

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · MINNESOTA

How to Get a Driver License in Minnesota: 2026 Guide

The card does not reveal your status, and statute forbids it. But the card you can fly on is stamped, and the fee is identical, so the choice is not about money.

SHORT ANSWER

Minnesota issues driver licenses regardless of immigration status, and what you get is not a separate product but an **ordinary standard license**; statute forbids that card from carrying **any indicator or design relating to the holder's lawful presence or citizenship**. That is half the answer. The other half: **you cannot fly on that card**, and the card you can fly on is **stamped**. A federally compliant card issued to someone with temporary lawful status is marked **"temporary"** on the face and in the machine-readable portion, and it expires **on the last day of your stay**. **Both cards cost \$27.75**, so the choice is not about money: it is a **trade between privacy and usability**.

Separate the two cards up front, because this is the table that matters

Minnesota does not offer a single card that both shows nothing and works federally. If you are on H-1B, F-1, L-1 or a similar temporary status, you make a choice at the counter.

ITEM	STANDARD CARD	FEDERALLY COMPLIANT CARD
Does status show on the card	No. Statute forbids any indicator or design relating to lawful presence or citizenship	Yes. A holder with temporary lawful status gets a card marked "temporary" on the face and in the machine-readable portion
Can status be asked about	No, statute forbids the question	Yes, and it is required: proof of lawful status is requested
Domestic flights, federal buildings	No. The card reads "not for federal identification"	Yes
Term	4 years	The last day of your legal stay; one year after issuance if that day is not identified
Fee	\$27.75	\$27.75, identical
Enhanced license	Not an option	U.S. citizens only

So the price of privacy is a card that does not work at the airport, and the price of usability is a card that carries a stamp on its face and expires with your visa. We read this split in [the statute that governs what appears on the card](#): the prohibition for the standard card and the stamp on a temporary holder's compliant

card sit in **two separate paragraphs of the same section**. In some states in this series everyone on temporary status received the same banded card as an undocumented applicant; in Minnesota there are two cards, and each one has a cost.

THE REVERSE TRAP: DOCUMENTING YOUR STATUS GETS YOU A SHORTER CARD

- The ordinary card runs **four years**. But the section that sets the expiration date says a license issued to a person with temporary lawful status expires on **the last day of that person's legal stay in the United States**, or **one year** after issuance if that last day is not identified.
- **The practical result is counterintuitive:** someone who arrived on a visa and documented their status can receive a **shorter** card than someone who never documented status at all. This is not a drafting slip, it is the scheme the statute sets up.
- **What to do:** put the expiration date on your calendar the day you get the card, and plan the renewal in the same file as the extension of your status document. An error on your I-94 feeds straight into the term of your card.
- The card expires **on your birthday in the fourth year** after the year of issuance, and can be renewed before expiration or **within one year** after it.

The no-questions rule is real, but it is not absolute

The application section says three things. First, the licensing agency and an authorized license agent **must not inquire** about an applicant's citizenship, immigration status or lawful presence. Second, the application form **may not record** which document was used to prove identity, and may not permit a determination of citizenship, immigration status or lawful presence. Third, and this is the part most easily missed, the prohibition operates in the statute's own words **except as provided in two specific paragraphs**, and those two paragraphs are the federally compliant card and the enhanced license.

- **On a standard card application, status cannot be asked about.**
- **On a federally compliant card application, proof of lawful status is already required and can be asked about.**
- **The enhanced license requires U.S. citizenship**, so a noncitizen cannot apply for it at all.
- That is why this guide does not say "Minnesota never asks about status." **The prohibition is real, but it applies to one card only.** Bring your documents to a compliant card appointment.

No Social Security number required, but a residence address is

A paragraph of the same section provides that the application include the number, and that an **applicant without a number declare that they elect not to furnish one**. So there is no number requirement for an identification card, an instruction permit or a standard Class D license. What is required is **a residence address in Minnesota**: the card is issued only to someone with a Minnesota residence address at the time of application. A **temporary mailing address** can be given for delivery of the card, but all other correspondence goes to the residence address, and **the card is not delivered to a forwarded address**. For a newcomer that is a concrete warning: if you set up mail forwarding, the card will not reach you. Every application is signed **under penalty of perjury**; only applications that require proof of lawful presence are signed in front of an official or notarized.

Documents: open the list once more before your appointment

- For a standard card the agency's document rule is **two documents from the primary list, or one primary plus one secondary**, with one of them showing full name and date of birth.
- The primary list includes an **unexpired international passport** (foreign or U.S.) and a photo **consular identification document** issued by any country. The document a Turkish applicant almost certainly holds sits at the top of that list.
- Secondary examples include a Minnesota property tax statement, a mortgage document for the residence, and a state unemployment insurance payment document.
- A **certified translation** is required for any document not in English, and **no proof of insurance is required at the time of application**.
- For an applicant who cannot obtain a required document at all, or is still waiting for it, the agency runs a **variance process**; ask about it before you book.
- **We give this list with a caveat:** the licensing division's own pages and document list did not open by any route during research, and we could read the list only indirectly. So treat it as **likely rather than certain**, and confirm it from [the driver and vehicle services division](#) before your appointment. The fees and card rules, by contrast, come straight from statute.

Fees: all of them are in statute

TRANSACTION	FEE
Class D license, compliant or standard	\$27.75 (identical either way)
Enhanced license, Class D (citizens only)	\$42.75
Instruction permit	\$11.25
State identification card	\$17.25
Duplicate card	\$12.75
Technology surcharge added to all of the above	+\$2.25
Filing fee, new application / renewal	+\$16.00 / +\$11.00
Motorcycle endorsement, first / renewal	+\$26.50 / +\$17.00
Knowledge test after two consecutive failures	\$10
Veteran with a total service-connected disability	License, endorsement, filing and identification fees are not charged

A realistic first outlay: an instruction permit at \$11.25 plus \$2.25 plus \$16.00, that is **\$29.50**; then the Class D license at \$27.75 plus \$2.25 plus \$16.00, that is **\$46.00**. Credit and debit cards are accepted, but an agent may add a **convenience fee** that does not exceed the card processing cost. That is also why the filing fees exist: Minnesota deliberately runs counter work through county offices and privately operated agents. **We**

publish no office address in this guide, because the agency's office locator did not open during research; get the address from the agency's own page.

Tests, the language of the test, and a Turkish license

- A license requires **a knowledge test and a road test**; an identification card requires no test.
 - The state is required to run an **online knowledge test** through licensed driver education programs and authorized organizations.
 - A statutory provision directed the agency to apply plain language standards by **February 1, 2025** and to rewrite the knowledge test **in clear, simplified language geared to the reader's needs**. For a reader whose first language is not English that is a concrete accommodation.
 - **We could not verify whether the test is offered in Turkish.** The plain language provision defines the written test as the portion administered **in English** and does not count versions in other languages, and the agency's language list did not open by any route. **We are not saying Turkish is unavailable, we are saying we could not find out.** Ask about language and interpreters when you book, and ask for the answer in writing.
 - **We also could not find whether a Turkish license brings any exemption.** We could not read an official page showing that Minnesota waives the knowledge or road test for a valid foreign license holder, and we could not verify a reciprocity arrangement with Türkiye. How many days a newcomer may drive on a Turkish license is in the same position.
 - **One warning:** when you get a Minnesota license you may be asked to **surrender** another license or identification card you hold. If you have anything pending that depends on your Turkish card, handle it before the appointment and ask in advance what happens at the counter.
- 1 Decide which card you want.** Since the fee is identical this is not a money decision; you are choosing between a card that carries no status indicator but does not work at the airport and a stamped compliant card.
 - 2 Establish your Minnesota residence address,** and remember the card is not delivered to a forwarded address if you set up mail forwarding.
 - 3 Prepare primary and secondary documents,** with a certified translation of anything not in English.
 - 4 Ask the agency about the test language,** not this guide, and ask for the answer in writing.
 - 5 If you are going for the compliant card, bring your status document.** The no-questions rule does not operate at that counter.
 - 6 If you are on temporary status, put the expiration day on your calendar;** the card expires on the last day of your stay.
 - 7 Carry your passport for flights.** The standard card is not an accepted document at the checkpoint.
 - 8 Keep the federal address obligation separate from the license.** The federal deadline is far shorter, and giving your address to the licensing agency does not satisfy it.



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