

COUPON WITH REMOVABLE TABS**Field of the Invention**

- 5 The present invention relates to coupons with removable tabs, especially parking coupons of a type which are displayed to show payment has been made or that a vehicle is validly parked.

Background

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There are various schemes in existence by which local authorities or the owners of a parking area require payment to allow a vehicle to be parked. There are also various ways by which a vehicle that is validly parked can be distinguished from one that is not, the most popular of this is by way of a ticket or coupon placed inside the

15 vehicle at a position where it can be viewed from without.

A typical parking coupon is printed with different areas representing the year, month and day and possibly even the particular time. In some instances there is a covering layering which has to be removed to indicate that the coupon is being used on that

20 date and/or time. In other cases, the different years, months, days, hours and minutes printed on removable tabs or chads.

In the latter cases, when a person parks, he removes the relevant tabs indicating the present date and time and then the particular coupon entitles him to stay parked

25 for a certain length of time thereafter, or for the remainder of the day or whatever, depending upon the particular scheme.

The idea is that once the coupon has been used, it is thrown away and next time a person wishes to park, he uses a new coupon. The authority or owner of the parking

30 area makes its money through the sale of the coupons.

There are various disadvantages associated with this known system.

One problem is that of littering. Individual tabs are small and easily dropped, either

35 by accident or deliberately. Typical coupon use may require removal of from three

to five such tabs. Whilst one particular coupon may itself represent minimal littering, the numbers build up both in cars themselves and in car parks, such that they do represent a noticeable problem.

- 5 Additionally, people tend to seek to reuse the coupons, rather than to buy new ones each time. They manage this through bending the tabs out from the surface of the coupon, rather than removing them completely. Once they are no longer needed in that particular configuration, the tabs are then bent back into their original positions. Alternatively, the tabs are removed completely for use, but then are reinserted in
- 10 position and held there by tape or the like. Usually, because the coupons are merely lain on top of the dashboard, it is quite difficult for a parking attendant to determine whether the coupon is reused or likely to be reused or not, as he can seldom, if ever, see the rear of the coupon.
- 15 Moreover, there is the problem that such coupons, when left on the dashboard, have a tendency to be blown off by the closing of a door, such that they cannot then be seen or read by the parking attendant, who issues a parking ticket.

Summary of the invention

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The present invention is intended to alleviate at least some of the above mentioned disadvantages, at least partially.

- 25 According to one aspect of the present invention, there is provided a coupon having a plurality of removable tabs therein and means for adhering tabs removed from said coupon, to positions on the coupon other than those from which they were removed. The coupon may additionally have means for attaching it to a surface.

- 30 According to a second aspect of the present invention, there is provided a coupon having a plurality of removable tabs therein and means for attaching said coupon to a surface. The coupon may additionally have means for adhering tabs removed from said coupon, to positions on the coupon other than those from which they were removed.

- 35 The means for adhering may be a first adhesive area of said coupon. The means

for attaching may be a second adhesive area of said coupon. Preferably, the first adhesive area is on the rear of said coupon, with the second adhesive area on the front.

- 5 Thus, there may be provided a coupon having a plurality of removable tabs therein and a first adhesive area to which tabs removed from said coupon can be adhered.

The plurality of tabs usefully can represent a plurality of possible times and/or dates, possibly with printing thereon. Ideally, the coupon may be a parking coupon.

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According to another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a coupon as above, having one or more of tabs removed therefrom adhered thereto.

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According to a further aspect of the present invention, there is provided a book of coupons, comprising a plurality of the above coupons. The first adhesive area of each coupon, of at least some of said coupons, may adhere to the coupon immediately adjacent to it, preferably in a first direction, whilst the second adhesive area of each coupon, of at least some of said coupons, may adhere to the coupon immediately adjacent to it, preferably in a second direction opposite to said first direction.

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According to again another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of using a coupon, comprising the steps of: removing one or more tabs from said coupon; and adhering said one or more tabs to a position or positions on the coupon other than that or those from which it or they were removed. The method preferably further comprises the step of attaching said coupon to an inside surface of a vehicle.

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According to yet again another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of using a coupon, comprising the steps of removing one or more tabs from said coupon; and attaching said coupon to an inside surface of a vehicle. This method preferably further comprises the step of adhering said one or more tabs to a position or positions on the coupon other than that or those from which it or they were removed.

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In these methods the adhering step may involve sticking said one or more tabs to a first adhesive area of said coupon, whilst the attaching step may comprise sticking said coupon to said surface using a second adhesive area of said coupon. Ideally the surface is a window surface.

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These methods may use the coupons of the earlier mentioned aspects.

These methods usefully can further comprise the step of removing said coupon from a book of coupons, preferably also as mentioned above.

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Thus using the present invention, one may have a parking coupon having removable tabs that are removed according to the conditions of parking and placed on an adhesive area at the rear of the coupon. In this way littering is reduced. Additionally, an adhesive area on the front of the coupon allows the coupon to be

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attached to the inside of a windscreen for easy verification by a parking attendant.

Description of the Drawing

The present invention will now be described by way non-limitative examples, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

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Figure 1 is a front view of a first embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a side view of the embodiment shown in figure 1; and

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Figure 3 is a rear view of the embodiment shown in figure 1.

Detailed Description

Figures 1-3 show a typical embodiment of the present invention. A flat parking coupon 10 is printed on the front with a series of areas 12a-12e representing the year, month, day, hour and minute. Within each area there are a number of removable tabs 14. In the case of the year area 12a, there would only be a few years indicated, as any such coupons are meant to be used up within those years.

Within the month area 12b there would be twelve months, within the day area 12c

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thirty-one days, within the hour area 12d six morning hours and twelve evening hours (as early morning parking is usually free) and in the minute area 12e one tab for every five minutes. Of course, the areas, numbers of tabs and other aspects can vary.

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In Figures 1-3, there are five holes 16a-16e, from whence the relevant tabs 14a-14e have already been removed. In an unused coupon these would not yet exist. Thus the date and time is already indicated in this coupon 10.

10 Along the top of the front of the coupon 10 there is a front sticky strip 18, which allows the coupon to be stuck to the inside of a windscreen 20.

Additionally, on the rear of the coupon 10, at the other end from the front sticky strip 18, there is a rear sticky strip 22, as can be seen in Figure 3. The purpose of this is
15 to provide a place on which the removed tabs 14a-14e can be placed rather than dropped as litter.

The use of a coupon of the present invention will now be described.

20 Coupons 10 are usually bought in books, with the front sticky strip 18 of each coupon 10 sticking to the rear of its neighbour (except for an end one), and the rear sticky strips 22 sticking to the fronts of the coupons 10 next to them. The coupons 10 are generally paper or card, with or without a plastic top layer and the adhesive of the sticky strips 18, 22 such that the coupons can readily be separated.

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The user removes a coupon 10 from the book and removes the tabs 14a-14e from the positions representing the relevant time and date. He places those tabs 14a-14e on the rear sticky strip 22. He then sticks the coupon 10 to the inside of the windscreen or other window 20, using the front sticky strip 18.

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Because the coupon is stuck to the windscreen, a parking attendant can readily see the time and date, without having to strain to see a coupon lying elsewhere in the vehicle, away from the windscreen. Additionally, as the coupon 10 is stuck to the windscreen 20, the attendant can see the rear of the coupon from along the side of
35 the vehicle. This allows him to see whether the tabs have merely bent out of

position or if old ones have been stuck in position.

When the vehicle owner returns to drive off, he can simply remove the whole coupon from the windscreen 20, with the tabs 14a – 14e stuck on the rear strip 22 and place it in a bin, rather than trying to fiddle with throwing away the individual tabs.

The present invention is particularly useful if the parking system requires that such coupons be stuck to the windscreen. There may even be additional requirements that any coupon, to be valid, must have the removed tabs stuck to the sticky area. In such an instance, it would be most useful if the sticky strip for holding the tabs is, in fact, also on the front. This feature would be even more effective if the tabs are all double-side printed, such that it is quite clear whether the tabs that are attached to the sticky strips are those that have been punched out for that time and date, or not.

Usually use of a coupon will require removal of a plurality of tabs. Some uses of the invention might require only a single tab to be removed.

The adhesive areas can be in different positions, for instance both on the back (with the top strip needing to be folded over), both at the top (one at the rear and one at the front) or as a single merged area on the same side (large enough to stick to the windscreen and stick the removed tabs).

The sticky strip preferably uses adhesive that does not leave a noticeable residue on the window. Normally, keeping the coupons in books keeps them tacky. However, each strip could have a piece of removable paper covering it. The problem then is that provides additional litter. However, these bits of paper could also be stuck by one end to the rear sticky strip, together with the tabs. Another possibility is for the strips to be water activated, e.g. by licking.

The sticky areas have, so far, been referred to as sticky-strips. However, they do not have to be strip shaped, but could be any shape allowing their particular function. Indeed, as a means for sticking the coupon to the window, the sticky area could be replaced completely, for instance with a sucker on the windscreen and a hook, attaching to a hole in the top of the coupon, or some other means by which

the coupon is effectively attached to the windscreen.

5 In the invention so far described, the adhesive is on the sticky area for sticking the tabs thereto. However, the invention also covers the case where at least part of the adhesive is on the tabs themselves, for instance on the rear, so that, adhesion is created when the sticky area and tabs come into contact. Or else all the adhesive could be on the tabs, so that they can be stuck anywhere on the coupon. The trouble with that, however, is that the tabs may then be replaced in position for reuse.

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The invention has been described so far in relation to a coupon to stick to a window and adhere loose tabs. It may also cover a coupon that is only able to do one of those, or at least only one at a time. Moreover, the present invention is not only applicable to parking. It could be used for other schemes, such as licensing, for instance licensing market stalls on a daily, weekly or other relevant basis. Other renewable payments or registrations could also be indicated using the present invention.

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Other arrangements are also possible within the scope of the present invention.

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Claims

1. A coupon (10) having a plurality of removable tabs (14) therein and means (22) for adhering tabs (14) removed from said coupon (10), to positions
5 on the coupon other than those from which they were removed.
2. The coupon (10) of claim 1, further comprising means (18) for attaching said coupon (10) to a surface (20).
- 10 3. A coupon (10) having a plurality of removable tabs (14) therein and means (18) for attaching said coupon (10) to a surface (20).
4. The coupon (10) of claim 3, further comprising means (18) for adhering tabs (14) removed from said coupon (10), to positions on the coupon other
15 than those from which they were removed.
5. A coupon (10) according to claim 1, 2 or 4, wherein said means for adhering comprises a first adhesive area (22) of said coupon (10).
- 20 6. A coupon (10) according to claim 5, wherein said first adhesive area (22) is on the rear of said coupon (10).
7. A coupon (10) according to claim 5, wherein said first adhesive area (22) is on the front of said coupon (10).
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8. A coupon (10) according to any one of claims 5 to 7, having one or more of tabs (14) removed therefrom adhered to said first adhesive area (22).
9. A coupon (10) according to claim 2, 3 or 4 or according to claim 5, 6, 7
30 or 8 when dependent on at least claim 2 or 4, wherein said means for attaching comprises a second adhesive area (18) of said coupon (10).
10. A coupon (10) according to claim 5, 6, 7 or 8 or claim 9 when dependent on at least claim 5, wherein said second adhesive area (18) is



distinct from said first adhesive area (22).

11. A coupon (10) according to claim 8 or 9, wherein said second adhesive area (18) is on the front of said coupon (10).

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12. A coupon (10) according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said plurality of tabs (14) represent a plurality of possible times and/or dates.

- 10 13. A coupon (10) according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said plurality of tabs (14) have printing thereon.

14. A coupon (10) according to any one of the preceding claims, being a parking coupon.

- 15 15. A book of coupons, comprising a plurality of coupons (10) according to any one of the preceding claims.

16. A book of coupons according to claim 15, wherein:
the coupons are as defined in claim 5 or any one of claims 6 to 14
20 when dependent on at least claim 5; and
the first adhesive area (22) of each coupon, of at least some of said coupons, adheres to the coupon (10) immediately adjacent to it.

17. A book of coupons according to claim 15 or 16, wherein:
25 the coupons are as defined in claim 9 or any one of claims 10 to 14 when dependent on at least claim 9; and
the second adhesive area (22) of each coupon, of at least some of said coupons, adheres to the coupon (10) immediately adjacent to it.

- 30 18. A book of coupons according to claims 16 and 17, wherein the first adhesive areas (22) adhere to adjacent coupons (10) in a first direction and the second adhesive areas (18) adhere to adjacent coupons (10) in a second direction opposite to said first direction.



19. A method of using a coupon (10), comprising the steps of:
removing one or more tabs (14) from said coupon; and
adhering said one or more tabs (14) to a position or positions on the
coupon other than that or those from which it or they were removed.
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20. The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of attaching said
coupon (10) to an inside surface (20) of a vehicle.
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21. A method of using a coupon (10), comprising the steps of:
removing one or more tabs (14) from said coupon; and
attaching said coupon (10) to an inside surface (20) of a vehicle.
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22. The method of claim 21, further comprising the step of adhering said
one or more tabs (14) to a position or positions on the coupon other than that
or those from which it or they were removed.
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23. The method of claim 19, 20 or 22, wherein said adhering step
comprises sticking said one or more tabs (14) to a first adhesive area (18) of
said coupon (10).
24. The method of claim 19, 21 or 22 or of claim 23 when dependent on
claim 19, 21 or 22, wherein said attaching step comprises sticking said coupon
(10) to said surface using a second adhesive area (18) of said coupon.
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25. The method of claim 19, 21, 22 or 24 or of claim 23 when dependent
on claim 19, 21 or 22, wherein said surface is a window surface.
26. The method of any one of claims 19 to 25, wherein said coupon (10) is
as defined in any one of claims 1 to 14.
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27. The method of any one of claims 19 to 26, further comprising the step
of removing said coupon (10) from a book of coupons.
28. The method of claim 27, wherein said book of coupons is as defined in



any one of claims 15 to 18.

29. A coupon substantially as hereinbefore described, with reference to and as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

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30. A method of using a coupon substantially as hereinbefore described, with reference to and as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.