

CHECKLIST · AUBURN

Moving to Auburn Checklist: The First 30 Days (2026)

One county, one easy answer. But three separate boundaries run through one address, and the only confirmed local occupational fee of the five settlements is here.

SHORT ANSWER

We start with good news in this city: **the county question has one answer**, the city sits entirely inside **Lee County** and federal boundary data confirms it. **Do not relax, though**, because **three other boundaries** run in the county's place and **none of them follows the same path: the city limit** for your child's school, **the place where the work is done** for the local fee taken out of your pay, and **the zoning district** for how many unrelated people may live in one dwelling. A fourth split matters just as much: **who sells you electricity changes with your address**, and that changes **your shutoff protection**. At the center of this list is money: among the five settlements read this round, **a local occupational fee taken directly out of wages was confirmed only here**, and **taking it asks for no number while getting it back does**.

Three boundaries, one address

Living in a single-county city does not mean the answer is always single. **What draws the distinctions here is not the county but four separate lines**, and you need to ask about all four while house hunting.

ITEM	DOES IT CHANGE WITH YOUR ADDRESS
School district and the right to enroll	It changes, and this is the hardest rule on the list. You must live inside the city limits ; no waiver and no tuition enrollment is accepted
The local fee taken out of your pay	It changes , but by where you work, not where you live
Unrelated occupants allowed in one dwelling	It changes , and it changes from district to district inside the city . The limit runs between one and five
Who sells you electricity	It changes , and with it your shutoff protection and your complaint route
City water and sewer	It can change. The city's own plan writes that some addresses inside the city limits have no access to public water or sewer
County	It does not change. The whole city is in one county
License and vehicle registration counters	They do not change , but foreign national transactions are handled only at the state office and that office is not inside the city

ITEM	DOES IT CHANGE WITH YOUR ADDRESS
Property tax and the exemption application	It does not change. The application goes to the county , not to the state
Vital records and the marriage certificate	It does not change. The registry is statewide and the form may be recorded in any county you choose
Weather warnings and emergency management	They do not change. One county, one agency
Library card	It does not change , and in this city the card does not even require residence

An access note: the county's official site answered every route tried in this research with a refusal, and the city's old domain redirects to its new official domain. **If an address you tried would not connect, do not assume the institution is closed;** use its telephone number. The city's non-emergency line is **334-501-3100** and the city says it is staffed around the clock.

The center of this list: one percent out of your pay

Among the five settlements read this round, **a local occupational fee taken directly out of wages was confirmed only here.** In the city's own words: **anyone who works within the city limits has one percent deducted from their gross wages by their employer**, and the employer reports and remits it to the city **every quarter**. The city's own text puts **federal employers** outside that duty.

- **The test is not residence, it is where the work is done.** If you live in the city and work elsewhere, no liability arises on those wages; **if you live elsewhere and work here, it does.**
- **The base is gross wages**, meaning the total before federal and state tax, retirement and benefits come out; the list also includes commissions, tips, bonuses and vacation and sick pay.
- **This deduction is not creditable on the state return.** The revenue department's own return booklet says plainly that local, city or occupational taxes may not be counted as Alabama income tax withheld.
- **And this state has an income tax.** If you came from another state, **redo your take-home calculation**; the sentence "there is no tax" is never written in this guide.

THREE DOCUMENTS, ONE GAP: THE DEDUCTION ASKS FOR NO NUMBER, THE REFUND DOES

Three separate city documents govern the same fee and **they do not agree about identification numbers**. We set out all three as they are, because the person caught in between is this guide's reader.

DOCUMENT	DOES IT ASK FOR AN IDENTIFICATION NUMBER
The individual return form a person files for themselves	No identification number field at all. The form asks only for a customer number, a business name and address, and a signed declaration of accuracy
The reconciliation report an employer files at year end	Yes. The city's instruction requires a listing showing employees' names and Social Security numbers , gross wages and amounts withheld
The refund claim form, filed to get back an over-deduction	Yes, and an incomplete form will not be processed. One section is headed employee's Social Security number ; the wage statement for the year and the employer's notarized signature are also required

- **What this means in practice:** if only part of your working time was spent inside the city limits but the employer withheld one percent on all of your pay, **the route to the difference runs through that refund form.**
- **For an employee holding an ITIN rather than a Social Security number, research found no alternative on any of the city's occupational fee forms. We make neither claim here:** we do not say an ITIN holder cannot get a refund, and we do not say they can. We say **research found no alternative**, and it stands as a gap.
- **What to do:** look for this deduction on your first pay statement, ask your payroll office whether your work location is inside the city limits, and before the refund period arrives **call the city revenue division and ask what document is accepted if you have no number.** Ask for the answer in writing.
- **Who to contact:** City of Auburn Revenue Division, 144 Tichenor Avenue, Auburn, Alabama 36830, telephone **334-501-7239**, weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. **We print a contradiction and take no side:** the city's own documents give **two different room numbers and two different email addresses** for this division. Call and ask which is current before you post anything.

Zoning district: how many people may live in a house

This is the legal form of the question people ask in a university town, and in this city the answer is **not a single number**. The city's zoning ordinance sets occupancy through its definition of **family**, and the narrow definition applies in some districts only. We write the codes out **exactly**, because these are the codes you will use when you ask the city and when you look for your own district on the map.

DISTRICT GROUP	LIMIT ON UNRELATED OCCUPANTS
UC, UN-E, UN-W, UN-S, MDRD, RDD, CDD, CRD-U, CRD-E, CRD-S, plus the NRD east of North Donahue Drive and the CRD-W east of North Donahue Drive	Five unrelated persons
NC districts, DDH, LLRD, LDD, plus the NRD west of North Donahue Drive and the CRD-W west of North Donahue Drive	Limited to the family definition: a related household plus exactly one unrelated person

What that means in practice: across much of the city **four graduate students cannot lawfully share a house**. And in two districts the limit changes exactly across one street: two houses facing each other can give different answers. **Look at the dwelling's zoning district rather than the neighborhood name or the agent's word**, and have the city's planning office confirm it before you sign.

The first thirty days

TASK	WHERE OR HOW
☐ Run the address lookup and write the answer down	geocoding.geo.census.gov returns an address's county, municipality and school district in one query and asks for no registration or key
☐ File the federal change of address within 10 days	uscis.gov/addresschange ; enter the receipt number of every pending application. If you have a case in immigration court, also file Form EOIR-33/IC within 5 days
☐ Moving at the start of a term is still a move	Dorm to apartment, apartment to a shared house, a different address for the summer. Each one triggers its own notice . Giving an address to the school or the international student office does not satisfy the federal duty
☐ Open the water, sewer and garbage account	All three on one account , billing office 334-501-3050 . The board's own form names a passport or a visa among accepted identification
☐ Budget for four opening items	Water deposit 35.00 , sewer 30.00 , garbage 30.00 dollars and a non-refundable 15.00 dollar service charge
☐ Call ahead about the number line	The form says nothing about whether the Social Security number line may be left blank . We do not fill that gap; ask the board
☐ Find out who sells electricity to your address	Most of the city is served by a large utility, parts of the northwest and parts of the south by electric cooperatives . Read the institution's name on your bill
☐ Plan the license appointment accordingly	None of the county's three probate counters handles foreign national transactions; the state office is not inside the city
☐ Register the vehicle within thirty days	The annual value-based tax is collected before the plate is issued and every owner's identification is verified
☐ Look for the one percent deduction on your first pay statement	The test is where you work , not where you live. If there is a difference, call the revenue division before the refund period
☐ If you have children, confirm the address is inside the city limits	No waiver and no tuition enrollment is accepted and residency is re-proved every year
☐ Get a library card	Living in the city, owning or renting property, working in the city, or attending an educational institution in the city each qualifies on its own . Registration asks for photo identification and proof of residency; no Social Security number was found in the published terms . Address 749 E. Thach Ave. , information 334-501-3195

TASK	WHERE OR HOW
☐ Plan transportation realistically	The university shuttle is closed to the public and the public system runs by telephone with no fixed stops , weekdays 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. , telephone 334-749-9092 . Its fare and registration terms could not be verified
☐ Keep automatic emergency alerts on your phone turned on	No sign-up is needed , they reach compatible phones automatically, and in a tornado this is the main channel
☐ Pick your shelter spot before a storm	A windowless interior room on the lowest floor. If you rent, ask about the building's interior space before you sign
☐ If you bought a house, note the exemption calendar	October 1, October 1 to December 31 and December 31 . The application goes to the county revenue office
☐ Use one free door in your first week	The university's art museum states in its own announcement that general admission and all programs are free for everyone . Confirm the hours on the institution's own page

ELECTRICITY: YOUR RIGHTS CHANGE WITH WHO SELLS IT TO YOU

The utilities chapter of the city's own comprehensive plan describes this structure: electricity and gas inside the city are provided mostly by **a large electric utility and a natural gas company; some northwest areas and some southern areas** take electricity from **electric cooperatives**. And the state regulator writes on its own consumer page that it **does not regulate electric cooperatives, most water companies or municipal utilities** and that it therefore **has no authority to resolve complaints** about them.

PROVIDER TYPE	COLD-WEATHER SHUTOFF BAN	COMPLAINT ROUTE
Regulated private utility	Covered	The state regulator
Electric cooperative	May not be covered	No state regulator; you deal with the cooperative itself

- The regulator's rule says this: residential **electric or natural gas** service may not be **disconnected** for nonpayment when the temperature at that location is forecast to be **32 degrees Fahrenheit or below** for that calendar day. The governing forecast is the national weather service forecast for that location.
- **The scope is electricity and natural gas only. Water, sewer and garbage are entirely outside this rule**, and in this city those three sit on a single account.
- **No heat threshold was found. So we cannot show you a state protection against an air conditioning shutoff in summer.** We do not say there is none, we say we did not find one.
- **The source carries a very old effective date;** whether the text was later amended could not be verified. **We give the rule by name but we do not claim it applies today exactly as written.**
- **If you are with a regulated utility you hold concrete rights:** a disconnection notice must be sent **at least five calendar days** in advance, service may not be cut **after 3.30 p.m.** on the day before the company's offices will be closed, a deposit may not exceed **the estimated bills for two billing periods** and carries **7 percent interest per year**, and every company must give **at least one employee in every office** authority to extend payment and arrange installments. **Call on the day you realize you cannot pay**, do not wait for the disconnection date.
- **The number question on utility accounts:** the electric and gas companies' own account pages could not be read in this research and **none of them had a published sentence about a taxpayer identification number. Do not say you have no number;** ask this instead: **what do you accept as alternative identification, is a passport on the list, and does applying in person change anything.**

Water, sewer and garbage: one account, and where a complaint goes

- **All three sit on a single account** opened by the city's **water works board**. The billing office is at **1501 West Samford Avenue, Auburn, Alabama 36832**, telephone **334-501-3050**, weekdays **7.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.** Night boxes are at the facility's drive-through window and at **144 Tichenor Avenue**.
- **On identification the list is plain:** the board's own form says a copy of **a valid US state or government issued ID, passport, or visa** is required to start service and that identification may be emailed. **But the**

same form says nothing about whether the Social Security number line may be left blank. We write that neither as refused nor as accepted; **call before you apply.**

- **A deposit waiver exists but it is conditional:** deposits may be waived with a letter of credit from your most recent utility showing **the last 24 months of payment history. For a reader newly arrived from abroad this often does not work.** And the waiver is not permanent: if your account falls behind, **the waived deposit is applied to the account at that moment.**
- **The calendar:** payment is due **15 days** after the bill date, the minimum late charge is **5 dollars** or 5 percent of each service, and if the balance is not paid by the **25th day a 50 dollar past-due account charge** is applied and service is scheduled for disconnection. After-hours reconnection is **75 dollars.**
- **Garbage** sits on the same account; household waste, yard waste and recycling are collected **once a week**, and for your neighborhood's day the environmental services division is at **334-501-3080.**
- **The complaint route:** the state regulator writes that it **does not regulate municipal utilities or most water companies.** So for these three services **you have no state-level complaint route;** you deal directly with the board and the city. **There are two regimes in one household** and you tell which door to use **from the name of the institution on the bill.**

Severe weather: two seasons, and a shelter gap

- **There are two separate seasons and a newcomer does not know the second one.** The weather office's own text describes the primary season as **spring** and the second as running from **early November to mid December.** A family that moves in September can walk into November unprepared. **Turn the alerts on in the week you move, not in March.**
- **The moment to go to a shelter is the watch, not the warning.** A watch means conditions are favorable and **that is the moment to travel to a community shelter;** at the warning stage the agency's own wording is that **setting out at that point is dangerous.**
- **Research found no published community storm shelter list for this county.** The county's official site answered every route tried with a refusal. **We do not say there is none, we say we did not find one,** and we tell you **not to build a plan around a shelter nobody could find.** Before the season starts, call the county emergency management agency and ask two questions: **is there a public storm shelter in the county, and at what point does it open.**
- **In a manufactured or mobile home the official advice is not to shelter in place, it is to leave early.** The agency's own wording is to **leave well before severe weather arrives and go to a sturdy building. That is a renting decision. We publish no risk ratio,** because no numerical ratio could be verified from any institution's own page.
- **Research found no Alabama requirement obliging apartment buildings to provide a shelter area;** ask the landlord about the building's windowless interior space **before you sign.**
- **The language of an alert depends on your device.** The agency's own sentence is that the length and language of the message depend on **the network and the device's language setting; no Turkish example was found in this research.** The state's opt-in notification system **requires sign-up** and its announcement speaks of **floods and other disasters.**

Renting and property: items that come back after month one

- **Protected classes:** the state's fair housing section names race, color, religion, sex, familial status and **national origin**. **Source of income and immigration status are not on the list**, and **disability is not named in this section** (housing protection on disability comes from **federal housing law**, and the two are separate statutes). For a Turkish reader the handle is **national origin**.
- **There is a retaliation ban but it is narrow:** it operates in three cases only. A complaint **to a public agency** about a building or housing code violation materially affecting health and safety, notifying **the landlord** of a violation of a duty the statute places on the landlord, and **membership in a tenants' union** or the organization of one. **Those three are written out, and it is not generalized into "tenants are protected."**
- **The deposit cap is one month's rent. Return or an itemized written accounting is due in 60 days;** a landlord who misses it owes **twice the deposit**, but to claim that you must have left **a written forwarding address** when you moved out.
- **And one item cannot be cured:** knowing misrepresentation of a material fact in the lease or **in the rental application**. **Leave a line you do not understand blank and ask, rather than guessing at it.**
- **The rental provision in the 2011 act was permanently enjoined but the text is still printed in the code.** The citation is Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama v. Bentley, Northern District of Alabama, **Doc. 180**, stamped **November 25, 2013; the commonly repeated October 2013 date is wrong**, that being the date of the parties' joint report. If a landlord shows you that text, **speak to an attorney**.
- **On property tax there is a twofold difference between living in it and renting it out:** an owner-occupied single-family dwelling is assessed at **10 percent** while property that is rented out or not exclusively owner-occupied is assessed at **20 percent**. **A unit rented to students is not in the owner-occupied class**. The penalty for a false claim is **twice the tax, up to ten years back, with 15 percent annual interest**.
- **The cap on increases resets when the property changes hands. Budget from the new valuation, not from the seller's last tax bill.**
- **The answer to the number question is at the county, not the state.** The exemption's administrative rule was read end to end and **never mentions an identification number**; but the **county** takes the application and **this county's document list could not be read. Assume nothing and call the county revenue office before October 1.**

A one-sentence summary of this list: the county question is easy in this city, **but do not let that mislead you:** school follows the city limit, your pay follows where the work is done, and occupancy follows the zoning district, and **the three do not run along the same line**. Ask about all three while you are house hunting.



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN AUBURN

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