



MAJOR EXPANSION OF SAFER PARKING ENHANCES VANCOUVER TOURISM THIS SUMMER

20 new safer parking facilities certified by Vancouver Police; Vancouver hotels begin enrolling in program; Tourism Vancouver applauds initiative

Vancouver, July 3, 2008 – This year’s influx of summer tourists to Vancouver is about to get a boost – with the certification of 20 new parking facilities as Safer Parking destinations.

Visitors will have their choice of 25 Vancouver Police Department certified Safer Parking facilities that include public parking lots in major hotels, shopping centres and office buildings. The new Safer Parking Awards, announced in Vancouver today, indicate that a parking facility is safer than facilities in the same area that have not made the same effort to prevent crime and the fear of crime. The latest batch of recipients includes several local hotels, including the Westin Bayshore and Pacific Palisades Hotel.

Awards are based on evaluations done by the Vancouver Police Department, which considers key elements of public safety in a parking facility, including lighting, cleanliness, visibility and good security practices that deter crime and anti-social behavior and build public confidence.

Despite the impact of rising gas prices, Tourism Vancouver expects the majority of overnight visitors to Vancouver this season will continue to be British Columbians traveling by car.

“Tourism Vancouver applauds Vancouver’s local community of businesses and organizations who work collaboratively to ensure Vancouver remains an attractive travel destination,” says Rick Antonson, President and CEO, Tourism Vancouver. “We’re highly supportive of programs like the Safer Parking Initiative that encourage a safer environment for our visitors.”

The Safer Parking Initiative focuses on creating a more enjoyable and safer experience for those who visit, work or live in downtown Vancouver.

“This initiative was developed in response to the growing problem of property crime and public disorder in Vancouver,” says Colin Brown, Chief Operating Officer of Canadian Direct Insurance and spokesperson for the Safer Parking Initiative. “Like the Pacific Palisades Hotel and The Westin Bayshore, we have an interest in making Vancouver a safer city by reducing auto break-ins and improving the safety of parking lots.”

“With 25 certified facilities, Safer Parking now has a respectable footprint across much of downtown Vancouver. The program is coming of age,” Adds Brown.

The Safer Parking Initiative was officially launched in February when Mayor Sam Sullivan proclaimed 'Safer Parking Day' in the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Police Department granted the first five Awards.

“Our priority is to provide the best possible experience for our guests,” says Mike Poirier, Regional Vice President of Operations for Diamond Parking, receiving a Safer Parking Award in his capacity as manager of the Pacific Palisades parking facility. “We are continually seeking and adopting industry best practices like the Safer Parking Initiative that encourages peace-of-mind for those visiting Vancouver and encourages them to return.”

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SAFER PARKING AWARD FACILITIES:

- 160 Water St. (EasyPark)
- 701 W. Georgia St. (EasyPark)
- 777 Dunsmuir St. (EasyPark)
- 900 W. Cordova St. (EasyPark)
- Pacific Palisades Hotel (Diamond Parking)
- Jewish Community Centre 950 W. 41st Ave (Diamond Parking)
- Bentall Centre, 540 Thurlow St. (Advanced Parking)
- Bentall Centre, 550 Burrard St. (Advanced Parking)
- Bentall Centre, 1040 W. Pender St. (Advanced Parking)
- 500 W. Cordova St. Harbour Centre (Owned by Polaris Realty, managed by Impark)
- 450 W. Cordova St., Harbour Centre (Owned by Polaris Realty, managed by Impark)
- 999 W. Hastings St. Axa Building (Owned by Polaris Realty, managed by Impark)
- Westin Bayshore Main Parkade, 1620 Bayshore Drive (Managed by Westin)
- Westin Bayshore Central Parkade, 1675 Bayshore Drive (Managed by Westin)
- 1495 W. 8th Ave (Diamond Parking)
- 933 Seymour St. (Diamond Parking)
- Capers Market, 1675 Robson St. (Diamond Parking)
- 1505 Mariners Walk (Diamond Parking)
- 2150 W. Broadway (Diamond Parking)
- 1154 W. Broadway (Diamond Parking)
- 817 Denman St. (Diamond Parking)
- 1420 W. Georgia St. (Diamond Parking)
- 2012 McDonald St. (Diamond Parking)
- 1131 – 1151 Haro St. (In rear alley, Diamond Parking)
- 1034 -1040 Robson St. (in rear alley, Diamond Parking)

About the Safer Parking Initiative

The Safer Parking Initiative, launched in August 2007, is a partnership between the Vancouver Police Department and a coalition of organizations including parking lot owners, operators, businesses and community groups. SPI's mandate is to improve the reality and perception of safety and security in Vancouver parking facilities in order to help reduce crime and increase the public's confidence in Vancouver, making the city an even more desirable destination to work, live and visit. For more information visit www.SaferParkingVancouver.com

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Parking Tips for Tourists

When choosing a parking facility be sure to look for these 5 qualities:

1. Bright lighting and light colours throughout the facility
2. Clear and legible signs
3. Noticeable entrance and exit points for vehicles and pedestrians
4. Cleanliness inside and outside the facility
5. Onsite security, including emergency phones or parking attendants

Or simply look for the Safer Parking Initiative Logo!

FACTS: Parking & Crime in Vancouver

- A recent survey done by the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association found that parking ranked second among factors that people dislike most about downtown.
- The West End – Coal Harbour Community policing centre cites that theft from vehicles is one of the city's most pressing issues, and finds higher theft rates within commercial lots, as opposed to residential areas. The DVVIA's most recent public survey also indicated that 69% of Vancouverites surveyed said they felt safe either "all the time" or "most of the time" downtown. That figure is down from 76% last year.
- The Vancouver Board of Trade reported that thefts of vehicles, thefts from vehicles, and vandalism of vehicles (all in the City of Vancouver) cost the community around \$60 million in 2003. In September 2006, the Board reported that theft of autos was down 3.6%, but theft from autos was up 6.5% The

Vancouver Police Department reports that 16,000 cars are broken into every year in Vancouver.

- The indirect costs of car theft include: hospitalization/health care, police services, fire & rescue services, and court & judicial processes.
- The costs of thefts from automobiles are very significant and include lost time at work (to get vehicle repairs), insurance claims, and psychological distress.
- There are over 400 parking facilities in Vancouver and more than 6,000 parking meters.
- The average Vancouverite pays \$268 for monthly parking, while a top parking spot costs up to \$375, according to a recent CB Richard Ellis survey.