

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · ATHENS

How to Get a Driver's License in Athens: the Office Left the County in October 2026, 2026 Guide

The licensing office is no longer in Athens. The new address in Bogart, the fact that no bus goes there, the knowledge exam in Turkish, an SSN or DDS-351, and the LIMITED-TERM card.

SHORT ANSWER

The most time-sensitive fact in this guide is that **the licensing office left the county**. The state Department of Driver Services (DDS) closed its Athens center at 1505 US Highway 29 North on October 3, 2026 and opened a replacement in neighboring Oconee County on October 6, 2026: 1627 McNutt Creek Road, Bogart, Tuesday to Friday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. An appointment is needed for the road test only. Call **(678) 413-8400** before you travel.

THE LICENSING OFFICE MOVED OUT OF THE COUNTY

- **Telephone first.** We could not read this on the DDS page itself, because the site blocks automated access; it comes from a search engine extract of the official page. If the move slipped, the old Athens address may still be open. Our one piece of advice is to call **(678) 413-8400** before you set out and confirm both the address and that day's hours.
- **No bus goes there.** ACC Transit states on its own FAQ that it serves only Athens-Clarke County, so the county's fare-free buses do not run into Oconee County. Someone without a car cannot reach the new center by city bus.
- **You bring a car to the road test.** It has to be tagged, registered and insured. If yours is not registered in Georgia yet you may use someone else's insured and registered car, as long as you carry the papers.

Two centers, two dates

CENTER	ADDRESS	HOURS	STATUS
Oconee Customer Service Center	1627 McNutt Creek Road, Bogart GA 30622	Tuesday to Friday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.	Open as of October 6, 2026
Athens Customer Service Center	1505 US Highway 29 North, Athens GA 30601	-	Closed as of October 3, 2026

What this means for a family without a car

- **The distance:** Bogart is about 7 miles (11 km) west of downtown along the Atlanta Highway corridor, roughly 15 minutes by car, and the center sits on the Oconee side of the county line.
- **The practical answer:** go with someone who drives, or pay for a ride. Almost everything else in Athens can be done on a free bus. This errand cannot.
- **Build your first week around it.** Once you count as a resident you have 30 days, and a car cannot be registered without a license, so this errand sits at the head of the chain.
- **When do you count as a resident:** being in the state 30 days or longer, or working here and enrolling your children in school within 10 days. From then you have 30 days to get a Georgia license. Georgia law does not allow a license to be issued to someone without lawful status.

Step by step

- 1 **Fill in the online form.** DDS asks everyone to complete the Online License/ID/Permit form before coming in. It is free, on [DRIVES e-Services](#).
- 2 **Get your documents into English.** One identity document, an SSN (or form DDS-351 if you cannot get one), proof of address from two separate sources, and an immigration document showing lawful status. DDS **does not accept translations** and wants the **originals of your immigration documents at every visit**.
- 3 **Walk in for the knowledge exam.** The Oconee center's service list covers first issuance, renewals, replacement of a lost or stolen license, out-of-state transfers, reinstatements, Georgia driving history, the car and motorcycle knowledge exams, CDL written exams and the non-commercial road test. **An appointment is needed for the road test only.**
- 4 **Book the road test online** through DRIVES e-Services or the DDS appointment page. After a first failure you can retake the next day, after a second you wait seven days.
- 5 **Wait for the card.** You leave with a temporary paper document and the permanent card arrives by mail. TSA does not accept the paper document, so carry your passport on domestic flights until the card comes.

Which documents are required?

ITEM	FOR SOMEONE COMING FROM TÜRKİYE
Identity (1 document)	Valid foreign passport, green card (I-551) or work permit (I-766)
Social Security	Your SSN, or form DDS-351 picked up at the center if you are not eligible for one
Address (2 documents, 2 separate sources)	A lease, an electric or water bill, a bank statement. P.O. boxes are not accepted
Lawful status (1 document)	Passport plus visa plus I-94; for F or J, the I-20 or DS-2019 plus I-94; an EAD; a green card

ITEM	FOR SOMEONE COMING FROM TÜRKIYE
Not accepted	Translations, photocopies and notarized copies. An international driving permit cannot be used in a DDS transaction either

Is the knowledge exam available in Turkish?

Yes. Per the DDS language list the non-commercial knowledge exam is offered in **26 languages** and **Turkish is one of them**. The road test is in English. There is a conflict worth knowing: an older driver manual text still on the DDS site says the road signs section is English only, while the newer language list says both sections are translated. Since you are calling anyway, use the same call to ask **(678) 413-8400** whether you can take the signs section in Turkish too.

Fees and the LIMITED-TERM card

TRANSACTION	FEE AND NOTE
License (Class C)	\$32. A citizen's card lasts eight years; a card issued to a non-citizen is printed LIMITED-TERM and expires with your approved period of stay, after five years at the latest
Instructional permit	\$10
State ID card (8 years)	\$32
Lost card or renewal	\$10
Online transaction discount	\$5 less
REAL ID	Every Georgia license and ID issued since 2012 is REAL ID compliant at no extra charge
The 120-day extension	While an immigration document is in the renewal process you can get one 120-day extension by showing the original I-797C. The LIMITED-TERM date on your card follows the admitted-until date on your I-94, so an error there lands directly on your license

Your Turkish license

- **It is not exchanged.** The only reciprocal jurisdictions on the DDS list are South Korea (with a consulate letter) and Taiwan. So you take the vision test, the knowledge exam and the road test.
- **You do not surrender it.** It is shown during the transaction and handed back.
- **Until you count as a resident** you may drive on your Turkish license as a tourist or business visitor.
- For adults getting a first license, DDS can ask those who take the direct Class C route for a declaration of 40 hours of supervised driving, six of them at night. Whether someone who already holds a Turkish license is exempt is not stated on the DDS pages we could read, so call (678) 413-8400 and ask.

Common mistakes

- Going to the old Athens address at 1505 US Highway 29 North. The center closed on October 3, 2026.
- Trying to reach the new center by city bus. The county buses do not run into Oconee County.
- Bringing translations. DDS does not accept them; it wants the English originals.
- Bringing photocopies of your immigration papers and leaving the originals at home.
- Walking in without having completed the online form.
- Holding a work permit but going with a DDS-351 instead of applying for an SSN first.
- Trying to register a car before getting the license. The state revenue department requires a valid Georgia license or ID to register a vehicle.

NOTE FOR IMMIGRANTS

- Keep your passport, visa, I-94 and any I-797C or EAD in one folder and take it to every visit. DDS wants to see the originals every time.
- Go back to DDS the day you extend your status, because the LIMITED-TERM date on your card follows the date on your immigration document.
- If anyone at the center offers to register you to vote and you are not a U.S. citizen, decline and check the Opt-Out box on the form. As the form words it, signing that section is a sworn statement, under penalty of perjury, that you are a U.S. citizen.
- DDS does not text or call you to ask for fees. A message like that is a scam.
- A lawfully present noncitizen with a Georgia license can end up on the jury list without ever registering to vote. If a summons arrives, do not ignore it; file the excusal affidavit.



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN ATHENS

Have a question about your immigration status?

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