

CHECKLIST · SAN DIEGO

Moving to San Diego Checklist: The First 90 Days

What newcomers should do, in order, with deadlines and where to do it. Print it and check items off.

SHORT ANSWER

If you are subject to the address-reporting requirement, report your new address to USCIS within 10 days. Once you are a California resident, your previous license is good for only 10 days, so look for a DMV appointment right away. Pay your car's California registration fees to the DMV within 20 days. In San Diego, SDG&E handles electricity and gas, and Environmental Services with the Get It Done app handles trash and recycling. MTS/NCTD transit fares rise on October 1, 2026, so budget for it early.

First 10 days

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Report your address to USCIS (AR-11)	As a general rule, required for most noncitizens, including green card holders; A and G visa holders and Visa Waiver visitors are exempt. uscis.gov/addresschange
☐ Book a DMV appointment for your California license	You have only 10 days from establishing residency (California Vehicle Code section 12505). dmv.ca.gov office locator
☐ In immigration court? File EOIR-33	Within 5 days: respondentaccess.eoir.justice.gov
☐ ICE check-in obligations?	Update ICE too: portal.ice.gov
☐ Change your address with USPS	Separate from USCIS; one does not update the other.

First week

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Electricity and gas	SDG&E handles both: 1-800-411-7343. An SSN is optional online but affects whether a deposit is charged; without one, expect to apply in person.
☐ Trash, recycling and organics	San Diego uses three bins: black (trash), light blue (recycling), green (organics). Trash and organics are collected weekly, recycling every other week, Monday-Friday 6am-5:30pm. Request a bin or report a problem through Get It Done: sandiego.gov/get-it-done or 858-694-7000.

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ School enrollment	sandiegounified.org/Enrollment
☐ Library card	San Diego Public Library is free to California residents and to anyone who owns property in the city; non-residents pay \$32.50 a year. Applications are in person only, at a branch.
☐ SSN application (if eligible)	Start online, then visit an SSA office: ssa.gov

Within 20 days

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ California car insurance	At least \$30,000/\$60,000/\$15,000.
☐ Smog check	Required for most gasoline vehicles; the certificate is valid 90 days after testing.
☐ Vehicle registration	DMV, Form REG 343, your previous state's title or registration, and a REG 31 Verification of Vehicle.
☐ SANDAG FasTrak account (if you drive the I-15 Express Lanes or SR-125)	\$40 minimum prepaid balance: myfastrak.511sd.com

Within 90 days

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Homeowners' exemption (if you bought a home)	The Homeowners' Exemption takes \$7,000 off your home's taxable value, roughly \$70 a year in actual savings. File Form BOE-266 by February 15. San Diego County ARCC: (619) 236-3771.
☐ Renting? Know your rent-increase cap	The statewide AB 1482 rent cap for the San Diego region runs about 8.2% for the 2026-27 cycle. The City of San Diego's own tenant protection rules (Municipal Code Chapter 9, Article 8, Division 7) require just cause from the first day of the tenancy.
☐ Budget for the transit fare increase	MTS/NCTD one-way fare rises from \$2.50 to \$3.00 on October 1, 2026, and the monthly pass from \$72 to \$85; riders on CalFresh, Medi-Cal or CalWORKs can apply for PRONTO LIFE, which keeps today's \$2.50 and \$72 prices.
☐ Turkish citizens: consulate services	San Diego has no consulate of its own; the Turkish Consulate General in Los Angeles (Beverly Hills, about 120 miles away) serves the area. Appointments at konsolosluk.gov.tr

IF YOU ARE NOT A U.S. CITIZEN

- Never check "U.S. citizen" on any form, and never register to vote.
- Since January 1, 2026, adults 19 and older without a satisfactory immigration status can no longer newly enroll in full-scope Medi-Cal; new applicants in that group get restricted-scope coverage (emergency and pregnancy care only). Children and pregnant people are not affected.
- Talk to an immigration attorney before applying for Medi-Cal or any public benefit: a new public charge rule has been in effect since September 18, 2026.
- Only U.S. citizens may vote or serve on a jury in California; if San Diego Superior Court sends you a jury summons and you are not a citizen, use the Disqualification Section of the online Juror Portal.
- Check your I-94 at i94.cbp.dhs.gov. Your license term and work authorization depend on it.
- With a green card application pending, do not travel abroad without advance parole.



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN SAN DIEGO

Have a question about your immigration status?

Attorney Asim Clinch serves clients in San Diego and the surrounding area, in Turkish and English.

Free evaluation: clinchlaw.com/free-evaluation · +1 866-491-7669

Office: 321 N Central Expy, Ste 206, McKinney, TX 75070

Attorney responsible for this guide: Asim Clinch, Esq., Clinch Law Firm P.C. Attorney Asim Clinch is a member of the Missouri Bar (No. 76084) and practices U.S. federal immigration law.

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