

# The Sign

by Karen

Karen in America



I didn't realize how often I've seen the parking sign for disabled people in America until I started driving around to look for a parking space. On a busy day, it's not easy to find a parking space near my local library. Cars are parked back to back on the street and side by side in the one-story garage. But the parking spaces for disabled people are baldly empty. If this happens in China, eight out of ten able-bodied drivers might take the space without hesitation.

It's the law in America to give way to disabled people. Their parking space is especially reserved closest to the entrance of supermarkets, malls, movie theatres, post offices, restaurants, hospitals and any other office buildings. The Pittsburgh buses, for instance (I believe the same is true in all American cities), have special access for disabled passengers. Museums, galleries, theatres, stadiums and any other public venues, both indoor and outdoor, are accessible to disabled people. I saw more passengers on wheelchairs in the airport in America than in China. So travelling is not impossible for the

disabled. In fact, they benefit by getting on board first.

On our way to Pittsburgh last year, we stayed overnight at a Best Western inn on the outskirts of Grove City, PA. We were put into a room for the disabled on the ground floor for the convenience of my four large suitcases. A parking space with the disabled parking sign was right in front of our room. I knew that space was for whomever stayed in the room. But we couldn't park there. The woman at the reception desk clarified this to us in an official tone, "You can't. The parking space is only for disabled people who have the approved disabled license. The cops cruise around this area at night. You might get in trouble for that. We can't take any responsibility for you."

Okie dokie. All vehicles in America for the disabled are given a special license which allows the driver to use the disabled parking space. I now have great respect for the sign in which a man sits in a wheelchair. I'm not surprised that I've grown accustomed to the sense of priority for the disabled in America. 🇺🇸