

'Serious structural concerns' cause closure of Akron Children's Hospital parking deck

Hospital officials say the Locust Parking Deck, which is 46 years old, features 656 spaces.

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AKRON, Ohio -- Akron Children's Hospital has permanently closed the Locust Parking Deck after an engineering report found "serious structural concerns with the 46-year-old deck."

The deck featured 656 parking spaces.

"We regret the inconvenience this causes everyone beginning this morning, whether it is for a doctor's appointment or a lab/radiology test, as well as our nearly 300 employees who park in the Locust Parking Deck," said Akron Children's President Grace Wakulchik. "But, we approached this decision just as we would approach a medical issue – we felt the need to act upon this information as quickly as possible to avoid harm."

Akron Children's had planned to replace the Locust Parking Deck in the next few years as part of its Akron campus master plan. Recent observation, however, of falling concrete prompted the hospital to obtain a structural review by the GPD Group. The firm's conclusions prompted the hospital to make immediate plans to close the deck and divert vehicles to other parking decks.

The hospital outlines their updated parking procedures as follows:

- Patient families of the hospital and private medical practices located in the Locust Professional Building who currently park in the Locust Parking Deck (P3) should park in the Bowery Parking Deck (P1), 199 W. Bowery St.
- Patient families who normally park in the Bowery or the Exchange Parking Deck (P2), 156 W. Exchange St., should continue to park in those lots.
- Both the Bowery and Exchange Parking Decks are accessible to the main hospital by pedestrian bridges. A map showing the location of these decks is at www.akronchildrens.org/parking.
- Valet parking for patients will be expanded to meet patient needs. Free valet parking is available for emergency room patients.
- \$4 special parking needs can be arranged by security or social work at 330-543-8181 or 330-543-8830.

Here's [more parking information](#) from the hospital's Web site:

"Our Akron campus has two other parking decks and a free surface lot for Emergency patients only. Please use the following documents to help find the best parking option for your destination: Recommended parking options are also displayed in location listings on this web site. Parking in our parking decks is \$1 per hour; \$4 max daily. Cash and credit cards are accepted. Discounted multi-use and long-term passes are available at exit booths. Handicapped parking is available on all levels of the parking decks."