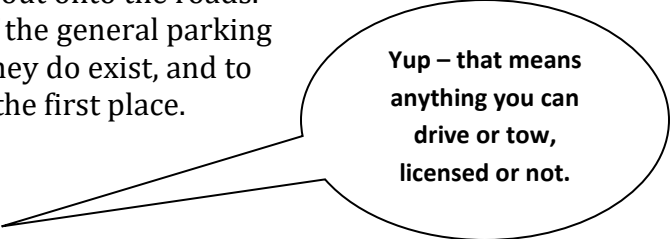


Did You Know?

We hope you are aware the City of Three Forks has an array of general traffic and parking regulations. Some of these are simple like, “Don’t use a city street for storage,” or, “No parking within 15-feet of any fire hydrant.” But **Did You Know** why we have all these rules and regulations?!

Generally speaking, laws are intended to provide general public health and safety. These rules are in place to keep public rights-of-way clear for moving vehicles, to provide parking to residents and businesses nearby, and for pedestrians to be seen by drivers as well as be able to see oncoming traffic before stepping out onto the roads.

In this newsletter we’d like to cover some of the general parking laws for Three Forks to gently remind you they do exist, and to educate you as to why they were created in the first place.



Yup – that means anything you can drive or tow, licensed or not.

General Parking Rules

#7-2-5 GENERAL PARKING REGULATIONS *No person shall park any vehicle, or trailer, boat, camper or motorcycle upon any street, roadway, thoroughfare or alley; or on and in any other public place for the principal purpose of:* ([link here to full language](#)) displaying it for sale; repairs/oil changing; leaving it unattended in an alley when loading or unloading; to be used for storage; not parked parallel unless designated that way with paint; for the use of camping; **or be parked in the same location for more than 72-hours.** (Specifics to each of those rules can found in the link to the City’s ordinances at www.threeforksmontana.us.)

72 hours in one spot?

According to #7-2-5 you must move the vehicle to the other side of the street, or around the corner.

#7-2-6: PARKING PROHIBITED IN SPECIFIC PLACES: *No person shall stop, stand or park a vehicle, except when necessary to avoid conflict with other traffic, or in compliance*

with the directions of a police or traffic control officer, or highway patrolman, in any of the following places. This includes the prohibitions of parking on a sidewalk, blocking a driveway, within 15-feet of an intersection or fire hydrant, within 20-feet of a designated crosswalk or traffic stop, alongside excavation or construction, or “double parked” to name a few. Let’s talk about specific examples seen in Three Forks.



Parking Parallel Unless Designated Otherwise

In the above photo, we can see the two vehicles closest to the camera on the right adhering to this rule, and the next two vehicles violating this rule by parking diagonally. The reason for this law is to provide enough room on both sides of the street to allow traffic to pass safely. Parking parallel consumes roughly 7-feet of that right-of-way. For instance, if you had an 18-foot truck with a trailer hitch attached parked diagonally it would really limit the traffic flow in the right-of-way by hogging another 11-feet. That's almost the same space as a lane for travel! The picture clearly depicts the space consumed by parking diagonally, and these are not extra-long vehicles.

Clearance for Intersections

Below you can see an alley entrance and a vehicle parked right at the end of the sidewalk. If another vehicle, let's say it has a pull behind trailer attached, attempted to navigate into this alley from the white Chevy's driver side and drive away from the camera's perspective, that white Chevy would most likely get hit by the trailer. The 15-foot requirement is to provide clearance for the driver navigating into the 20-foot-wide alley.

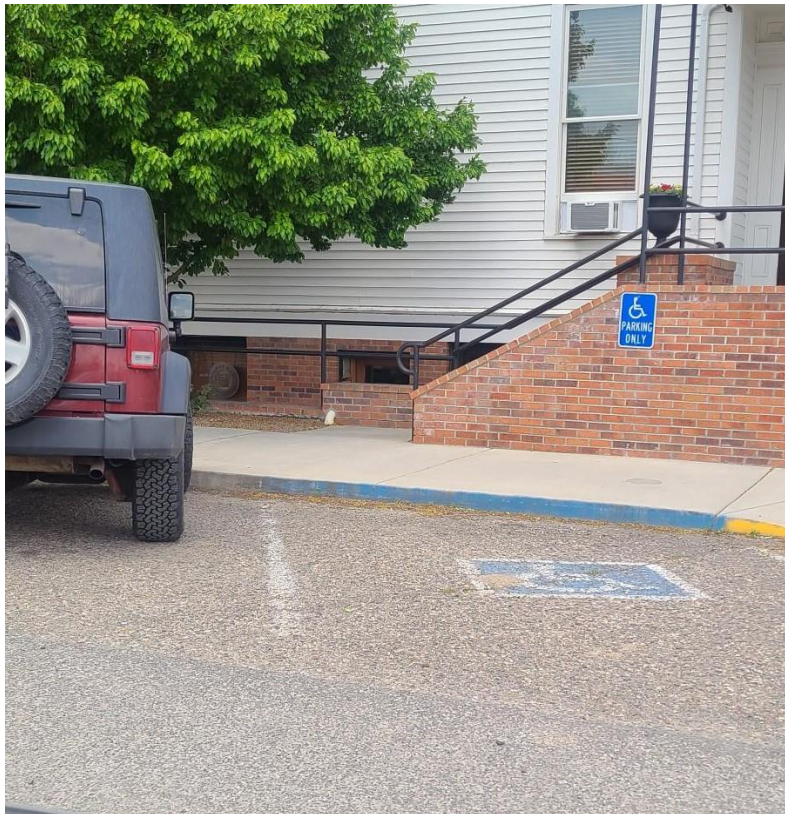
***#7-2-6C states,
"[no parking]
within 15-feet
of any
intersection."***



Another thing to point out in the above picture is the vehicle parked in the alley right-of-way. This is acceptable and demonstrates how to be done safely while adhering to #7-2-5B by allowing for the free movement of other traffic. **#7-2-5B: When a vehicle is loading or unloading within a public alley, ten feet (10') of the width of the alleyway shall be available at all times for the free movement of vehicular traffic. When such a vehicle is loading or unloading in an alley, the same shall not be parked in such a position as to block the driveway or entrance of any abutting property, except for in Central Business District.** This particular property is located in the Central Business District, and the vehicle is parked in front of a driveway both the vehicle's right and left. There is enough space to allow the driveway to the left to be utilized as well as allows traffic to flow through the alley. Let's hope the driveway on the right did not have to wait too long to leave the property.

This clearance is to keep the area free for moving traffic; it is not intended for parking full time.

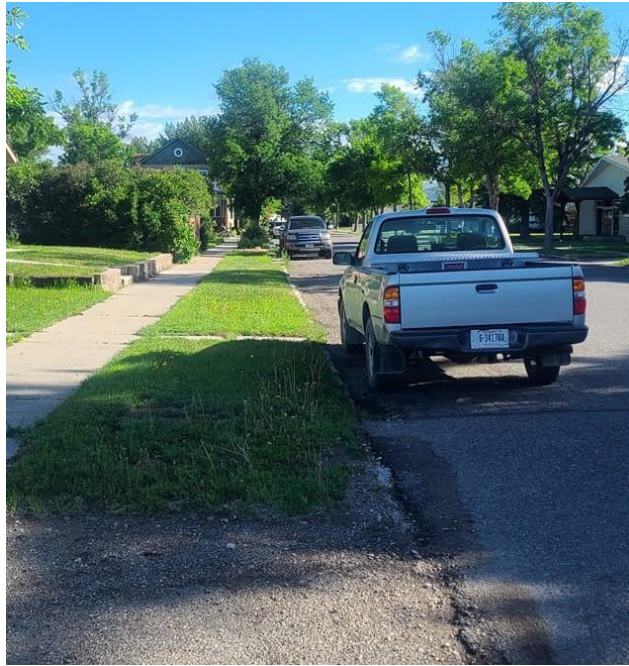
#7-2-10 ANGLE PARKING says *Upon those streets which have been marked or signed for angle parking, vehicles shall be parked wholly within, or between, two (2) such adjacent marks or signs. In the Business District, all vehicles must be parked on, and by turning the same to, the right side of the street in the direction which such vehicles are facing. No left turns into parking spaces.*



This picture shows us a vehicle parked within the lines of the designated angle parking along Ash Street outside the Sacajawea Hotel. This particular area is across from the Conoco gas station where no parking could occur on the opposite side of Ash Street, and

where a heavy amount of traffic is pulling in and out of the station. Angle parking was designated to allow for more parking in this one block section due to the lack of parking available on the opposite side of the street.

#7-2-5D: Except as otherwise provided, a vehicle parked upon a public street or thoroughfare shall be parked or stopped parallel to the travelled way facing the same direction as the traffic flow upon such street or thoroughfare. Further, parking or stopping shall be of such a distance as to not block, inhibit or impair the travelled way in any manner, including but not limited to opening doors shall not interfere or cross the plane of the travelled way.

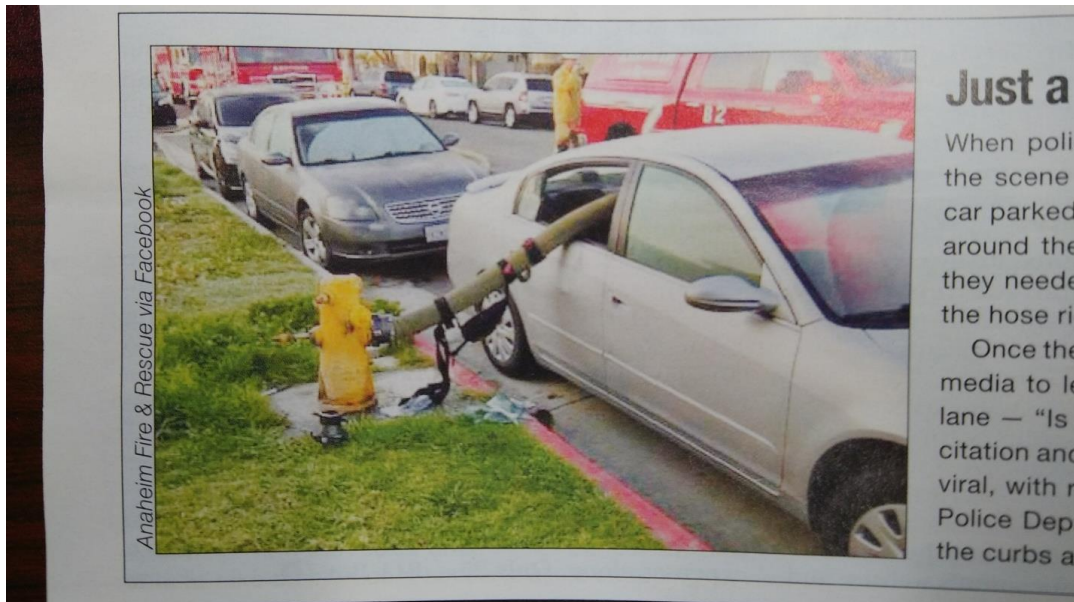


So why does the City care if you are “facing the same direction” as the travelled way of traffic?? Let’s say I park on 2nd Avenue East (which runs in a north/south direction) on the west side of the street; so my vehicle is facing the school, but parked on the opposite side of the street as the traffic would travel. How can I safely maneuver to get back to the correct side of the street without the possibility of hitting someone head on who is travelling on the correct side of the street? Hence the law to park parallel to the travelled way facing the same direction as traffic flow listed in #7-2-5D. The law exists for my safety and yours.

Fire Hydrants

Three Forks Ordinance **#7-2-6C & D** states that ***no person shall stop, stand or park a vehicle (except for emergencies) within 15-feet of any intersection or within 15-feet of any fire hydrant.*** Why you ask? This photo below captured firefighters responding to a residential structure fire. This was the closest hydrant to the blaze, but every inch counts in order for the hose to reach the fire.

There are not curbs on every street in Three Forks, so not every fire hydrant location is able to be painted red at the curb. However, **every fire hydrant is painted RED** and generally red means stop.



(Photo credit to *American Police Beat* magazine: <https://apbweb.com/>)

According to the [Federal Highway Administration](#) (FHWA) uniform traffic control devices manual, roadway signs convey important messages to us via symbols and coloring. Red is used to convey stop, yield, and prohibitions. For Montana, red also means "do not enter" and "wrong way" according to the [Montana Driver Manual](#).

U-Turns

Now for the number one witnessed (from City Hall anyway) violation which is only briefly mentioned in **#7-2-10 ANGLE PARKING** with the ***No left turns into parking spaces:***

The U-turn across Main Street!



This is probably the most common practice, and the most dangerous, we see. Let's envision someone wants to drop their water payment off. They head to City Hall coming from the Library, turn left across the double yellow lines on Main Street (which is also a State Highway) to be right in front of City Hall. They just made an illegal U-turn. Double yellow lines mark a two-directional no passing zone. They mark areas of danger, and not just for the purpose of passing. 61-8-328, MCA states **A person may turn a vehicle left across a**

lane marked with two yellow lines into a public or private parking lot, private road, private driveway, if the turn can be made safely and if the person does not hinder the flow of oncoming traffic. Parking on the opposite side of Main Street is not private land. In fact, from the door of City Hall to the door of V42 Fitness across the street is entirely within the 100-foot right-of-way owned by the State of Montana Department of Transportation. This is the same down the entirety of Main Street. Under the guidelines of FHWA, crossing the double-yellow shall only take place when leaving the highway to enter private property.

The scariest part we have witnessed though is from those leaving that angled parking space on Main and making the U-turn in reverse! Using the driver in that previous example, the person dropped off their water/sewer payment, gets back in their vehicle, backs up across Main Street changing direction and then heading north back towards the Sacajawea. Oncoming traffic is not expecting you to back into their lane. Likewise any vehicle backing out of a space on the opposite side of Main Street is not expecting nor looking for you over their left shoulder. We have witnessed two accidents in the past two years where this has happened. Fortunately no one was seriously injured.

So, please remember

Be safe out there! Keep all intersections clear for at least 15-feet. Park parallel unless otherwise designated. Don't park in front of a hydrant. Don't park in a crosswalk, sidewalk, or driveway blocking the sidewalk or the property owner's access to their property. Leave 10-feet of clearance in alleys when loading and unloading. Don't make a U-turn across Main Street.

A number of good reasons come to mind, but the bottom line is we want you to make it to wherever you are headed safely! To learn more visit our website at www.threeforksmontana.us or give us a call at 406-285-3431.