

What's the law?

Australian law for new arrivals

Answer sheet 12: Fines

October 2016

Requirements: A copy of the DVD

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Pre-teaching

Vocabulary: parking fine, parking ticket, infringement notice, infringement court, penalty reminder notice, legal aid, extension, instalment plan, payment plan, permit zone, loading zone, clearway, tolls, magistrate

Warm up activity to introduce topic: ask the class have they or anyone in their household ever had a parking fine?

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Key messages

1. There are many rules about parking your car and it is important to look out for signs about these rules, understand what they mean, and do what they say.
 2. If you get a letter about a fine, do not ignore it.
 3. There are options for paying fines. If you get help early, you may have more options. Check the letter to find out who to call if you're having trouble paying.
 4. If you ignore letters about fines, or ignore the due dates, you may have to pay more or even go to court.
 5. Always call legal aid if you get a letter saying that you have to go to court because of a fine or fines.
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Answers

Activity A – Watch the story again. What is the most important information? Complete these sentences using a word or words from below.

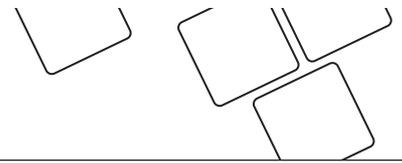
1. understand
2. permit zone
3. pay, help
4. increase, court

Activity B – Match each of these words with its meaning.

Infringement notice	A letter that tells you about a fine if you have broken the law
Penalty reminder notice	A letter reminding you to pay a fine
Extension	You can ask for this so that you have more time to pay a fine
Legal Aid	A place to get help if you need to go to court

Activity C – Watch Fines and answer the questions:

1. Because Ayel is running late for work and the car park is full.
2. Ayel does not understand what the sign means
3. Ajit suggests they call the council
4. The council worker says Ayel can get an extension to pay the fine. If she still doesn't pay the fine by the new due date, the fine will be sent to the Infringements court.

**Activity D** – Discussion

Activity E – Watch Fines again. Look for the screen that tells you where to get help, then complete the missing information in the boxes.

Service	Web address	Phone number
Fines Victoria	www.fines.vic.gov.au	(03) 9200 8111
Victoria Legal Aid	www.legalaid.vic.gov.au	1300 792 387
Translating and Interpreting service	www.tisnational.gov.au	131 450

Script for Fines story

Ayel is in the car on her way to work

Ayel Oh no! I'm going to be late.

Chris Hey Ayel. Can't you find a car park?

Ayel No, the car park is full. And I'm going to be late for work! I will have to park my car somewhere on the street.

Chris Make sure you read the parking signs though! Otherwise you could get a fine! I got one last year when I parked on the street near my house.

After work, Ayel returns to her car. A parking ticket is visible on the front windscreen.

Ayel Infraction notice. Seventy five dollars?

One month later Ayel is sitting at her kitchen table with her husband Ajit. There are letters and papers on the table.

Ajit Ayel, do you know what these letters are for?

Ayel They could be about where I park my car at work. When I'm late from taking the children to school, there are no places left in the car park. So sometimes I park on the street.

Ajit Are there any signs on the street where you park that say you can't park there?

Ayel I think there is a sign that says 'permit'. I don't know what that means.

Ajit It might mean that you need a special permit that allows you to park there. And if you don't have a permit, you can get a fine for parking there. Do you know how many of these letters have we got in the mail?

Ayel We did get one before, saying we had to pay \$75. We didn't have enough money to pay it. We've had doctor's bills to pay, and rent, and shopping, and getting the car fixed. I didn't know what to do. I don't understand what the letters say.

Ajit This one says because we didn't pay the first fine, the amount has gone up to \$100. Oh no, it says payment is due this week! Remember last year when we got a lot of letters about not paying for road tolls, but we didn't do anything about them? Then later we got a notice saying I had to go to court because of all the fines. And we had to pay extra money because we had ignored them for so long.

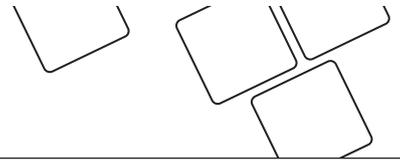
Ayel Yes, I remember. You called Legal Aid and they helped us understand the letters and get ready for court. They helped you work out what to say to the magistrate at court.

Ajit We don't want this parking fine to get to that stage, so we should do something about it now. I remember the people at Legal Aid said there might be different options for paying if we speak to someone early.

Ayel But who should we talk to?

Ajit It says here you can call the council for more information. The number is here. We could also get legal help if we need more advice.

Ayel Ok, let's call the council. What is the number?



Ayel calls the council.

Ayel Hello. I got a letter in the mail saying that I have to pay money. I think it's because I parked my car in the wrong spot.

Council

worker Ok, first we need to know what type of letter you have. Can you read out what it says at the top?

Ayel It says penalty reminder notice. It says payment is due next week! And we can't afford to pay it now!

Council

worker It's good that you called us now, before it becomes more serious. You said you don't have the money to pay. Because you called us now, we can give you an extension. That means you have more time to pay the fine.

Ayel Ok. That might help. How much more time can we have?

Council

worker We can give you another month to pay the fine. I will put the new due date into the system now, as 30 June.

Ayel What happens if we don't pay the fine by the new due date?

Council

worker If you do not pay, the fine will be sent to the Infringements Court. The court will give you a new due date and you will have to pay extra money. You can talk to the court about different ways you can pay. Then, if you still don't pay the fine, the sheriff can take steps to get the money from you. They can do this by taking and selling some of your things to pay the fine. Or they could take money from your wages, or suspend your driver licence until you pay. If you get to this stage, you should get legal help.