

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · ARLINGTON

How to Get a Driver's License in Arlington, VA: 2026 Guide (Virginia DMV)

For newcomers to Arlington County, applicants of any immigration status, and drivers arriving with a Turkish license: the Driver Privilege Card, testing, and the DMV offices in the county.

SHORT ANSWER

New Virginia residents have 60 days to get a license. For anyone who does not qualify for a standard license because of immigration status, Virginia's own solution is the Driver Privilege Card (DPC): no SSN is required and an ITIN is accepted, but it does require proof of Virginia-source income or dependent status. Türkiye is not one of Virginia's reciprocal countries, so a Turkish license holder still has to pass the knowledge and road skills tests, though Turkish is one of DMV's official knowledge-exam languages. Arlington County has two DMV offices: the Arlington office on S. Four Mile Run Drive (the only one that gives road skills tests) and Arlington Metro at Virginia Square.

The 60-day rule and REAL ID

- **60 days.** Per Virginia's own page, "When you move to Virginia, you have 60 days to get a Virginia driver's license to legally drive here." A current CDL holder must get a Virginia CDL within 30 days.
- **REAL ID is optional.** A standard license is enough for voting, banking, and benefits, but since May 7, 2025, you need a REAL ID (the star-marked card) or a valid passport to board a domestic flight or enter a secure federal building or military base. The one-time REAL ID surcharge is \$10.
- REAL ID requires one proof of identity, two proofs of Virginia residency, one proof of legal presence, and proof of your SSN if you have one; all documents must be originals.

The Driver Privilege Card: no immigration status question

Virginia takes a different path from New Jersey's "Standard License open to everyone." Instead, it issues a separate credential, the **Driver Privilege Card (DPC)**, for residents who cannot meet the legal-presence requirement. In DMV's own words: "A driver privilege card is a driver's license for non-US citizens. It gives Virginia residents who are not citizens the opportunity to be a legal driver, without requiring proof of legal presence or U.S. citizenship."

- **Eligibility:** a non-US citizen Virginia resident; reported Virginia-source income in the past 12 months, or claimed as a dependent on a Virginia tax return; no suspended or revoked driving privilege in Virginia or any other state; at least **16 years 3 months** old (a learner's permit is available from 15 years 6 months).
- **No SSN required.** An SSN is verified if you have one; without one, an ITIN is accepted. Income is verified electronically with the Virginia Department of Taxation.

- **Not a REAL ID.** A DPC cannot be used to board a domestic flight or enter a secure federal building. DPC holders are not eligible for a CDL.
- **Documents:** the "Driver and Identification Privilege Card Application" form, two proofs of identity, two proofs of Virginia residency, proof of SSN or ITIN, and tax-return documentation. Foreign-language documents need a certified professional translation; all documents must be originals.
- **Fees and duration:** \$50 for the first card and each renewal; \$53 for a combined learner's permit and DPC. Valid up to 8 years (5 years if you are 75 or older, or subject to the Sex Offender and Crimes Against Children registry).
- **First-time applicants 18 and older:** pass the knowledge exam, get a learner's permit, then either complete a state-approved driver-ed course and pass the road skills test, or hold the permit at least 60 days and pass the road skills test.

NOTE FOR IMMIGRANTS

For a Driver Privilege Card, if your Turkish license is valid or expired less than a year ago, you can usually follow the exchange path instead of every first-time step. Because Türkiye is not on the reciprocity list, the knowledge exam, road skills test and vision screening still apply.

With a Turkish license: testing required, but Turkish is supported

- **Türkiye is not on the reciprocity list.** Virginia recognizes reciprocity only with Canada, France, Germany, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan (Taiwan applicants still take the knowledge test). In DMV's own words: "If you are age 18 or older and you hold a valid driver's license issued by a country other than Canada, France, Germany, Japan, South Korea, or Taiwan, you are not eligible for foreign reciprocity and must pass the two-part knowledge exam, road skills test and a vision screening." This applies to a Turkish license too.
- The good news: holders of a valid foreign license **may not have to hold a learner's permit for 60 days.**
- **Turkish is one of the official knowledge-exam languages.** DMV's knowledge exam is offered in Turkish alongside English, Arabic, Farsi, Russian, Vietnamese, and more than 20 others. The CDL HAZMAT exam is English-only.
- The road skills test itself is conducted in English; a translator or interpreter (at least 18, holding a valid U.S. license) may accompany you, though DMV does not provide one.
- Applicants under 18 cannot exchange a foreign license and must complete the entire process from scratch.

Road skills test: practical details

- Walk-in testing is available, but you must be present by 4:30 p.m. on weekdays or 11:30 a.m. on Saturdays.
- Requirements: Virginia residency, a completed CSMA 140 form, and a passed knowledge exam.
- Fail once or twice: retest after 2 days. Fail three times (knowledge or road): complete the relevant portion of a driver-education course before a fourth attempt.
- You supply the test vehicle (a rental or Zipcar is allowed if you are a named authorized driver); it needs a valid inspection sticker, plates, registration, and working brakes, belts, horn, lights, signals, mirrors, and speedometer.

- In Arlington, in-car road skills testing is offered only at the Arlington office on S. Four Mile Run Drive, not at the Virginia Square office.

Fees (2026)

ITEM	FEE
Driver's license (8-year, standard)	\$32
REAL ID surcharge (one-time)	\$10
Driver Privilege Card (first or renewal)	\$50
Combined learner's permit and DPC	\$53
Photo ID	\$2/year, \$10 minimum, \$16 maximum
License/ID change or replacement of a lost card	\$20

Payment: Visa, Mastercard, American Express, Discover, Apple Pay, Google Pay, cash, checks, and money orders are all accepted.

DMV offices in Arlington

Arlington County has two full-service DMV Customer Service Centers. The county also runs a "DMV Select" desk, but it does not handle driver's licenses or ID cards, only vehicle transactions (see the car registration guide). The Pentagon DMV office serves Pentagon employees only, so do not go there.

OFFICE	ADDRESS
Arlington (road skills tests are given here)	4150 South Four Mile Run Drive, Arlington, VA 22206
Arlington Metro at Va. Square (no road skills tests)	3434 North Washington Blvd., Suite RET01, Arlington, VA 22201
Alexandria (nearby alternative)	2681 Mill Road, Alexandria, VA 22314
Franconia (nearby alternative)	6306 Grovedale Drive, Alexandria, VA 22310

Hours (both Arlington offices): weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m. to noon. DMV phone: 804-497-7100. An appointment is recommended for a first license, an ID card, a permit, a DPC, and an out-of-state or foreign transfer; book at dmv.virginia.gov/appointments.

Common mistakes

- Confusing the standard license with the Driver Privilege Card and trying to fly domestically on a DPC; neither is a REAL ID on its own.
- Assuming Türkiye has reciprocity like Canada or South Korea and expecting to skip the tests.
- Confusing the 60-day license deadline with the separate 30-day deadline to title and register a vehicle; these are two different dates.

- Submitting incomplete proof of Virginia-source income or dependent status for a DPC application; income is verified electronically with the Department of Taxation.
- Going to the county's DMV Select desk for a license; it handles vehicle transactions only.



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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