

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · AUSTIN

Austin Car Registration, Emissions and Toll Tags (TxTag, EZ TAG) 2026

For cars brought from another state or country, cars bought in Texas, and Austin-area toll roads.

SHORT ANSWER

New residents have 30 days to register a vehicle in Texas. The order is: insurance of at least 30/60/25, an emissions test in Travis or Williamson County (up to \$11.50), then the Travis County Tax Office. Since March 5, 2026, a first registration needs an unexpired passport plus an I-94, green card or immigrant visa (or a U.S. REAL ID license). The one-time new resident tax is \$90.

Step by step

- 1 Buy insurance.** Minimum liability: \$30,000 per person, \$60,000 per accident, \$25,000 property damage. Out-of-state insurance that meets these limits is accepted; bring the declarations page.
- 2 Get an emissions test.** Gas vehicles 2 to 24 years old are tested; the station fee is up to \$11.50. Travis County accepts only tests done in Travis or Williamson County. Ask for the Vehicle Inspection Report (VIR). Find a station: [DPS station locator](#).
- 3 Have the right ID.** A first Texas registration requires one unexpired "List A" ID (below).
- 4 Visit the tax office.** Form 130-U is completed at the tax office or a title service. Offices take walk-ins, and lines close early when they reach capacity, so go early.
- 5 Then get your license.** Travis County says to register the vehicle before you apply for a Texas license.

New since March 5, 2026: ID for a first registration

Under a new TxDMV rule, a first registration in Texas requires one of these:

- A REAL ID-compliant U.S. license or ID card (licenses from states that require proof of lawful presence, Texas included, also count)
- A U.S. passport
- **An unexpired foreign passport plus an I-94 (not in parole status), a current green card, or an unexpired U.S. immigrant visa**

FOR NEWCOMERS FROM TÜRKİYE

A Turkish passport alone is no longer enough; bring your I-94, green card or immigrant visa with it. An I-94 that shows only parole status does not qualify, so talk to an attorney first. From January 1, 2027, registration renewals will check ID too.

What to bring

DOCUMENT	NOTES
☐ Previous title or registration	For out-of-state cars, that state's title or your most recent registration receipt. A temporary registration is not accepted.
☐ List A ID	One of the IDs above, unexpired.
☐ Proof of a Travis County address	Lease, utility bill or proof of insurance. The office serves Travis County residents only.
☐ Proof of insurance	At least 30/60/25.
☐ Emissions report (VIR)	From a station in Travis or Williamson County.
☐ Lienholder information	If the car is financed: name, address and first lien date.

Fees (2026)

ITEM	AMOUNT
Annual registration (passenger car)	\$51.75
Travis County local fee	\$11.50
Processing and handling	\$4.75
Inspection program replacement fee	\$7.50 per year
Typical registration total (per Travis County)	about \$70 to \$80
Title application	\$33
New resident tax	\$90, once
Emissions test (station)	up to \$11.50
Sales tax on a car bought in Texas	6.25%
Electric vehicle fee	\$200 per year
Card payment (renewals)	\$3 up to \$100, 3% above

Bought a car in Texas? Transfer the title within 30 days of the date the seller signed it. A \$25 penalty starts on day 31 and grows by \$25 every further 30 days, up to \$250.

Travis County tax offices

OFFICE	ADDRESS · NOTES
Headquarters (Nelda Wells Spears Building)	2433 Ridgepoint Dr, Austin 78754 · vehicles 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

OFFICE	ADDRESS · NOTES
North, Pflugerville	15822 Foothill Farms Loop, Pflugerville 78660 · 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Northwest Austin	8110 N FM 620 Rd, Austin 78726 · 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Southeast Austin	4011 McKinney Falls Pkwy, Austin 78744 · 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Southwest Austin, Oak Hill	8656 W Hwy 71, Building B, Austin 78735 · 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
East Austin	4705 Heflin Ln, Austin 78721 · drive-thru only (renewals)

More: tax-office.traviscountytexas.gov. If you live in Round Rock, Cedar Park, Georgetown or Leander, use the Williamson County tax office (512-943-1601). Kyle, Buda and San Marcos are in Hays County, which has no emissions test.

Importing a car from abroad

- Customs entry form (CBP Form 7501) and DOT Form HS-7.
- A VIN inspection on Form VTR-68-A. Ask the tax office where to get it and what it costs.
- Certified English translations of foreign documents.
- The one-time \$90 new resident tax.

Toll roads: TxTag or EZ TAG?

There is no NTTA in Austin. Toll roads belong to two agencies, and none have booths. TxDOT roads (Loop 1 north of Parmer Lane, SH 45 North, SH 45 Southeast, SH 130) have been billed by the Harris County Toll Road Authority (HCTRA) since November 9, 2024. The 183A, 290 Toll, MoPac Express, 71 Toll, 45SW and 183 roads are billed by the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA).

TOPIC	DETAILS
New tags	New TxTags are no longer issued. New or replacement tags are EZ TAGs from HCTRA: hctra.org
Existing TxTags	Keep working; accounts are serviced by HCTRA
Phone and service center	281-875-3279 · TxTag Customer Service Center, 12719 Burnet Road, Austin · Mon to Fri 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Sat 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Tags accepted	TxTag, EZ TAG, Dallas TollTag, K-TAG, PIKEPASS, ExpressToll, SunPass
No tag	You may get two separate bills: an EZ Invoice from HCTRA and a bill from CTRMA, both at higher rates than tag rates
CTRMA Pay By Mail	A tag saves 33%. Each bill adds a \$1 processing charge; you have 30 days to pay before late fees. Pay at PayMobilityBill.com or (833) 762-8655
Rental cars	Tolls go through the rental company (usually PlatePass or HTA); ask about fees. Tags cannot be moved between cars

Watch for scams: TxDOT and TxTag do not send texts or emails about unpaid tolls. Do not click links in such messages; check your balance at 281-875-3279.

NOTE FOR IMMIGRANTS

Toll bills go to the address on your vehicle registration, so update it after you move. 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 AUSTIN

Have a question about your immigration status?

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