



Jeffrey R. Gahler  
Sheriff

# Harford County Sheriff's Office

## Office of Media and Public Relations

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## NEWS RELEASE

### Respect the Space: Save handicap parking spaces for those who need them!

For Immediate Release

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(December 13, 2016 – BEL AIR, MD) — On December 8th, 2016, deputies with the Harford County Sheriff's Office along with representatives from the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) and Rachel Harbin, Disabilities Coordinator with Harford County Government's Office on Disability, participated in a Handicap Parking Enforcement Initiative.

This yearly joint initiative was designed to make sure that vehicles parked in accessible parking spaces had the appropriate parking placard or designated license plate displayed. In addition to the placard or license plate, drivers were also required to produce their Motor Vehicle Administration-issued identification. Deputies issued 19 citations for fraudulent placard use which carries a \$140 fine and 6 citations for no placard being displayed which carries a \$120 fine. In total, 129 contacts were made, and 19 placards were seized by the MVA from numerous locations in Harford County. Deputies, along with the Disabilities Coordinator and the MVA, want to remind everyone that people with disabilities face challenges every day, not the least of which is finding adequate parking when they need it. For those with disabilities, the use of handicap parking spaces, also known as accessible parking spaces, is not a luxury; it's a necessity. Yet every day, motorists with disabilities cannot find parking spaces when they need them because their non-disabled counterparts use these spaces as a means of convenience.

Sheriff Gahler remarked, "During the holiday season, we are all busy and looking for a shortcut to get things done and make life easier. Don't let one of those shortcuts be parking in a handicap parking space. If you don't need it, leave it."

"Sometimes parking in an accessible parking space is the only way that people with disabilities are able to access the community." said Rachel Harbin, Disabilities Coordinator at the Office on Disability. "We want everyone to be able to participate to their fullest ability, so please 'respect the space' and only park in handicap parking spaces if you are qualified to do so."

For more information visit the MVA's "**Everything You Need to Know**" for Maryland motorists with disabilities. <http://www.mva.maryland.gov/About-MVA/DISABILITIES/default.htm>

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#### Harford County Sheriff's Office Mission

*With courage, honor and integrity we protect the rights and dignity of all citizens. In partnership with our communities, we strive to preserve the peace and provide for a safe environment for all.*