

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · OHIO

Ohio Vehicle Title, Registration, Tax and Inspection Guide 2026

Three bodies for three errands, an \$18 title but an 8% tax, the six-month exemption, the narrow E-Check program and compulsory insurance.

SHORT ANSWER

First, a correction: in Ohio, go to the BMV is the wrong sentence. **Three separate bodies do three separate jobs.** A **driver exam station** tests you, a privately operated **deputy registrar** agency sells the card, the plates and the registration, and the **county clerk of courts** title office issues the vehicle **title**. The order is fixed: **title first, then registration and plates**, both inside the same 30 days. And the real money at the counter is not the \$18 title fee, it is the **sales and use tax**.

THREE ERRANDS, THREE BODIES, THREE SEPARATE DOORS

ERRAND	BODY	NOTE
Knowledge, vision and road tests	A driver exam station run by the State Highway Patrol	Knowledge test and vision screening are walk-in; the in-car test is by appointment only
Card, plates and annual registration	A privately operated deputy registrar agency	You join the queue remotely with Get In Line, Online, but the BMV states plainly that this is not an appointment
The vehicle title	The county clerk of courts title office	An out-of-state title can be converted at any county title office; an appointment is not required but the office recommends one

What happens in what order

- 1 Title, at the county clerk of courts.** You convert the out-of-state title to an Ohio title. The title fee is **\$18** statewide and **\$23** in counties where local officials approved a surcharge. A vehicle brought in from out of state also needs an **\$8 inspection** (VIN and odometer check).
- 2 Registration and plates, at a deputy registrar.** What to bring: the Ohio title, memorandum title or electronic title receipt; an Ohio license, an Ohio ID card **or proof of a Social Security number**; a tax number if the vehicle is titled to a company; the lease and a power of attorney if it is leased; an **E-Check certificate** if you are registering in a county that requires one; and a notarized power of attorney or form **BMV 5736** if a co-owner is not present.

- 3 Pay the annual registration.** Passenger registration is **\$36.00** a year, plus an **\$8.00 deputy registrar fee** for one year (\$12 for 2 years, \$16 for 3, \$20 for 4, \$24 for 5), plus the local **permissive tax** your taxing district sets in \$5 increments, capped at **\$30 per vehicle**.
- 4 Budget for the fuel-type surcharge.** Hybrid **\$100**, plug-in hybrid **\$150**, electric **\$200** a year. The electric vehicle surcharge is among the highest in this series.
- 5 Do not run late.** A renewal more than 30 days late adds a \$10 late fee. A plate or registration transfer is \$9.00, a duplicate registration \$9.00, a sticker replacement \$9.00, a two-plate replacement \$16.25 and a temporary tag \$23.00.
- 6 If you are shipping a car from Türkiye,** an imported vehicle is titled only once **compliance with federal motor vehicle safety standards is proven**. The office asks for the bill of sale and the foreign title or registration document among the paperwork.

The big number is not the title fee, it is the sales tax

The state rate is **5.75%** and each county adds its own. In **Franklin County**, where Columbus sits, the **combined rate is 8.00%**, and there is a trap inside that figure: the rate **rose from 7.50% to 8.00% on April 1, 2025**, when COTA's additional 0.5% sales tax took effect. **Every source online that says 7.5% for Columbus is out of date**. In practice: on a \$15,000 car bought in Columbus you pay roughly **\$1,200** in tax at the title counter.

TAXING DISTRICT	RATE
Franklin County (Columbus)	8.00% (up from 7.50% on April 1, 2025)
The part of Delaware County inside COTA	8.00%
The part of Fairfield County inside COTA	7.75%
The part of Licking County inside COTA	8.25%
The part of Union County inside COTA	8.00%

The COTA taxing district is not the same thing as Franklin County: the four counties above pay a higher rate inside COTA than the rest of the same county does. Two addresses in the same county can therefore owe different vehicle tax. Check the rate by **county and taxing district**, not by city name; the table is published quarterly and the figures here are for October 1 to December 31, 2026. One point we could not confirm: no official page says explicitly whether motor vehicle tax follows the buyer's county of residence or the seller's location. Assume your county of residence and registration, and confirm at the title office.

THE SIX-MONTH RULE: THE MOST VALUABLE LINE HERE FOR A NEWCOMER FROM TÜRKIYE

- The Ohio Department of Taxation says on its own page that **no additional Ohio sales tax is due if the vehicle was purchased at least six months before moving to Ohio**, and that you use the **CV exemption code** at titling.
- A vehicle bought **less than six months** before the move is taxable, though a credit may be available. Credit is generally given for sales or use tax lawfully paid to another state or jurisdiction; you show proof of payment to the clerk of courts, and if the tax paid elsewhere equals or exceeds the Ohio tax, no additional tax is due.
- The result: if you are bringing in a car you have owned for **more than six months**, from Türkiye or from another state, **you pay no sales tax**, only the \$18 or \$23 title fee, the \$8 inspection and the registration. Keep the document showing the purchase date and ask for the **CV exemption code by name** at the counter.
- **On a private sale, report the price honestly.** The Department of Taxation reviews non-dealer sales and sends an electronic questionnaire to buyer and seller to verify the price. Misstating the price is an offense under ORC 2921.13, punishable by up to six months in jail, a \$1,000 fine or both. Tax help line **(888) 405-4039**.

Inspection: there is no general safety inspection

- Ohio has **no statewide periodic safety inspection** for ordinary passenger vehicles. The only inspection on a newcomer's path is the **\$8 out-of-state vehicle inspection** done when a car from elsewhere is titled.
- On emissions there is **E-Check**, and its scope is narrow: only seven northeast Ohio counties, namely **Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, Portage and Summit**. The Cleveland and Akron area is in; **Franklin County and the whole Columbus area are out**, so no emissions test is needed to register a vehicle in Columbus.
- In 2026 the program tests even-model-year vehicles plus odd-model-year transfers without a valid test, using an OBDII computer scan.
- With one caveat: **on September 29, 2026 the Governor directed Ohio EPA to begin the process of ending E-Check in northeast Ohio**, on the grounds that the federal EPA reclassified the region in June 2026 as attaining the ozone standard. But the program **must remain in force until the federal government approves the request**, so it still applies today. We could not read the body of the announcement; if you live in northeast Ohio, check the current position on [Ohio EPA's E-Check page](#) before you register.

Insurance is compulsory and Ohio verifies at random

The minimum liability coverage is **\$25,000** for bodily injury or death of one person, **\$50,000** for two or more, and **\$25,000** for property damage (25/50/25). Insurance is a legal requirement for operating any motor vehicle in Ohio, and an owner may not let an uninsured person drive their vehicle. Proof of insurance must be produced **at traffic stops, at crash scenes and at vehicle inspections** (ORC 4507.212 and 4509.101). On top of that Ohio runs a **random selection** verification program and suspends the license of a driver who cannot show coverage. Driving uninsured costs \$40 the first time, \$300 for a second within a year and \$600 for a third. For impaired driving or administrative suspensions issued from April 9, 2025 the reinstatement fee is \$315.

Toll roads

Ohio's toll road is the **Ohio Turnpike** and it runs through northeast Ohio; there are no toll roads in the Columbus area. For title corrections and cancellations, the BMV Title Support Section is at PO Box 16520, Columbus OH 43216-6520, asktitles@dps.ohio.gov, **614-752-7671**.

Fee and rate tables are updated periodically. Before you transact, check the [BMV fee page](#) and the [Ohio Department of Taxation rate tables](#). Information as of October 6, 2026.



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