

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · NEW ORLEANS

How to Get a Driver's License in New Orleans: 2026 Guide

Turkey is not on the reciprocity list, and the consequence lands straight on your first month: an approved driving course is required. The card also carries a status marking.

SHORT ANSWER

A driver's license is **a state matter** and New Orleans has no separate rule of its own; the card is issued by the **Louisiana Office of Motor Vehicles**. **But first, the distinction that concerns you:** if you moved from another U.S. state you convert your license **within 30 days**; **if you came from Turkey that route is closed to you** and on paper you are a **first-time applicant**. The agency's reciprocity policy lists the countries it has agreements with and **Turkey is not on it**; the consequence is **an approved driving course**. Three other things in this document concern everyone: the **Limited-Term** marking on the card, which **green card holders carry too**; the **180-day** and **30-day** thresholds on your immigration document; and the fact that **photocopies are not accepted**. **Every decision touching your status can affect your immigration case; talk to a lawyer before your visit.**

First, separate the two paths

WHERE YOU ARRIVED FROM	THE AGENCY'S PATH
Another U.S. state	Transfer. The agency asks that the license be converted to a Louisiana license within 30 days of establishing residency here, and the old state license is surrendered and destroyed
Turkey	No transfer. In the agency's own language you are a first-time applicant : temporary instructional permit, approved course, knowledge test, road skills test and vision test

The sentence circulating online, that you simply transfer your license within 30 days, **is wrong for a person arriving from Turkey**. Still, put the 30 days on your calendar: housing, schools, banks and utility accounts all ask for state identification.

If you arrived with a Turkish license: the mandatory course

The agency's reciprocity policy lists the countries with agreements one by one: **Germany, Switzerland, Taiwan, South Korea and the Republic of Ireland**. **Turkey is not on that list**. The consequence is written in a second agency policy: **all first-time applicants, including first-time applicants presenting a foreign driver's license, must furnish proof of driver education training**, and **international driving permits are not accepted to waive the appropriate course**.

STEP	ACTION	STANDARD
1	Obtain a Temporary Instructional Permit	Required before taking the knowledge test, driving in behind-the-wheel training or taking the road test
2	An approved course: 6 classroom hours and 8 behind-the-wheel hours	For ages 18 and over; for ages 15 to 17 the load is 30 classroom hours and 8 behind-the-wheel hours
3	Knowledge test	Passing score 80 percent
4	Road skills evaluation	70 points or higher
5	Vision test	At the same visit

DO NOT OPEN THE SEALED ENVELOPE

- The school places the knowledge test and the completion certificate in a **sealed envelope**.
- **Only an employee of the motor vehicle agency or of an authorized tag agent may open it;** the customer or parent may not.
- If the envelope looks opened or tampered with, the file goes to the agency's training and certification unit. **Carry it as it is and do not open it out of curiosity.**
- The completion certificate becomes invalid **five years after the completion date;** finishing the course early and postponing the application for years does not work.
- **Whether any approved school teaches in Turkish could not be verified.** The agency keeps a separate list page for schools teaching in other languages; **the page's existence was measured, its contents could not be read.** Ask the school directly.

THERE IS A CONTRADICTION IN THE RECIPROCITY LIST, AND WE PICK NO SIDE

- The agency's **live policy document** (last revised August 1, 2026) adds **the Republic of Ireland** to the list.
- The **archived copy of the agency's web page dated March 10, 2026** gives the same list **with four countries** and does not include the Republic of Ireland.
- The difference in dates may explain it, but we **could not verify** whether the page has been updated today. **We publish both.**
- **For you nothing changes: Turkey is on neither list.**

The card shows your status

The agency's immigration policy (last revised March 10, 2026) says this: a license is normally valid for six years; but **if a non-permanent foreign national has less than six years of lawful presence remaining on the immigration documents,** the card is issued with a **variable expiration date pulled back to the last day of lawful presence** and the card shows Limited-Term. **The same policy also says it for lawful permanent residents:** the card expires six years from issuance **and still continues to bear that marking.** The sentence is repeated for refugees, asylees and nationals of certain island nations.

So in this state every non-citizen, green card holders included, carries that marking on the face of the card. It is not a restricted license; it is a regular passenger license and the marking only reflects status.

Thresholds, and two groups that get no card

- **On a first application:** your entry record or employment authorization document must have **at least 180 days** remaining. The agency says the application will otherwise be **denied**.
- **On renewal: at least 30 days** remaining on any document showing lawful presence is enough.
- A person who could not renew on time because the documents expired is **not charged a delinquent fee**.
- A person who filed a timely renewal or change of status and received an **automatic extension** is given a **180-day renewal**.
- **No card for visitors.** The policy table reads **no issuance by the agency** on the visitor and visa waiver rows. **The only exception is an issued employment authorization document.**
- The statuses Turkish readers most often hold appear on the **issuable** side of the table: work, investor, intracompany transfer, extraordinary ability, student and exchange statuses, along with spouses and children.

Documents, fees and two hard rules

ITEM	TERM	FEE
Basic license, through age 69	About six years , on your birthday	\$32.25
Basic license, age 70 and over	Same	\$18.75
Office service fee	Each transaction	Up to \$8.00 at some offices
Delinquent fee, under 70	If more than 10 days past expiration	\$15.00 , or \$10.00 by mail or online

- **For a foreign national only two primary documents are accepted:** the permanent resident card and **the passport of the country of nationality**.
- **A Social Security number is required:** the agency writes that the number is **collected on every license issued in this state**. If you do not have one, **a letter** from the Social Security Administration is required.
- Proof of residency and a second identification document (a photo work badge, a diploma, an insurance card and the like) are required.
- **Photocopies are not accepted.** That is the agency's own warning in capitals: originals or certified copies only.
- **The name must match on every document.** If it differs for a reason other than marriage, the application is refused until the documents are corrected.
- **There is no cushion on a late renewal:** the agency says there is **no grace period** on expired passenger licenses.

Test language and identification cards

- **This state does not give the exam in another language;** it allows the applicant to **bring their own translator**. The agency says an applicant who does not understand written English well may bring a translator to assist with knowledge tests **other than the commercial license exam**. **You find the translator yourself;** the agency publishes no list of names.

- The site's language channel consists of machine translation links and an image for a telephone interpreting service. **How that actually works at the counter could not be verified.** Do not read an important sentence from a machine translation.
- **Identification card:** a person who will not drive can still get a state identification card. A first application takes one primary plus two secondary documents, or two primary documents, or a valid Louisiana license, plus proof of Louisiana residency.
- **There is a no-expiration card for age 60 and over**, but it is issued only in a form that is **not valid for federal identification**; if you need federal flight identification the card must carry a six-year term.

WHERE YOUR INFORMATION GOES, AND WHY WE PUBLISH NO OFFICE COUNT

- In some states in this series the agency had a **protection sentence** saying it does not share this information with the immigration agency. **No such sentence was found in Louisiana.**
- What was found points the other way: immigration documents are **verified for status** before a card is issued, and in one status section **entry records are entered into the federal verification system. We do not say none exists; we say research found no protection sentence.**
- **We do not publish the number or addresses of offices in this city:** the office network runs on two layers (the agency's own offices plus authorized Public Tag Agents) and no machine-readable list of either **could be found.** Check the agency's own site for appointments and **call before you go.**
- One more sentence is worth noting: among male applicants aged 15 to 26, **those who are U.S. citizens** are automatically registered with the federal selective service system when a card is issued. **A non-citizen is not swept into that registration**, and it is an entirely separate matter from military obligations in Turkey.

How heavy the consequence is in this city

The good news: New Orleans is **the community in this state best suited to a first year without a car.** The same agency operates **the buses, the streetcars and the ferry** together, a single ride is **\$1.25**, a 31-day pass is **\$45.00**, and a **\$1.25** route runs to the airport. **Even so, enroll in the course in week one:** course schedules can run for months, and items like the property tax exemption and a library card ask for state identification.

- 1 **Talk to your lawyer first.** Which document gets you which card depends on your status.
- 2 **Check the time remaining on your document:** at least 180 days for a first application, at least 30 days on renewal.
- 3 **Start the number in week one;** if you are not eligible, get the letter from the Social Security Administration.
- 4 **Get the temporary instructional permit before the course.** Reverse the order and your enrollment is useless.
- 5 **Enroll in week one** and ask about fees, the classroom schedule, how far out the behind-the-wheel hours open, and whether the school supplies the car.
- 6 **Carry the sealed envelope to the counter unopened.**
- 7 **Bring originals;** photocopies are not accepted and the name must match on every document.

8 For the full set of statewide rules see [the driver license section of our Louisiana guide](#).



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN NEW ORLEANS

Have a question about your immigration status?

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