

New Parking Options at Charleston VAMC

Thursday, February 19, 2015

Construction on Charleston VAMC's parking deck will soon be underway, and with the onset of building comes new opportunities for parking for Veterans, visitors and employees. The offsite parking lease located at 41 Folly Rd. near Porter Gaud School and the shuttle service to bring you to and from the VAMC will be up and running on March 16, 2015, prior to the beginning of construction on the deck. The offsite parking will provide 600 parking spaces, a covered non-smoking shelter, and shuttles running from 4:30 a.m. until 11:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Shuttles will run every five minutes during peak hours of 6:00 – 8:30 a.m. and 3:00 – 5:30 p.m., and will run every 15 minutes at other times of the day. The shuttle schedule is designed to make sure rides to and from the VAMC are available when you need them.

While the offsite parking is available to patients and guests, Veterans and visitors are encouraged to use Charleston VAMC's complimentary valet service at the front entrance of the medical center. Patient and visitor parking, which is not affected by the parking deck construction, is also available on the VA campus.



Ralph H. Johnson
VA Medical Center
Parking Deck



Join us for the Parking Deck Groundbreaking Ceremony on Friday, March 27 at 10 a.m. in the Charleston VAMC back parking lot.

Parking Deck Groundbreaking Ceremony – Friday, March 27 at 10:00 a.m., Charleston VAMC back parking lot



The offsite parking location is 41 Folly Road, Charleston SC. There will be shuttle transportation between the lot and the medical center throughout each weekday.

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Who can park at the offsite parking lot?

Veterans, visitors and employees of Charleston VAMC may park at the offsite lot and take the shuttle to the VA.

When will employees start using the offsite parking lot and shuttle service?

March 16 is the first day for offsite parking. Employees should plan now to arrive earlier at the offsite lot to ensure sufficient time to catch the shuttle and arrive at your duty station on time.

Where is the offsite lot located? 41 Folly Road close to Porter Gaud School.

How were employees selected to park at the offsite lot vs. at the VAMC? Parking assignments were negotiated with all three employee unions with each union having a percentage of parking spaces at the VAMC for their employee members. If you have questions regarding parking assignments please contact your Union president.

How and when will employees be notified of their parking assignments? Employees will be notified via email of their parking assignments prior to the offsite parking start date of March 16, 2015.

Where will employees working evening and overnight tours park? Employees whose tour of duty begins at or after 2:00 p.m. may park on the Lockwood side of the VAMC. Please be aware that if you choose to use the offsite lot for parking, shuttle service ends at 11:00 p.m.

What hours will the shuttle run? Shuttle services will operate from 4:30 a.m. until 11:00 p.m. Monday - Friday. During peak hours 6:00 - 8:30 a.m. and 3:00 - 5:30 p.m., shuttles will run every 5 minutes. At other times, shuttles will run every 15 minutes.

Where will the shuttle drop employees off at the VAMC? The shuttle drop-off and pick-up location will be at the corner of Bravo and Charlie streets by the Veterans Enrichment Center.

Do I still need an employee sticker to park at the offsite lot? Yes. In the event you drive an alternate vehicle, please notify VA Police as soon as you arrive at the VAMC.

Do I need to show my VA ID to ride the shuttle? While showing ID is not required, shuttle drivers are trained to look for VA ID and may ask for it to ensure appropriate riders are using the shuttle service.

How will employees assigned to park at the VAMC access the employee lot? Charleston VAMC is currently updating the Physical Access Control Systems (PACS) or card readers that control building, parking, and sensitive areas entrance. The new PACS system, which will be operational at the VAMC lot prior to the parking changes, requires swipe by the assigned employee PIV card. All employees should ensure PIV cards and those assigned to park at the VAMC must enroll in the PACS system. Contact VA Police for assistance at ext. 5521 or 5810.

How many shuttles will run during peak hours? The contractor is providing 6 brand new buses (seating capacity of 25) and 5 vans (seating capacity of 12) for shuttle service during peak hours of 6:00 - 8:30 a.m. and 3:00 - 5:30 p.m. Each bus holds 25 passengers and features bucket seats. Vans hold 12 passengers. There will be cameras inside the buses to help ensure driver and passenger safety, at the request of the contractor.

How often will shuttles run? Shuttles will run every 5 minutes during peak hours, 6:00 - 8:30 a.m. and 3:00 - 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Shuttles will run every 15 minutes during non-peak hours. The offsite lot is closed on weekends.

Can employees walk from the offsite lot to the VAMC? Due to the lack of sidewalks between the VAMC and the offsite lot, it is unsafe to walk between these locations. The shuttle service is provided for safe transport of employees and Veterans parking at the offsite lot.

How many spaces will there be at the offsite lot? Approximately 600 spaces will be provided.

Where will handicap employees park? There are 13 employee handicap spaces at the VAMC, and there will be 11 handicap spaces at the leased lot. Staff and patients parking at the offsite lot should be able to board the shuttles independently. Employees driving wheelchair vans will park at the VAMC. VAMC handicap parking is available on a first-come, first-served basis. In the event employees with handicap parking decals park at the VAMC in other than handicap spaces, VA Police will investigate.

What happens if an employee parks in an area they are not assigned to? Parking in areas other than those assigned could result in a ticket, disciplinary action and revocation of parking privileges for the employee.

Will there be a shelter? Yes, there will be an open-air shelter with benches that will accommodate approximately 60 people at a time.

Will there be Security at the offsite lot? While there will not be security staff stationed at the lot, there will be a phone that rings directly to VA Police. That phone is located in the shelter.

Will Van Pools still park at the VAMC? Are there designated spaces for Van Pools? Yes, Van Pools will park at the VAMC in their designated spaces. We encourage employees to join Van Pools and establish new Van Pools. As new Van Pools are established we will work with the employees to designate a parking space. Employees who carpool, i.e. not part of a VA-sponsored Van Pool, will park at the offsite lot.

When will construction begin on the parking deck? The contractor will take possession of the construction area on March 23. The Groundbreaking Ceremony will be held on March 27.

How long will construction take? Construction will take approximately 16-20 months.

How many parking spaces will the VA gain from building the parking deck? The parking deck is a two-phase project with Phase 1 building 2 stories and setting the foundation for Phase 2 future expansion. Phase 2 is requested in the FY 2017 construction cycle with VA. Phase 2 will add 4 more levels for a total deck capacity of 900 parking spaces. At the same time, we will maintain the offsite parking lease even after the deck is built adding 600 more spaces for employees and Veterans.

Who is the shuttle contractor? Owl Shuttle Services is the contractor. This company also has shuttle service contracts for the Atlanta and Durham VAMCs.

Can I park overnight at the offsite lot? No. The offsite lot will be closed from 11:30 p.m. until 4:00 a.m. on weekdays and closed on weekends.

Am I guaranteed a space at the offsite lot? Parking will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Please ensure you arrive early to get a space and allow time for riding the shuttle in order to arrive at your duty station on time. The lot may be full at times and parking rules will be enforced.

Will the buses be air conditioned and heated? Yes, they are new climate controlled buses.

Do we need to tip the drivers? No tipping is allowed.

Is there a hotline employees can call to ask questions? Yes. Employees may call the Operations Helpline at ext. 7310 to leave their questions. Messages will be checked daily and responses provided to all questions on a weekly basis.

- See more at:

<http://www.charleston.va.gov/CHARLESTON/features/parkingupdates022015.asp#sthash.RTEChe0b.dpuf>