

CHECKLIST · HOOVER

Moving to Hoover Checklist: The First 30 Days (2026)

One question opens the whole list: which county is your address in? Write the answer down, because it comes back in six separate items.

SHORT ANSWER

This list starts with a single task, and in this city nothing comes before it: **look up your address**. Hoover is **one city spread across two counties**, its land area is divided **roughly in half** on the Census Bureau's own boundary data, and **the postal address on your envelope does not tell you your county**. Write the answer down, because **it comes back in six separate items**: the sales and grocery tax rate, the plate and registration office, the probate court, the property tax exemption application, the emergency management agency, and the storm shelter list. One item sits outside even that logic: **water comes from four separate utilities, sewer is split three ways, and none of those boundaries follow the county line**, so there knowing your county is not enough, **you have to know your neighborhood**.

Day one: look up your address

The most useful link in this guide is an address lookup, and there are two tools; both belong to the agencies themselves and both are free.

TOOL	WHAT IT RETURNS
The Census Bureau address lookup service	Returns the county, the municipality and the school district of an address in a single query, and asks for no registration and no key . It was tested first hand with Hoover addresses in this research
The state revenue department address lookup	Returns the state, county and city tax rates applied at that address, which closes the county question on the money side

One caveat: the counties' own map services did not open in this research (one behind bot protection), so we do not cite them as sources.

Where the answer comes back

ITEM	DOES IT CHANGE WITH THE COUNTY
Sales and grocery tax rate	Yes . Two different combined rates in the same city

ITEM	DOES IT CHANGE WITH THE COUNTY
Yearly value tax on a vehicle	Yes , because one multiplier is the county rate
Property tax office and exemption application	Yes . The application goes to the county , not the state
Vehicle registration and plate counter	Yes , and the county office inside the city is open to the residents of one county only
License office	Yes . Two separate offices, two sets of hours
Probate court and recording of the marriage form	Yes , and the fees can differ
Emergency management agency and shelter list	Yes
County business license	Yes
School district	No . The city has its own school system and it is the same whichever county the address is in
City code enforcement, zoning, city licensing and the request channel	No . All of it sits with the city
Trash collection	No . A single contracted company under the city's agreement
Library card	No . A Hoover resident on either side can get a free card
Weather forecast office	No . Both counties fall under the same regional office, and this was measured
Water and sewer	Yes, but not by county . The boundaries do not follow the county line

That last line is the item most easily misread in this city. And there is a third layer: in this state **municipalities can exercise tax and licensing authority in a band outside their limits**, and the revenue department's own file carries **a separate rate for Hoover in that band**. So an address whose owner says **I am not inside the city** may still be paying city tax. **The statutory basis of that authority could not be read in this research**, so we do not write where the band begins or ends.

The first thirty days

TASK	WHERE OR HOW
☐ Run the address lookup and write down your county	geocoding.geo.census.gov . Your neighbor's answer may not be your answer ; in this city the two sides of a street can be in two different counties
☐ Report your address federally within 10 days	uscis.gov/addresschange ; enter the receipt number of every pending application. If you have a case in immigration court, also file Form EOIR-33/IC within 5 days
☐ Do not be misled when the city name on your envelope does not change	In this city an address can be written on the postal side under another city's name . What triggers the duty is the move itself, not the envelope . Even a move inside the city can change your county

TASK	WHERE OR HOW
☐ Open power and gas in your own name	A bill in your name serves as a residency document at many doors. The account setup charge is 40 dollars ; a deposit is set by credit check and, where required, is twice the average monthly bill
☐ Ask the right question when you open an account	Do not say I have no number. Ask this: what do you accept as alternative identification, are a passport and an individual taxpayer identification number on the list, and does applying in person change the answer. Ask for the answer in writing
☐ Find out which utility supplies your water	There are four separate water utilities in the city and the boundaries follow neighborhoods. See the table below
☐ Get a library card	Free for a city or county resident, a passport is accepted as identification , even a pay stub counts as proof of address, and no Social Security number appears in the published requirements . A Hoover resident on the Shelby side can get one too
☐ Plan the license appointment after you know your county	No county counter processes foreign nationals; most state offices do but not all. Look at the type of the office, not its name
☐ Register your vehicle within thirty days	On the Shelby side you cannot use the county office inside your own city . The yearly value tax is collected before the plate is issued
☐ Call the school district if you have children	The school is unaffected by the two counties, but the district's enrollment rules are unverified ; ask for the document list in writing
☐ Ask your employer whether payroll carries a local withholding	No occupational tax was found for Hoover this round, but that does not mean there is none. The test is not residence but where the work is performed
☐ Keep the automatic emergency alerts on your phone turned on	No sign-up is required , they go to compatible phones automatically, and in a tornado this is the primary channel
☐ Decide on your shelter place before a storm	A windowless interior room on the lowest floor . If you rent, ask about the building's designated shelter area before you sign
☐ If you bought a home, calendar the exemption dates	October 1, October 1 to December 31 and December 31 . The application goes to your own county's revenue office

WATER, SEWER AND TRASH: THE BOUNDARIES DO NOT FOLLOW THE COUNTY LINE

The city's own page names **four separate water utilities**:

NEIGHBORHOOD	WATER UTILITY	PHONE
Most of the city	Central Alabama Water	205-244-4000
Greystone (except Greystone Highlands)	Shelby County Water System	205-678-2818
Lake Cyrus and Ross Bridge	Bessemer Water	205-481-4333
Quail Run and Valley Station	Pelham Water	205-620-6420

- **Do not confuse this table with the county table.** Greystone is on the Shelby side and its water comes from that county's system, but **Quail Run and Valley Station are also on the Shelby side and take water from a different utility. The county line does not give you the water line.**
- **Sewer is split three ways.** The city's own text says it operates, maintains and owns the system in the **Inverness, Riverchase and Southlake** areas; the city's business page additionally gives **Jefferson County Environmental Services** (205-325-5390) and **Southwest Water** (205-733-1672). **Which neighborhood belongs to which was not fully verified**, so we draw no map. The city's own sewer number is **205-444-7523**.
- **The responsibility line:** the property owner is responsible for the service line **from the building to the main**; if a blockage is in the main, the city responds.
- **Trash is simple:** a **single contracted company, two collections a week**, routes can start at **6.30 a.m.**, recycling needs **no sorting and no rinsing**, but **bags outside the cart are not taken on the second collection. How the trash charge is billed could not be verified**; ask when you move.
- **An internet warning:** a .org domain resembling the large water utility's name **is not the utility's site, it is a parked domain**. The correct domain is **caw-al.gov**. The utility was also restructured in 2025 and now trades under a new name, so **you will see the old name on old bills**.
- **And the utilities' identification rules could not be read:** the large utility's own site could not be reached at all and the other three were not examined. **We publish no tariff or deposit figure**. Call the utility and ask by name what it accepts as identification.

The complaint door: who is regulated and who is not

The state regulatory commission's own consumer page **names what it does not regulate**: electric cooperatives, **most water companies**, municipal utilities, wireless services, cable television and a regional federal power producer. It ends the sentence this way: **the commission therefore has no authority to resolve complaints about them**.

SERVICE	STATE COMPLAINT DOOR
Electricity and natural gas	Yes. Hoover's providers are regulated investor-owned companies. Consumer line 1-800-392-8050 , weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Water and sewer	No. Your counterpart is the water utility, the city, or the elected city council
Trash	No. Not within the scope

THE SHUTOFF RULE: COLD ONLY, AND IT HAS FOUR LIMITS

- The regulator's rule states that residential **electric or natural gas** service may **not be disconnected** for nonpayment if the temperature at that address is forecast to be **32 degrees Fahrenheit or below** for that calendar day. The controlling forecast is the National Weather Service forecast for that location.
- **The scope is electricity and natural gas only. Water, sewer and trash sit outside this rule.**
- **No heat trigger was found. So we cannot show you a state protection against an air conditioning shutoff in summer.** We do not say there is none; we say we could not find one.
- **The source carries a very old effective date.** Whether the rule was later amended could not be verified, so we give the rule by name but **do not claim it applies unchanged today.**
- **It binds regulated utilities only.** Hoover's electricity and gas providers are regulated; **the water utilities are not.**
- **And a right you can use:** every utility must give **at least one employee in each office the authority to extend payment time and arrange installments.** If you run into payment trouble, **call before a disconnection notice arrives.**

Severe weather: two seasons, and a shelter gap

- **There are two distinct seasons and newcomers do not know the second one.** The regional weather office's own text describes the main season as **spring** (March through May) and the second as running from **early November to mid December.** A family that moves in September can walk into November unprepared.
- **The moment to go to a shelter is the watch, not the warning.** A Tornado Watch means conditions are favorable and **that is the moment to go to a community shelter;** at the Tornado Warning stage the agency's own wording is that **traveling at that point is dangerous.**
- **Hoover does not appear on the community shelter list.** The 2025 document of the emergency management agency on the Jefferson side names **more than forty communities** and **Hoover is not among them;** the agency on the Shelby side and any list it keeps **could not be reached at all in this research. We do not say there is no shelter in Hoover,** we say research found none, and we tell you **not to build a plan around a shelter nobody could find.**
- **A naming trap:** the page on the city's own site headed **emergency shelters** is not a storm shelter list, it is **a resource directory for homelessness and emergency housing services.** Do not confuse the two.
- **For a manufactured or mobile home the official advice is not to shelter inside but to leave beforehand.** The weather service states that **mobile homes and tents are not safe;** a county emergency management agency is more direct: **mobile homes are among the most dangerous places to be in a storm and should be evacuated,** and residents of parks without a shelter **should plan to stay with a friend, neighbor or relative who lives nearby.** This is a renting decision. **We publish no risk ratio,** because no numeric ratio could be verified from any agency page.
- **A correction:** both county portions of Hoover fall under **the same regional weather office;** this was measured. The reason to know your county is different: **warning text goes out with the county name, shelter lists are published by county, and the emergency management agency changes with the county.**

Home and renting: five questions before you sign

- 1 **Which county is this address in?** Run the lookup yourself; do not rely on the landlord's answer.
 - 2 **Which utility supplies the water, and who handles the sewer?** There are four utilities and the boundaries follow neighborhoods.
 - 3 **Does this building have a designated shelter area, and where is it?** Whether a landlord has any duty to provide or show one **could not be verified**, so the question is yours to ask.
 - 4 **Is this address in a flood-prone area?** The city's building inspection division **checks this by address**, and the city's own page names the local flood-prone areas.
 - 5 **What identification does the power company accept?** If you cannot open an account, your move-in date can slip.
- **Protected classes:** the state fair housing section names race, color, religion, sex, familial status and **national origin**. **Source of income and immigration status are not on that list**, and **disability is not named in this section** (housing disability protection comes from **federal housing law**, which is separate legislation). For a Turkish reader the real ground is **national origin**.
 - **There is a retaliation prohibition but it is narrow:** it runs in three cases only. A complaint to **a public agency charged with enforcement** about a building or housing code violation materially affecting health and safety, a complaint **to the landlord** about a violation of a particular section, and **membership in or organization of a tenants union**. **These three are written out, not generalized into tenants are protected**.
 - **The deposit cap is one month's rent**, with three exceptions. **Sixty days** for return or an itemized written accounting; if the landlord misses it, they owe **twice the deposit**, **but to claim that you must have left a written forwarding address when you moved out**.
 - **And one ground cannot be cured:** a deliberate material misrepresentation in the lease or **in the rental application**. **Do not sign a form you do not understand**.
 - **The 2011 act's prohibition on renting to immigrants was permanently enjoined but the text is still printed in the code**, and a reader who searches will find it. The citation is in the school section above; if you run into a problem over it, **talk to an attorney**.

Tax and property: two items that come back after month one

- **This state has an income tax.** If you came from another state, **redo your take-home pay calculation**. Sales and grocery tax **differ between the two sides**, and the rates are in the city guide's tax section; the state cut its grocery share **but the local shares did not come down**, so the rate you see at the register is not the state rate.
- **In property tax there is a two to one difference between living in a home and renting it out:** an owner-occupied single-family home sits in one class at **10 percent** of market value; vacant land or property **not exclusively occupied by the owner** is assessed at **20 percent**. **The penalty for a false claim is heavy:** the administrative rule makes a person who knowingly and willfully gives false information liable for **twice the tax due for up to ten years back, with 15 percent annual interest**.
- **The increase cap resets when the property changes hands.** Annual growth in taxable assessment is capped at **7 percent** for certain classes, with a base year of **October 1, 2024** and application from

collections beginning **October 1, 2025**; but the cap does not transfer. **Build your budget on the new assessment, not on the seller's last tax bill.**

- **The answer to the number question is not at the state but at the county.** The administrative rule for the exemption was read end to end and **mentions no identification number anywhere**; but the **county** takes the application and **no county's published document list could be read**. In Hoover that is a question to ask **of two counties separately**. **Whether the filing deadline differs at county level was also not verified.**

The one-line summary of this list: in Hoover almost every question starts with **looking up your address**, and on one item **even that is not enough**, because the water and sewer boundaries do not respect the county line.



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