

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · FAIRFAX

Fairfax Car Registration, Inspection, E-ZPass and Car Tax Guide 2026

For cars brought from another state, cars bought in Virginia, and anyone driving the Dulles Toll Road, the Express Lanes, or I-66.

SHORT ANSWER

After moving to Virginia, you have 30 days to title and register your vehicle, a shorter window from the 60 days you get for a license. Fairfax County and the City of Fairfax both require an emissions inspection before a vehicle's first registration. Insurance minimums have been \$50,000/\$100,000/\$25,000 since January 1, 2025. Fairfax County's own car tax rate is \$4.57 per \$100 of assessed value, filed automatically after your DMV registration.

Step by step: title and registration

- 1 Get Virginia insurance.** Minimum liability coverage effective January 1, 2025: \$50,000 per person / \$100,000 per accident bodily injury, \$25,000 property damage (the 2022-2024 minimums were \$30,000/\$60,000/\$20,000).
- 2 Title your vehicle within 30 days.** Moving from another state requires a completed title/registration application, proof of address, your prior state's title or registration card, and proof of purchase price if bought in the last 12 months. The title fee is \$15.
- 3 Register within the same 30 days** at any DMV customer service center. If your vehicle is garaged in Fairfax County or the City of Fairfax, you likely need an emissions inspection first unless you already hold a valid certificate.

Fees (2026)

ITEM	AMOUNT
Title fee	\$15
Registration, passenger vehicle up to 4,000 lbs	\$30.75/year
Registration, passenger vehicle 4,001-6,500 lbs	\$35.75/year
Electric vehicle Highway Use Fee (in addition to registration)	\$135.63
Sales and use tax	4.15%, \$75 minimum

Multi-year registration discount: 2-year registration saves \$3 online/by phone or \$2 by mail/in person; 3-year registration saves \$4 online/by phone or \$3 by mail/in person. But a vehicle garaged in an emissions

locality like Fairfax County or the City of Fairfax is not eligible for the 3-year discount unless it has more than a year left on its emissions cycle, or is being registered for the first time.

Emissions and safety inspection

- **Emissions inspection required.** Fairfax County and the City of Fairfax are on Virginia's list of localities that require an emissions inspection before a vehicle's first registration (alongside Arlington, Loudoun, Prince William, and Stafford counties and the cities of Alexandria, Falls Church, Manassas, and Manassas Park), unless you already hold a valid certificate less than 12 months old. Vehicles registered in this area pay an extra \$2 on top of the standard registration fee. Contact the Department of Environmental Quality: 703-583-3900 (local) or 1-800-275-3844 (toll-free in Virginia).
 - **Safety inspection is separate and required statewide.** Every vehicle needs an annual safety-inspection sticker from a licensed private repair shop, not from DMV. For locations or questions, DMV points to the Virginia State Police: (804) 674-2000. Driving without a valid sticker can lead to a fine and a mark on your driving record.
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Insurance minimums and the risk of lapsing

Minimum liability coverage for policies effective on or after January 1, 2025: \$50,000 per person and \$100,000 per accident for bodily injury, \$25,000 for property damage. Statutory basis: Code of Virginia § 46.2-472. If coverage lapses, you must reinsure, deactivate the plates, or surrender them. Uninsured owners pay a \$600 non-compliance fee, must file an SR-22 for three years, and pay a reinstatement fee if applicable.

Fairfax County car tax

- **Rate.** In the Fairfax County Department of Tax Administration's own words: "The current tax rate for most personal property in Fairfax County is \$4.57 for each \$100 of assessed value." Valuation is based on J.D. Power Valuation Services.
 - **Auto-filed.** Since January 1, 2023, Fairfax County automatically files a personal property tax return for a vehicle registered with DMV, under Code of Virginia §§ 46.2-600 and 46.2-622. A 10% penalty (or \$10, whichever is greater) applies if the county does not receive your DMV registration within 60 days.
 - A separate Local Vehicle Registration Fee, which varies by vehicle type and weight, applies on top of this value-based tax, and also applies in the towns of Clifton, Herndon, and Vienna within the county.
 - The state's PPTRA subsidy applies on top of this \$4.57 local rate for the first \$20,000 of a qualifying personal-use vehicle's assessed value.
 - Contact: Department of Tax Administration, Personal Property Division, 703-222-8234, DTAPPD@fairfaxcounty.gov, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 223, Fairfax, VA 22035.
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E-ZPass Virginia, Express Lanes, I-66, and the Dulles Toll Road

- **E-ZPass Virginia** is the shared tag and account used on every Virginia toll facility, run by VDOT. Customer service: 1-877-762-7824, weekdays 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

- **The Express Lanes on I-495, I-95, and I-395** are operated by Transurban with dynamic pricing, payable by E-ZPass or, without a tag, Pay-By-Plate. Customer service: 1-855-495-9777.
- **I-66 Express Lanes** is a separate brand, with both the Inside and Outside the Beltway sections open. Check ride66express.com directly for current dollar rates.
- **The Dulles Toll Road**, run by the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA), runs through the Fair Oaks/Chantilly/Reston/Herndon corridor toward Dulles Airport and accepts both E-ZPass and Pay-By-Plate. Check dullestollroad.com directly for current rates.

TOLL-RATE WARNING

Current dollar rates for the Express Lanes, the I-66 Express Lanes, and the Dulles Toll Road change often, and Express Lanes pricing is set dynamically by real-time traffic. Check the operator's own app or site before you travel; no fixed figure is given here.

NOTE FOR IMMIGRANTS

After you move, update the address on your vehicle registration. 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 FAIRFAX, VA

Have a question about your immigration status?

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

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