

IPCCA PARKING PATROL – NOVEMBER 2019

PATROL MASTERS

We have been asked to comment on our evaluation of the Patrol Masters parking enforcement program. This is the third year we have had this in place.

General Information

IPCCA employs Patrol Masters (PM) to enforce our street parking rules and to provide additional security presence in the community. They are normally on duty from midnight to 6:00 am every day. During this time, they patrol all IPCCA streets two or more times a shift for street parking violations and prohibited vehicles, perform routine checks for unauthorized use/vandalism at the Life Style Center (pool, courts, gym and restrooms) and our two satellite pools, check that all facilities are locked, and react to any suspicious activity (i.e., homeless issues, excessive noise, etc.). They also provide additional security as required for festivals and other specific situations. Residents may call PM during this time for security checks or issues. However, residents should call 911 if they are concerned about dangerous or criminal activity.

PM provides a broad range of services. Residents can put vehicles on a safe list allowing overnight street parking for visitors a certain number of times per year. (See other parts of this website or contact PPM for details.) PM assisted with legally required towing signage, they provide meticulous records on warning citations issued, and follow legally mandated procedures when vehicles are towed. We recently prevailed in a small claims court action alleging improper towing of a vehicle. In this action it was necessary to provide the court with detailed information, including maps showing the location and language of warning signs, copies of previous citations of the vehicle in question with dates and times, and the badge number of the Indio Police officer notified of the tow and the exact time of that notification. Keeping this type of record is essential backup in any towing action.

Evaluation

The Board is pleased with the results of these efforts:

- Before we began this program, about 80% of reported rules violations involved street parking/unauthorized vehicles. These violations are now less than 20% of a much reduced number of total violations.
- No matter what we did about these violations, things did not change much. Rules enforcement procedures are mandated by civil code and our CCRs; they have lengthy time frames and are expensive (calls, letters, hearings, fines, appeals, court actions). We have limited options for enforcing any penalties levied. Liens against the property are not permitted for rules violations fines. Even going to court and getting a favorable judgment does not guarantee collecting the judgment or changing behavior. Documentation needed to prevail is extensive and we do not have sufficient volunteers

for this. Vehicles are generally towed if there is a third violation in any rolling six month period; vehicles parked in a way that creates a safety hazard are towed immediately. Tow companies do not have to release the vehicle until the impound fee is paid by the offender. This seems to be an effective deterrent to repeat parking violations – we have had 3 double tows and no triple tows since this program started. Patrol Masters has no financial connection with the tow company we use, nor does the HOA or management.

- Controlling overnight street parking has helped with the problem of over-occupancy where there are more vehicles routinely associated with a residence than can be accommodated by the available off-street parking spaces for that home.
- We have had a reduction in reported car prowls. It seems cars parked on the street are more likely to be vandalized than cars parked in driveways.
- Patrol Masters covers the entire IPCCA community each night. This has helped us with the problem of selective enforcement, where certain streets were regularly patrolled by volunteers, while others were hardly ever patrolled.
- Having the ban from 1 am to 6 am allows us to limit our cost to one 6-hour shift (standard). It does not interfere with occasional street parking for evening parties, but it does discourage the repetitive overnight street parking that used to be the case. (People do not want to move their vehicle at 12:45 am!) Having more open streets makes it safer for pedestrians and children, provides better access for emergency vehicles such as fire trucks and ambulances, and is generally more pleasant for the majority of residents.

We get monthly activity reports from Patrol Masters which show details of citations, tows, general patrols and so on. For example, August 2019 there were 26 safe list requests, 65 citations and no tows; in October 2019 there were 29 safe list requests, 26 citations and no tows. However, the raw numbers are not particularly interesting in themselves. These figures need to be evaluated over time and trends identified, which PPM and the Board do regularly. The program's success is actually shown by fewer numbers of citations, tows and security incidents! We definitely have fewer citations and other security issues compared to initial numbers when this program was instituted.

We do not share violation specifics outside PPM and the Board because of privacy issues, but we do share any general information that we think would be helpful. We also post any changes in parking guidelines that are in effect because of holidays or the festivals.

In regard to general information, I would like to clarify an on-going point of confusion. **GETTING A PASS FROM THE GATE ALLOWS ONE TO ENTER THE FRONT GATE – IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ALLOWING OVERNIGHT STREET PARKING OR PERMITTING PROHIBITED VEHICLES (LIKE TRAILERS, RVs) TO PARK ON THE STREET FOR EXTENDED PERIODS.** Street parking is governed by the individual HOAs. Some people thought they were OK to park overnight on our streets because they were displaying a gate pass on the dashboard, and then were unpleasantly surprised by citations and/or towing.