

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · EVANSTON

The Evanston Wheel Tax, Parking Permits and Car Registration: 2026 Guide

A wheel tax with no sticker but camera enforcement, residential parking permits, state title and plates, emissions testing and tolls.

SHORT ANSWER

Instead of a Chicago-style city sticker, Evanston has a wheel tax, and no sticker is issued: payment is checked by license-plate-reading cameras and not paying brings a parking ticket. A passenger car is \$90 a year and the tax year runs October 1 to September 30. The deadline for the 2027 year was September 30, 2026, which has passed, so if you have just arrived, check your status now on 847-448-4311. A residential parking permit is a separate purchase, at \$50.

NO STICKER, CAMERAS INSTEAD

The city page gives the rule in one sentence: vehicles registered with the Illinois Secretary of State at an Evanston address must buy an annual wheel tax. Then comes the part that surprises people most: **no physical sticker is issued**. Compliance is monitored by License Plate Recognition technology and failure to pay may result in parking tickets. So there is nothing to put on your windscreen, the record of payment attaches to your plate, and what reminds you is usually the ticket the camera produces.

1. The wheel tax: who pays, and when?

- **Who pays:** only vehicles whose Illinois registration is at an Evanston address. If your car is registered in another municipality you do not pay the wheel tax, but you do need the out-of-town-plate permit to park in a residential district.
- **The calendar:** the tax year starts October 1 and ends September 30. The 2027 tax covers October 1, 2026 to September 30, 2027, and by the city's announcement the deadline to pay it was Wednesday, September 30, 2026. That date has passed, so the first thing a newcomer should do is ask about their status: 3-1-1 or 847-448-4311.
- **A car you just bought:** in the city's words, owners have 30 days from the purchase date to register the vehicle and buy the wheel tax, and no ticket is issued in that window. If you changed cars, the tax transfers to the new registration and you document that the old car is no longer yours.
- **Late fee:** we could not find the amount charged to someone paying after September 30, nor the amount of the parking ticket, on the pages we read, so no figure is printed here. Ask the city.
- **If you move, tell two offices:** the SOS and the city. For the city, call or text 847-448-4311 or open a 311 request; proof of the address change is required.

VEHICLE	ANNUAL WHEEL TAX
Passenger car (and school bus)	\$90
Motorcycle	\$65
Recreational vehicle	\$100
Trailer	\$45
Antique vehicle	\$35
Weight-plate vehicles (class B, under 8,000 pounds)	\$120 and up, to \$335 depending on class
Disabled veteran, active and retired military, diplomat (one vehicle per household)	free

Where to pay

- **Online:** the city payment portal. What you upload has to be a complete Illinois SOS vehicle registration showing the owner's name, make, model, VIN and the current status of the registration. **Cropped screenshots are not accepted.**
- **By mail:** City Collector's Office, Lorraine H. Morton City Hall, 909 Davis Street, Evanston, IL 60201. Make the check out to "The City of Evanston"; do not mail cash.
- **Drop box:** the blue box in front of 909 Davis Street.
- **In person:** the Customer Service Center at Morton City Hall and five payment sites: Robert Crown Community Center (1801 Main St.), Prieto Community Center (430 Asbury Ave.), Levy Senior Center (300 Dodge Ave.), Fleetwood-Jourdain Center (1655 Foster St.) and the Ecology Center (2024 McCormick Blvd.). Take your vehicle registration showing the Evanston address and any renewal letter.
- **The senior discount is not automatic:** it runs only through the city's Access Evanston program. You apply to the program first, then buy the Senior Wheel Tax Permit or the military and veteran permit. There is one discount per household, no online purchase route (in person or by mail), and no autopay.

2. A residential parking permit is a separate purchase

- The city has more than 25 residential parking districts, set up where on-street parking demand is high. The permits are stickerless too and verified by plate recognition.
- **Fees:** an on-street residential permit is \$50; for a resident whose car is registered outside Evanston, an on-street permit is \$140.
- **Accepted proof of residence:** a valid Illinois ID showing an Evanston address, a current lease signed by both tenant and landlord, or a gas, electric, cable or water bill less than 30 days old. Your document is kept on file and not asked for again at renewal. No SSN is asked on the page.
- **Is your address in a district:** check the city's [About My Place](#) tool and the parking district eligibility map.
- **Guest passes:** only residents of a parking district can buy them, and proof of residence is required each time. There is an online form, or you collect them from the first floor of the Collector's Office at 909 Davis Street; they are not sold at the community centers. We could not verify the price of a daily pass.

- **Snow days and street cleaning:** we could not read the overnight parking ban and snow-day rules in this research. Sign up for the city's e-notify alerts; a car left on the street on a ban day is towed.
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3. The state side: title, plates and emissions

- 1 **Get Illinois insurance.** Minimum coverage is \$25,000 (injury or death of one person), \$50,000 (more than one person) and \$20,000 (property damage). Keep the card in the car.
 - 2 **Do the title and plates within 30 days.** The title is \$165 and a standard passenger plate with annual renewal is \$151, \$316 in all. The Evanston facility lists the plate line without an appointment marking, but it serves seniors, so call 800-252-8980 first and otherwise use Chicago North.
 - 3 **File the tax form.** A vehicle titled and registered elsewhere for at least 3 months before you moved is exempt from Illinois tax, but you still file the form that shows the exemption (RUT-50 for a private sale, RUT-25 for an out-of-state dealer).
 - 4 **Get the emissions test.** All of Cook County is in the testing area, so Evanston is covered. The test is every two years, free and walk-in. We could not verify an [Illinois Air Team](#) station in or next to Evanston, so no address is printed here: search by plate on their site. A car that has not been tested cannot renew its plate.
 - 5 **Use your Evanston address.** Plate renewal reminders, emissions notices and toll invoices all go to the address on file with the SOS.
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Tolls: not needed inside Evanston

- No toll road through Evanston came up in our research, so I-PASS is not required for daily life inside the city. Someone who takes the Purple Line to work can live here without ever buying a transponder.
- A transponder earns its place when you leave the state or go regularly to the northwest suburbs. The Illinois Tollway is fully electronic with no cash lanes, and paying without a transponder costs twice the I-PASS rate.
- **I-PASS:** a prepaid account. The transponder is free from a Tollway customer service center or can be ordered online; retailers such as Jewel-Osco and Road Ranger charge a service fee. A transponder bought online or at a store has to be activated (1-800-824-7277). Auto replenish keeps extra charges from building up.
- **If you missed a toll:** opening a Pay By Plate account within 14 days keeps every penalty and extra charge off; it works for rental cars and visitors too. Miss the 14 days and invoices arrive at 30, 60 and 90 days, with the first adding \$3 per toll for passenger vehicles.
- **Do not let a balance build up:** the SOS lists toll debt among the reasons a license is suspended and charges a \$70 reinstatement fee. Current rates are on the [Tollway rate page](#); daytime and overnight rates differ. The Chicago Skyway and the Indiana Toll Road are separate operations; we could not verify whether they take I-PASS.

DO NOT CONFUSE THIS WITH THE CHICAGO STICKER

A Chicago city sticker is not valid in Evanston and the Evanston wheel tax does nothing in Chicago. They are two different cities' taxes and you pay the city where the car is registered. Watch the residential parking zone signs when you park in Chicago as well.

NOTE FOR IMMIGRANTS

- The trap here is plain: with no sticker to show that you paid, the wheel tax is easy to forget. If your car is registered at an Evanston address, call 847-448-4311 and ask about your status; on a newly bought car you have 30 days.
- Reporting an address change to the SOS within 10 days is a separate task from the AR-11 you file with USCIS. In Evanston there is a third notification as well: the city.
- Budget the first year up front: \$316 for title and plates, \$90 for the wheel tax, \$50 for a permit if you are in a parking district, plus insurance.



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN EVANSTON

Have a question about your immigration status?

Attorney Asim Clinch serves clients in Evanston and the surrounding area, in Turkish and English.

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