

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · ATLANTA

# Car Registration in Atlanta: the 3 Percent Title Tax, Emissions Testing and Peach Pass, 2026 Guide

The Fulton and DeKalb tag offices, the 3 percent title tax for new residents, insurance, emissions testing and the express lanes.

## SHORT ANSWER

Registration happens at the county tag office, not at DDS, and because Atlanta spans two counties your address decides where you go: Fulton or DeKalb. Get the Georgia license first, then register within 30 days of the move. A title is \$18 and the plate \$20 a year. The one-time title tax (TAVT) is 7 percent of fair market value, but **new residents pay 3 percent**, so say at the tag office that you are new to the state.

## Step by step

- 1 **License first.** The state Department of Revenue (DOR) requires a valid Georgia license or ID to register a vehicle. You visit two offices: DDS for the license, the county tag office for the registration.
- 2 **Find your county.** Most of the city sits in Fulton and part of it in DeKalb. Look your lease address up by county and write it down.
- 3 **Register within 30 days.** You have 30 days after the move, or 7 business days if you bought the car from a private seller. The penalty for being late runs up to \$100.
- 4 **Bring the documents:** form MV-1, the original out-of-state title (or the registration if your state does not issue titles), form T-17 if the car is financed or leased, proof of Georgia liability insurance and an emissions test result.
- 5 **Say you are a new resident** and show something that proves your move-in date, such as a lease or an employment letter. Then pay the title fee, the TAVT and the plate.

## TAVT: new residents pay 3 percent

Instead of sales tax on a car purchase, Georgia charges a one-time **Title Ad Valorem Tax (TAVT)** when the car is titled. The rate is **7 percent** of fair market value, but someone who has just moved to the state and brought the car along pays **3 percent**. Worked example: on a \$25,000 car, 7 percent is \$1,750 and 3 percent is \$750, a \$1,000 difference. If you do not say you are a new resident, the clerk calculates 7 percent, so raise it yourself at the counter.

## Fulton County tag offices

The Motor Vehicle Division of the Fulton County Tax Commissioner. Phone **404-613-6100**; all offices open weekdays 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

| OFFICE                                 | ADDRESS                                              |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Government Center (downtown)           | 141 Pryor Street SW, Suite 1113, Atlanta GA 30303    |
| North Fulton Service Center            | 7741 Roswell Road NE, Sandy Springs GA 30350         |
| South Fulton Service Center            | 5600 Stonewall Tell Road, College Park GA 30349      |
| Greenbriar Mall Service Center         | 2841 Greenbriar Parkway, Suite 124, Atlanta GA 30331 |
| Customer Service Center (Maxwell Road) | 11575 Maxwell Road, Alpharetta GA                    |

## DeKalb County tag offices

Residents of the DeKalb part of the city go to the DeKalb County Tax Commissioner. Phone **404-298-4000**; motor vehicle offices open weekdays 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. You can book online or join a same-day virtual waitlist.

| OFFICE  | ADDRESS                                                                            |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Central | 4380 Memorial Drive, Suite 100, Decatur GA 30032 (at I-285 and Memorial Dr)        |
| North   | 3653 Clairmont Road, Chamblee GA 30341                                             |
| South   | 2801 Candler Road, Suite 66, Decatur GA 30034 (inside the Gallery at South DeKalb) |

## Fees

| ITEM                        | AMOUNT                                                             |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Title                       | \$18                                                               |
| Plate and registration      | \$20 a year                                                        |
| TAVT (one-time, at titling) | 7 percent of fair market value; <b>3 percent for new residents</b> |
| Replacement or new title    | \$8                                                                |
| Late renewal                | 10 percent of the ad valorem tax plus 25 percent of the plate fee  |
| Insurance lapse             | \$25 fine plus \$60 reinstatement fee                              |
| Emissions test              | Up to \$25                                                         |

Insurance minimums: \$25,000 per person and \$50,000 per accident for bodily injury, plus \$25,000 for property damage. Registration expires on the birthday of the first person listed on it; renewal opens 30 days before that birthday, or 90 days before online. Fulton has 24-hour renewal kiosks in Atlanta-area Kroger stores, but kiosks handle renewals only, not a new resident's first titling.

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## Emissions: Fulton and DeKalb are both covered

- The test is annual, before your registration renewal date (your birthday), and doing it four to six weeks early is recommended.
- **Which cars:** for 2026 registration, 2002 to 2023 model-year gasoline cars and light trucks. Exempt: the three newest model years, vehicles 25 model years or older, diesels, motorcycles and RVs. On January 1, 2027 the window moves up a year, to 2003 to 2024 models.
- **Cost:** up to \$25. If you fail, you get one free retest at the same station within 30 days. Help line 1-800-449-2471.
- **Cars new to the area:** if you move to Fulton or DeKalb with a 2003 to 2024 model vehicle, you need proof of a passing test within the last 12 months and must register within 30 days.
- **No general safety inspection.** Georgia has no annual vehicle inspection.

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## Peach Pass and the express lanes

There are no express lanes inside the city; the tolled lanes start outside the I-285 perimeter. If you stay in the city you may never need a Peach Pass. If you drive north or south regularly, opening an account makes sense: the **transponder is free** and a personal account needs a prepaid balance of at least **\$20**. Tolls change with demand, with a floor of 10 cents a mile.

- **Account:** peachpass.com, by phone on 1-855-724-7277, or in person at the Peach Pass Retail Center, 245 Peachtree Center Ave NE, ground floor, Atlanta GA 30303 (weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.). The transponder belongs to the vehicle and cannot be moved between cars.
- **Who rides free:** on the I-85 express lanes, carpools of three or more with an account and the Peach Pass Verify app, certified motorcycles, MARTA and Xpress buses. The I-75 lanes have no carpool exemption. Electric vehicles have paid since September 30, 2025.
- **No credit card?** BancPass Pay n Go is a cash-reloadable alternative (starter kit \$20).

### IF YOU DRIVE THROUGH WITHOUT A TRANSPONDER

A camera photographs the plate and the notice goes to the **registered owner**. A **\$25 administrative fee per violation** is added on top of the toll. Unpaid notices can reach a civil penalty of up to \$70 per violation and **suspension of the vehicle registration**. To pay or dispute: 1-855-724-7277 or 1-833-448-4398.

#### NOTE FOR IMMIGRANTS

- Notices go to the address on the registration, so when you move, update it both at the tag office and on the Peach Pass account. Add your plate to the account the day it arrives.
- If you are subject to address reporting, also report the new address to USCIS within 10 days (AR-11).
- Your county decides more than the tag office: it also decides your property tax bill and the energy-assistance agency you apply to.



#### TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN ATLANTA

##### Have a question about your immigration status?

Attorney Asim Clinch serves clients in Atlanta and the surrounding area, in Turkish and English. Free evaluation: [clinchlaw.com/free-evaluation](https://clinchlaw.com/free-evaluation) · +1 866-491-7669

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