

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · ARLINGTON

Arlington Car Registration, Inspection, E-ZPass and Car Tax Guide 2026

For cars brought from another state, cars bought in Virginia, and anyone commuting on the I-66 Express Lanes, Metro, ART, or VRE.

SHORT ANSWER

After moving to Virginia, you have 30 days to title and register your vehicle, a different window from the 60 days you get for a license. Arlington's big difference: unlike Fairfax, the county does not open your car tax account from your DMV registration. You must also register the vehicle with the Arlington County Commissioner of Revenue (60 days under the county code; the late penalty is 10% or \$10). Arlington's car tax rate is \$5 per \$100 of assessed value, and there is no county decal and no separate county license fee. Insurance minimums have been \$50,000/\$100,000/\$25,000 since January 1, 2025.

Step by step: title and registration

- 1 **Get Virginia insurance.** Minimum liability coverage effective January 1, 2025: \$50,000 per person / \$100,000 per accident bodily injury, \$25,000 property damage (the 2022-2024 minimums were \$30,000/\$60,000/\$20,000).
- 2 **Title your vehicle within 30 days.** Moving from another state requires a completed title/registration application, proof of address, your prior state's title or registration card, and proof of purchase price if bought in the last 12 months. The title fee is \$15.
- 3 **Register within the same 30 days.** Arlington is on the list of areas that require an emissions inspection; if you do not already hold a valid certificate, you may need the inspection first (see below). You can register at either Arlington DMV office or at the county's DMV Select desk.
- 4 **Register with Arlington County separately.** See "Arlington car tax" below; DMV does not pass this information to the county.

Fees (2026)

ITEM	AMOUNT
Title fee	\$15
Registration, passenger vehicle up to 4,000 lbs	\$30.75/year
Registration, passenger vehicle 4,001-6,500 lbs	\$35.75/year

ITEM	AMOUNT
Electric vehicle Highway Use Fee (in addition to registration)	\$135.63
Sales and use tax	4.15%, \$75 minimum

Multi-year registration discount: 2-year registration saves \$3 online/by phone or \$2 by mail/in person; 3-year registration saves \$4 online/by phone or \$3 by mail/in person. But a vehicle garaged in an emissions locality like Arlington is not eligible for the 3-year discount unless it has more than a year left on its emissions cycle, or is being registered for the first time.

DMV offices and the DMV Select desk

PLACE	ADDRESS · NOTES
DMV Arlington	4150 South Four Mile Run Drive, Arlington, VA 22206 · weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m. to noon
DMV Arlington Metro at Va. Square	3434 North Washington Blvd., Suite RET01, Arlington, VA 22201 · same hours
Arlington County DMV Select (vehicle transactions only)	2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 218, Arlington, VA 22201 · weekdays 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. · title transactions are by appointment and must be finished by 3:45 p.m. · credit/debit card only, no cash or checks · no licenses, ID cards, or vital records

Emissions and safety inspection

- **Emissions inspection applies in Arlington.** Arlington County is on Virginia's Northern Virginia emissions program list (alongside Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, and Stafford counties and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, and Manassas Park). A vehicle that needs a test must pass it (or get a waiver) every two years to register or renew. The maximum fee is \$30, and you get one free retest at the same station within 14 days of a fail. Vehicles registered in this area pay an extra \$2 on top of the standard registration fee.
- **Exempt:** vehicles from the current model year and the 3 preceding model years (DMV may still require a test for a newer car first titled in another state), gasoline vehicles 25 or more model years old, and certain hybrids. Station list: virginiavip.org. Questions go to the Department of Environmental Quality: 703-583-3900 (local) or 1-800-275-3844 (toll-free in Virginia).
- **Safety inspection is separate and required statewide.** Every vehicle needs an annual safety-inspection sticker from a licensed private repair shop, not from DMV. For locations or questions, DMV points to the Virginia State Police: (804) 674-2000. Driving without a valid sticker can lead to a fine and a mark on your driving record.

Insurance minimums and the risk of lapsing

Minimum liability coverage for policies effective on or after January 1, 2025: \$50,000 per person and \$100,000 per accident for bodily injury, \$25,000 for property damage. Statutory basis: Code of Virginia §

46.2-472. If coverage lapses, you must reinsure, deactivate the plates, or surrender them. Uninsured owners pay a \$600 non-compliance fee, must file an SR-22 for three years, and pay a reinstatement fee if applicable.

Arlington car tax: register with the county separately

- **No automatic filing.** Arlington County says on its own page, "The Virginia DMV will not notify Arlington County on your behalf." Every vehicle regularly parked or garaged in Arlington must be registered with Virginia DMV within 30 days and, separately, with the Commissioner of Revenue within 60 days (County Code 27-11.1.C). Some county pages say 30 days for the county step, so do it the same week as your DMV registration.
- **How:** online through the CAPP portal (capp.arlingtonva.us), or in person at the Ellen M. Bozman Government Center, 2100 Clarendon Blvd., Window 218. Questions: Vehicle Personal Property Division, 703-228-3135, vehicle@arlingtonva.us.
- **Penalty:** for late registration, 10% of the assessed tax or \$10, whichever is greater (not more than the tax due).
- **Rate:** \$5 for each \$100 of value (5%). Value is based on the "Clean Loan Value" in the January J.D. Power guide. The tax year is January 1 to December 31, prorated by month.
- **2026 state relief (PPTRA):** for qualifying personal-use vehicles, 100% relief on the first \$4,000 of value and 13% relief on the next \$16,000 (values \$4,001 to \$20,000); none above \$20,000. Vehicles used more than 50% for business do not qualify.
- **No decal.** Arlington's vehicle decal ended July 1, 2019, and the county Motor Vehicle License Fee was eliminated January 1, 2022; only the state registration sticker applies.
- **Out-of-state plates:** the county charges \$100 a year on vehicles that do not display Virginia plates; you are exempt if you title and register in Virginia within 30 days of moving.
- **Due date:** the county's due-dates page lists October 5, 2026 for the 2026 vehicle tax (first and final bills can have different dates; the second real estate installment is due the same day). Late payment brings a penalty and 10% annual interest; questions go to the Treasurer (703-228-4000).
- **Contact:** Commissioner of Revenue, 703-228-3033, revenue@arlingtonva.us, Suite 200; payments go to the Treasurer, Suite 201.

RESIDENTIAL PERMIT PARKING (RPP)

In some Arlington neighborhoods you need a Residential Permit Parking permit to park on the street. Since July 2026 the county issues only electronic permits and is moving zones over in phases. Apply at arlingtonvaparking.cmrpay.com · program desk 703-228-3344. We do not list permit fees here; confirm them with the county.

E-ZPass Virginia and the I-66 Express Lanes

- **E-ZPass Virginia** is the shared tag and account used on every Virginia toll facility, run by VDOT. Customer service: 1-877-762-7824, weekdays 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Standard and Flex tags can also be picked up at the Arlington DMV offices.

- **I-66 inside the Beltway** runs through Arlington. It is tolled on weekdays only: 5:30 to 9:30 a.m. eastbound and 3 to 7 p.m. westbound. E-ZPass is required in those hours; vehicles with 3 or more occupants ride free if the E-ZPass Flex is set to HOV mode. Solo drivers and 2-person cars pay a dynamic price (calculator: vai66tolls.com). Motorcycles are free.
- **The Express Lanes on I-395, I-95, and I-495** are operated by Transurban with dynamic pricing, payable by E-ZPass or, without a tag, Pay-By-Plate. Customer service: 1-855-495-9777.

TOLL-RATE WARNING

Current rates for the Express Lanes and I-66 change often and are set dynamically by real-time traffic. Check the operator's own calculator or site before you travel; no fixed figure is given here.

Metro, ART, and VRE

SERVICE	FARE (SEPTEMBER 2026)
Metrorail, weekdays 5 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.	\$2.25 to \$6.75 depending on distance
Metrorail, weekdays after 9:30 p.m. and weekends	\$2.25 to \$2.50
ART (Arlington bus), adult	\$2.25 (seniors 65+ \$1.10, children under 5 free)
ART, K-12 students	Free with an iRide SmarTrip card (also valid on selected Metrobus routes)
Metrorail to ART transfer	Free (with SmarTrip)
VRE, Crystal City to Union Station	\$5 single, \$10 day pass, \$138 monthly (July 1, 2026 fare chart)

NOTE FOR IMMIGRANTS

After you move, update the address on your vehicle registration. If you are subject to the address-reporting requirement, you must also report your new address to USCIS within 10 days (AR-11).



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN ARLINGTON, VA

Have a question about your immigration status?

Attorney Asim Clinch serves clients in Arlington and the surrounding area, in Turkish and English.

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