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Park Smarter with SmartPark **Company Vehicle Magazine, December 2004**

The days of petty cash payouts for parking are now gone, thanks to the SmartPark in-vehicle parking meter.

The system is not yet live in Auckland but it is up and running in Wellington, where visitors to the CBD are finding the SmartPark is so much more convenient than hunting around for those often-elusive \$1 coins.



Now why is this of interest to *Company Vehicle* readers?

Simply because the SmartPark system is going to take away the hassles of \$40 fines for no pay and display ticket shown and the hassles of filling in expense accounts for parking.

Let's suppose that your company has a number of sales reps, service personnel, technicians or others whose duties involve them regularly visiting the CBD.

With a SmartPark meter, those drivers will have the freedom to park anywhere around town that is controlled by on-street meters – without any need to carry coinage or risk the wrath of the meter-minder.

How does it work?

There are two components to the system – the SmartPark Meter and the card.

The card is an intelligent chip card which carries 'Council cash'. In Wellington, the denominations are \$50, \$100 or \$200. The cards are sold through the council and should be protected with your driver's life. They fit conveniently into a wallet.

The cards slot into the second half of the device – the reader. This lightweight device recognises the card and will request that the operator keys in a parking 'zone', which is readily identified on the street meter. The 'zones' are to identify the correct parking rates so that the card's balance can be deducted correctly.

The card is removed from the meter. All the driver needs to do is hang the reader on the rear vision mirror and walk away.

Now, if your driver reckons he/she will be at their destination for an hour but in fact is only there for fifteen minutes, the card only charges for the fifteen minutes, as opposed to a regular meter which would charge you for an hours parking and that's what you'd have to pay, regardless of how many minutes you had saved.

It works the other way too. If you go over time with the SmartPark, it just keeps counting until such time as you return and turn it off.

What you have to remember though, is that the SmartPark can't cheat. The meter knows the zones and knows the restrictions. If you park for three hours in a two hour car park, you'll find a pesky piece of paper on your windscreen and your SmartPark has turned itself off – it's a SmartPark, but it doesn't mean your car is ticket-proof.

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No cash, no coins, no receipts – that's gonna put a smile on your accountant's face. And it's possible to get a printout of where and when SmartPark meters have been parked, which should discourage fraudulent parking usage.

At this point in time International Parking Systems (IPS) Ltd, who brought the SmartPark concept to New Zealand are offering the units on a rental basis. They can be leased from IPS in Wellington on a 1, 2 or three year plan from as little as \$7 plus GST per month plus the cost of the cards of course. Alternatively, customers can prepay the rental which entitles them to a 10% discount. It's likely that the same system will be implemented for Auckland in the new year.

How successful is SmartPark going to be?

IPS Ltd is realistic. It reckons it will take time for councils to take on the SmartPark system, but around the world, the concept has taken off like wildfire. Amsterdam alone has 45,000 units in use.



For more information about Ganis Systems in the press, please contact press@ganis-systems.com