely trimmed. If coconut trees are present, ensure that they are free of mature coconuts that can fall and damage vehicles or injure guests.
- Keep in mind that designating an area near the facility for dropping off passengers can greatly reduce the number of guests who have to walk in the grass or on other unimproved surfaces.



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- Whenever possible, consider installing improved walking surfaces that lead from the unimproved parking lot to an improved surface.
- There are many types of unique products that can be procured and installed in an overflow parking lot that are impervious for water drainage while providing a stable surface. The websites listed provide information on these products:

[www.invisiblestructures.com/grasspave2.html](http://www.invisiblestructures.com/grasspave2.html)

[www.stabiligrd.com/0\\_overflow\\_grass\\_lawn\\_parking.htm](http://www.stabiligrd.com/0_overflow_grass_lawn_parking.htm)

[www.boddingtonsonline.com/products/grass-ground-reinforcement/grass-reinforcement-protection/turfprotecta-turf-reinforcement-mesh.php](http://www.boddingtonsonline.com/products/grass-ground-reinforcement/grass-reinforcement-protection/turfprotecta-turf-reinforcement-mesh.php)

[www.terram.com/products/grass-mesh/grassprotecta-grass-reinforcement-mesh.html](http://www.terram.com/products/grass-mesh/grassprotecta-grass-reinforcement-mesh.html)