



# Consolidated and Updated Guidance on Vehicle Operation in Parks: Authorized Vehicles Only

**Approved by:** City Council [[2025.IE22.5](#)]

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Authorization to operate motor vehicles in parks outside of formal roadways is limited to trained drivers of emergency vehicles, vehicles delivering City or agency services, and third parties with a permit or agreement that includes authorization to operate a vehicle in a park.

Extra care must be used when driving in and around City parks. Children, cyclists, skaters, and pedestrians may not be as vigilant as they might be if they were on City streets. Persons experiencing homelessness may also use these areas and may not always be visible to the operator.

## When driving in parks

### Speed limit

The maximum speed shall not exceed 10 km/hr on paved roads and paths (unless otherwise posted) except where conditions or operating procedures dictate a lower speed. On turf and other areas not intended for vehicle access, the maximum speed shall not exceed 5 km/hr.

### Obey signs

All traffic regulatory signs posted in City parks and on City property must be adhered to in the same manner as posted signs on a provincial or municipal roadway.

## When driving outside of formal road systems in parks

### Protect turf

Take every reasonable precaution to avoid damage to turf. Do not drive on turf unless paved pathways are not available, and a vehicle is necessary to be on the turf to complete the work safely. In the event of poor or wet conditions, avoid operating vehicles on turf. Do not park on turf unless authorized by Parks and Recreation (PR) (third parties) or required for work (City staff). Report any damaged turf to the Park Supervisor immediately so that the area can be remediated promptly.

### Protect trees

Do not drive or park near trees, in natural areas, or on planted areas, to avoid damage to roots and soil compaction, except where required to perform necessary urban forestry work or park maintenance or repair. ("Near trees" is defined as within a Minimum Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) of a by-law regulated tree and in accordance with the City's [Tree Protection Policy and Specifications for Construction Near Trees](#)). Where it is not feasible to determine TPZ, a tree's dripline (e.g., a circle around a tree's outermost branches) can be used as a proxy.

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## **Use hazard indicators**

Turn on appropriate hazard/warning lights and beepers, when available. Four-way flashing lights must be used when a vehicle is in motion, and beepers or horn should be used intermittently, if and when required.

## **Use a guide**

Operate the vehicle at a walking speed, with a guide on foot when available and safety conditions permit, in visual contact with the operator at the right front of the vehicle. A guide is required for City staff driving vehicles over one half ton, and for third parties driving any vehicle.

## **Take care when crossing paths**

Stop the vehicle and check both directions before crossing a pedestrian or bicycle path.

## **Avoid debris**

Do not under any circumstance drive over any debris, garbage, cardboard, or tarps, as there may be people, animals, or objects under them.

## **Back up safely**

Plan routes to avoid backing when possible and follow safe backing procedures, including the use of a guide behind the vehicle when available. If a competent guide is not available, the driver must get out and walk to the rear of the vehicle to ensure the path is clear.

## **Stay in approved areas**

Third parties must follow City staff direction on appropriate routes and parking areas when operating outside of formal road systems.

## **When stopping or leaving vehicles**

### **Emergency access**

Do not block access routes for emergency vehicles.

### **Necessary purposes only**

Do not leave vehicles on park turf, sports fields, or park pathways unless the vehicle is required to complete the work. Vehicles used to deliver equipment for special events or for City work must return to authorized parking areas when the delivery is complete.

### **Avoid idling**

Adhere to the City of Toronto's Idling Control Bylaw, which prohibits idling for more than one minute in a 60-minute period. Review the bylaw for additional considerations.

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## **Do not leave running**

Do not leave a vehicle running unless the operator stay in it. This includes warming up in the winter months.

## **Secure vehicle and key**

When leaving a vehicle, remove the key from the ignition and where applicable, lower all hydraulic attachments to the ground or, where equipped, lock in position. The key is to be kept in possession of the driver and not left in the vehicle.

## **Lock vehicle**

When leaving a vehicle unattended, secure and lock down the vehicle with the engine off to ensure that no items nor the vehicle itself are tampered with.

## **Safe location**

Ensure the vehicle is left in a safe place that does not pose a danger to the public and to staff when entering or exiting and does not impede traffic. This includes being mindful of roadways, driveways, bike lanes, pedestrian pathways, sidewalks, and trails.

## **Circle check**

After leaving a vehicle unattended, whether working in the vicinity or taking a break, upon returning, walk around the vehicle and identify any potential hazards before driving or operating.