

STEP BY STEP GUIDE · BOWLING GREEN

# Getting a Driver License in Bowling Green: 2026 Guide

The city has its own regional office, but the door is not where you expect it: the agency's own note says the entrance is on 7th Street. The office is on Central Time; most neighboring offices are not.

## SHORT ANSWER

**Three things to know up front. First:** driver licensing in Kentucky no longer runs through the circuit court clerk. It moved to the state's own **Driver Licensing Regional Offices** and the transfer was completed in **2022**, so the "go to the circuit court clerk" instructions still circulating online are **wrong today**. **Second, and in this city's favor: Bowling Green has its own regional office - 360 E 8th Ave, Suite 111, 42101** - but do not go without reading the agency's own note: **the entrance is on 7th Street**. Hours are **Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**, and the agency labels this office **Central Time**. **Third:** licensing and vehicle work do not end at the same counter - licensing at the **state office, registration and plates at the county clerk**, testing at the **Kentucky State Police**. **The deadline for a new resident is 30 days.**

## The calendar: 30 days for licensing, 10 to 15 days for the car

On the licensing side the deadline is single and clear: once you establish residency in Kentucky you must obtain a Kentucky license **within 30 days**. **On the vehicle side the agency's own page gives two different numbers** and we print both: **ten days** in the page's opening and **fifteen days** in the insurance section of the same page. **We take no side**. Practical advice: if you have a car, go to the Warren County Clerk **in your first week** and the debate becomes irrelevant.

## The office is here, but the door is on 7th Street

- **Bowling Green Regional Office** - 360 E 8th Ave, Suite 111, Bowling Green, KY 42101. **The agency's own note: the entrance is on 7th Street.**
- **Hours:** Monday to Friday, **8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**, labeled **Central Time** by the agency itself.
- **The office has its own email address**, in the format **KYTC.DDLBowlingGreen@ky.gov**.
- **An appointment can be booked at any regional office.** The state police sentence says that since **July 5, 2022** Kentucky residents may schedule a testing appointment at **any regional office in the state, regardless of their county**; the licensing agency likewise says you may bring your documents to **any regional office**.

#### TIME ZONE WARNING: IF YOU BOOK AT ANOTHER OFFICE

Kentucky is split across two time zones and Bowling Green is in the Central zone. In the agency's own office list, 26 offices carry an Eastern label and 9 carry a Central one. You may book at a neighboring office when yours is full - the rule allows it - but choosing an office to the east also changes the clock. Ask which zone the appointment time is given in and save it in your calendar with the zone attached.

## Fees, from the agency's own price list

| CARD                           | STANDARD 4 YEAR   | STANDARD 8 YEAR   | REAL ID 4 YEAR    | REAL ID 8 YEAR    |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Driver license                 | \$21.50           | \$43.00           | \$24.00           | \$48.00           |
| Motorcycle license             | \$21.50           | \$43.00           | \$24.00           | \$48.00           |
| Driver and motorcycle combined | \$26.50           | \$53.00           | \$29.00           | \$58.00           |
| Identification card            | \$11.50           | \$23.00           | \$14.00           | \$28.00           |
| Learner permit                 | \$15.00 (3 years) | \$15.00 (3 years) | \$18.00 (3 years) | \$18.00 (3 years) |

On payment the agency's sentence lists **credit card, debit card, cash and check**. But the choice between 4 and 8 years may not be yours: for a non-citizen the term is tied not to your preference but to **your immigration document**.

## The card issued to a non-citizen: the term follows your document

- **The card expires with your status document.** The agency writes that a license or identification card issued to a non-citizen **expires together with the immigration documents**. The statute sets the term as **the length of the document's validity or eight years, whichever is shorter**. If the document is issued with no expiration date, **one year**.
- **Applicants in special categories** (asylee, refugee, humanitarian parole, fiance visa applicant) receive, in the agency's words, a **four year** card.
- **Only a "standard" card is issued.** The statute says an applicant under this section receives **only a standard driver license or learner permit**. **So no "foreign" marking is printed on the card**; the difference is **not being able to get a REAL ID**.
- **Ten days if your status changes.** The statute is explicit: an applicant whose immigration status changes in **any way** must apply to update the credential **within ten days**. **That rule is tied to status, not to moving, and naturalizing is also a change of status**.
- **Where you apply:** the statute ties the application to **the cabinet in Frankfort or a field office - not to the county circuit court clerk**.
- **Your status is checked against federal systems.** The agency's step list tells you to **complete the SAVE verification process at the office**, and the statute says verification runs through **federal agency systems and databases**. The agency also writes on its own page that the list of statuses **may change**.

- **Temporary credential:** once identity and status are verified, a **temporary credential valid for thirty days** is issued until the permanent card arrives by mail.

A bill proposing a status marking on the card was introduced in the 2026 session and did not become law. The card issued today is a **standard** card.

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## Documents and two strict rules

- **No photocopies:** original documents are required and all are subject to verification.
- **A notarized translation is mandatory:** the agency writes that **foreign licenses, birth certificates and marriage certificates must include a notarized, translated affidavit. Your Turkish documents will not be processed without a translation, and arranging it before you leave Turkey is both cheaper and faster.**
- **Permanent residents** must present their current card **at every transaction**, including renewals and updates.
- **If you are waiting on an extension:** the agency writes that a digital notice document may be accepted, **but it has to be printed so the office can scan it.**
- **Moving from within the United States:** proof of lawful presence, a **Social Security card, proof of Kentucky residency no older than one year (two for a REAL ID)**, the license from your previous state, any name change document, and a **certified driving history dated within the last thirty days.**

**Proof of residency is where this city has a concrete advantage:** electricity, water and sewer are with **one utility**, so a single application produces a single bill, and that bill is **an official document printed with your name and address. But there is a trap:** if the building has a **shared water meter**, the account **must stay in the property owner's name** and that bill earns you no proof of address. **Ask about a separate meter when you look at a home.**

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## Testing languages: no Turkish, but two doors

The Kentucky State Police list says the written test is offered in **Arabic, Burmese, Chinese, Dari, English, French, Kinyarwanda, Japanese, Pashto, Somali, Spanish and Swahili. Twelve languages, and Turkish is not among them;** the driver manual is translated only into Spanish. Against that, the same page writes two accommodations: **an audio version of the test exists at some locations**, and where it does not, **the test may be given orally. Call the Bowling Green office in advance and ask whether that option exists there.** The licensing agency's resources also list an **interpreter affidavit form for a foreign country driver license (TC 94-197); whether an interpreter may be used for the written test or only for the office transaction could not be verified. That is a gap, not an inference.**

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## If you arrived with a Turkish license: not a course, an exam

**Do not carry the rule from the previous round of this series.** In a neighboring state, not being on the reciprocity list meant a **mandatory driving course. Kentucky is different.** The licensing agency's reciprocity parenthesis names two countries - **Taiwan and South Korea** - and **Turkey is not on it**, but the consequence is not a course. It is the **full testing set.** Mandatory driver education in this state is written only for applicants **under eighteen.**

| YOUR SITUATION                                                               | TESTS REQUIRED                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Foreign license + <b>green card holder</b> , country on the accepted list    | Vision + <b>written</b>                                                                                       |
| Foreign license + green card holder, country <b>not</b> on the accepted list | Vision + written + <b>road</b> . The agency's sentence: <b>the applicant must start with a learner permit</b> |
| Foreign license, <b>no green card</b> , country on the accepted list         | Vision + written + <b>road</b>                                                                                |
| Foreign license, no green card, country <b>not</b> on the accepted list      | Written + vision + <b>road</b> . Again, <b>starting with a learner permit</b>                                 |
| A valid license from another U.S. state                                      | <b>No testing</b>                                                                                             |
| A license from another U.S. state, expired less than a year                  | <b>No testing</b>                                                                                             |

**The point to notice:** green card holders and non-holders are **not treated the same**. With the same "accepted country" license, a green card holder takes only vision and written, while someone without one **also takes the road test**. We read that from two separate agency tables.

#### TWO CONTRADICTIONS WE PRINT, BOTH FROM THE AGENCY'S OWN PAGE

- **The "foreign license accepted by the United States" list is not published.** The agency uses the phrase in its tables but publishes neither the list nor a definition; the research looked in three separate places and did not find it. **So which row a Turkish license falls into is unclear.** The practical consequence: the difference between the two rows is **whether you take a road test - prepare for one either way**.
- **What does the one year right to drive on a foreign license rest on?** At the top of the page it is tied to **being party to the Geneva Convention**; in the FAQ on the same page it is tied to **being on the reciprocity list**. **Turkey is party to the 1949 Geneva Convention on Road Traffic, but is not on Kentucky's two country list. We take no side;** do not build daily life on that uncertainty, and start the Kentucky licensing process **in your first month**.

## Renewal and commercial licensing

For a non-citizen the agency explicitly describes **in person renewal**: the credential may be renewed at **any regional office**, every renewal includes a **vision screening**, and all documents are brought **again** according to status. **Whether online renewal is open to a non-citizen could not be verified** - we are not saying it is closed, **the agency's page does not say**. On the commercial side the agency notes that the federal rules were updated and lists **H-2A, H-2B** and the **E-2 treaty investor** visa as potentially eligible. **For a Turkish reader: E-2 is on that list; H-1B, F-1 and L-1 are not.**

#### BEFORE YOU GO TO THE COUNTER

- **Look for the door in the right place:** the office is at **360 E 8th Ave, Suite 111**, but **the entrance is on 7th Street**.
- **The original passport** (no photocopies) and **notarized translations** of your Turkish documents.
- **Proof of Kentucky residency no older than one year; two** if you want a REAL ID. The **combined utility bill** does the job - **but if the building has a shared water meter the bill will not be in your name**.
- **You may book at any office in the state** - do not sit in a queue - **but ask about the time zone if you pick an office to the east**.
- Go knowing that **SAVE verification** will be run at the office, and that your card's term will be tied to **the term of your immigration document**.
- **A change of status gives you ten days under the statute**. Moving and a change of status often fall in the same period; plan them together.



#### TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN BOWLING GREEN

##### Do you have a question about your immigration situation?

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