

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · CLIFTON

How to Get a Driver's License in Clifton, NJ: 2026 Guide (NJ MVC)

For Clifton newcomers, applicants of any immigration status, and drivers arriving with a foreign license: documents, tests, fees and the Wayne, Paterson and Lodi MVC offices.

SHORT ANSWER

New Jersey's Standard License has been open to residents regardless of immigration status since 2021: no SSN or proof of lawful status is required, and a Turkish passport alone counts as a primary (4-point) identity document. You need 6 points of ID combined, one New Jersey residency document, and an SSN, ITIN or affidavit. The MVC offices closest to Clifton are Wayne, Paterson and Lodi, all by appointment. New residents have 60 days to register a vehicle and get a license. The Standard License is not REAL ID compliant, so a domestic flight needs a passport or a REAL ID instead.

New Jersey Standard License: immigration status is not asked

- **Open to everyone.** New Jersey has issued a Standard License to residents regardless of immigration status since 2021. No SSN is required; an ITIN or, if you are not eligible for either, a notarized affidavit is accepted. No proof of lawful immigration status is required.
- **A Turkish passport is enough on its own.** A passport from your country of citizenship counts as a primary (4-point) identity document. A Turkish driver's license presented together with another government ID also counts as primary.
- **The Standard License is not a REAL ID.** There is no star on the card; since May 7, 2025 it cannot be used for a domestic flight or to enter some federal buildings, where you need a REAL ID or a valid passport instead.
- **REAL ID is a separate track.** It requires full SSN verification and proof of lawful presence (a passport, a green card, or a foreign passport with a valid visa and I-94).
- **Most foreign licenses, including Turkish ones, cannot simply be exchanged.** New Jersey has reciprocity only with Taiwan and South Korea. The knowledge-test manual is offered in English, Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Gujarati, Korean, Arabic, Haitian Creole and Portuguese, not Turkish.
- **Visitors** may drive on a foreign license, with an International Driving Permit, for up to one year.

6 Points of ID: what documents count

CATEGORY	EXAMPLE DOCUMENTS
Primary (4 points, one document)	A Turkish passport; or a Turkish driver's license plus another government-issued ID; a U.S. birth certificate; a Certificate of Naturalization; a green card (I-551); a REAL ID-compliant license or ID from any U.S. state
Secondary (one 3-point document, or two 1-point documents)	A school or college ID with a transcript from any country; an out-of-state license; a marriage or divorce certificate; a bank statement; an employer ID plus a pay stub; a high school diploma from any country
New Jersey residency document (1 required, in addition)	A lease, an electric or water bill, a bank statement, a tax document, an insurance policy, a deed
SSN / ITIN / affidavit (in addition)	An SSN is verified with the SSA; without one, an official document showing your ITIN, or, if you qualify for neither, the notarized affidavit form on NJMVC.gov

No document can be more than 3 years expired. Documents in a language other than English need a certified translation.

NOTE FOR IMMIGRANTS

- A newly arrived Turkish citizen can meet the primary-identity requirement with just a Turkish passport plus one New Jersey residency document; a U.S.-issued document is not required.
- If you want a REAL ID instead, the process is different: it needs full SSN verification and proof of lawful presence (a passport, a green card, or a foreign passport with a visa and I-94).
- If you plan to fly domestically, the Standard License is not enough on its own: get a REAL ID or carry your valid passport.

Step by step for a first license

- 1 Book an appointment** at telegov.njportal.com/njmvc, choosing Wayne, Paterson or Lodi. An appointment is required for a first license, an ID card, a permit, an out-of-state or foreign transfer, and the knowledge test.
- 2** Get your Initial Permit, valid for 2 years. You take the knowledge test and a vision test; if you fail, you can retest after 7 days.
- 3** Practice: 3 months if you are 21 or older, 6 months if you are younger, with at least 50 supervised hours (10 at night) documented on Form BA-CSD.
- 4** Take the road test; if you fail, you can retest after 14 days.
- 5** Once you pass, you receive a Probationary License.

Fees (2026)

ITEM	FEE
Driver's license (4-year, initial or renewal)	\$24
REAL ID upgrade surcharge	\$11
Change or replacement of a lost card	\$11
Examination permit (car)	\$10
Motorcycle permit	\$5
Moped permit	\$5
Commercial permit	\$125

Payment: Amex, Mastercard, Visa, Discover, checks, money orders and cash are all accepted.

MVC offices closest to Clifton

OFFICE	ADDRESS
Wayne	481 Rte 46 West, Wayne, NJ 07470
Paterson	125 Broadway, Suite 201, Paterson, NJ 07505
Lodi	8 Mill St (off Garibaldi Ave), Lodi, NJ 07644

Hours: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays, closed Sundays. An appointment is required for a first license, an ID card, a permit (including REAL ID), an out-of-state or foreign transfer, a CDL, and the knowledge test. Walk-ins are accepted only for permit validation, decal purchase, a 5-year abstract, a name or gender-marker change, and a disability placard.

If you are moving from another state

- Transfer your out-of-state license and vehicle title or registration to New Jersey within 60 days of your move, or before your current license and registration expire, whichever comes first.
 - If you hold a current, valid, unrestricted license from another U.S. state, the knowledge and road tests are waived; you receive a 4-year New Jersey license and surrender your old one.
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Common mistakes

- Miscounting the 6 points: a Turkish passport alone gives 4, so you still need 2 more points from a secondary document.
- Showing up at Wayne, Paterson or Lodi without an appointment.
- Confusing the New Jersey residency document with the 6 points of ID; it is a separate requirement.
- Trying to use a Standard License, instead of a REAL ID or a passport, for a domestic flight.

- Missing the 60-day deadline for an out-of-state transfer.



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN CLIFTON, NJ

Have a question about your immigration status?

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

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