

CHECKLIST · SAN JOSE

Moving to San Jose 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; that step includes California insurance and a smog check if required. In San Jose, PG&E delivers electricity and San Jose Clean Energy supplies it (you will see both names on one bill). Water comes from one of three companies depending on your address, trash collection from one of the city's contracted haulers, and San Jose 311 covers city services.

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). There are four offices around San Jose: 111 W Alma Ave, 180 Martinvale Ln, Santa Clara and Los Gatos. dmv.ca.gov , San Jose office
☐ In immigration court? File EOIR-33	Within 5 days: respondentaccess.eoir.justice.gov . The San Francisco Immigration Court closed on September 4, 2026; your hearing notice says which court and address apply to you, and earlier San Francisco cases may now sit under the Concord court.
☐ 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	Open a PG&E account (pge.com). San Jose Clean Energy (SJCE) supplies the electricity by default while PG&E runs the grid and sends the single bill; you do not sign up with SJCE separately, you are enrolled automatically. The default plan is GreenSJ (62% renewable); TotalGreen is 100% renewable and a paid upgrade, and you may opt out. SJCE: 833-432-2454. According to PG&E's help pages, alternate ID can be used if you have no SSN, and a deposit may be charged; call PG&E if needed. sanjosecleanenergy.org
☐ Water	Three companies serve San Jose, depending on your address: San Jose Municipal Water System (the city, (408) 535-3500), San Jose Water (private, (408) 279-7900, request service at least 2 business days ahead) and Great Oaks Water (private, (408) 879-8246). If you do not know which one serves you, call (408) 535-3500 or use the city's address lookup. sanjoseca.gov
☐ Trash, recycling and junk pickup	The city works with contracted haulers (Recycle Plus); find your hauler and pickup day through the city's address lookup or (408) 535-3500. For single-family homes the charge appears on the county property tax bill; renters usually pay through rent. San Jose has no separate food scrap (compost) bin: all trash goes to a facility that recovers organics. Single-family homes get unlimited free junk pickup by appointment.
☐ City services (San Jose 311)	311 (inside the city), (408) 535-3500 or the "San Jose 311" app. You can report an issue with a photo and track the request.
☐ Clipper card	For VTA, Caltrain, BART and most regional transit: vta.org/go/fares
☐ School enrollment	Find your district by address first: SCCOE district locator . SJUSD Enrollment Center: 855 Lenzen Ave, (408) 535-6412.
☐ SSN application (if eligible)	Start online, then visit an SSA office; an appointment is generally needed: 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.
☐ FasTrak account (if you use Express Lanes or bridges)	The Silicon Valley Express Lanes (SR 237, US 101) require a FasTrak tag: vta.org/go/express-lanes . Bay Bridge and other state bridges: bayareafastrak.org . Golden Gate Bridge: goldengate.org .

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; the filing deadline is February 15. Confirm the filing process and current rules on the Santa Clara County Assessor's site. When you buy a home in San Jose you also pay county and city transfer taxes; see the county Clerk-Recorder fee schedule.
☐ Renting? Check San Jose's rent rules	The Apartment Rent Ordinance limits increases to 5% per 12 months for apartments in buildings of 3 or more units built and occupied before September 7, 1979. The Tenant Protection Ordinance requires a just cause to evict in buildings with 3 or more units. Duplexes and single-family homes are generally covered only by state law (AB 1482). See the city's rent stabilization page: sanjoseca.gov, rent stabilization
☐ Library card	San Jose Public Library, free to California residents; a photo ID plus proof of your California address gets a full-access card, and without proof of address you can get a limited card. sjpl.org
☐ Starting a business? San Jose business tax registration	Anyone doing business in San Jose, including the self-employed and home-based, needs a Business Tax Certificate within 90 days of starting. The city's amnesty program for unregistered businesses runs through December 31, 2026. sanjoseca.gov, business tax registration
☐ Turkish citizens: consulate services	There is no consulate in San Jose. The Turkish Consulate General in Los Angeles (Beverly Hills) serves all of California; 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. Santa Clara County's health system (Santa Clara Valley Healthcare) states that its hospitals and clinics are open to everyone and do not ask about immigration status; the county's Healthcare Access Program helps uninsured patients, so check the county's site for the conditions and income limits before you apply.
- Since April 1, 2026, refugees, asylees, parolees and some other groups can no longer get federal CalFresh (food assistance); most green card holders remain eligible. New work requirements for some applicants also took effect June 1, 2026.
- Talk to an immigration attorney before applying for Medi-Cal, CalFresh or any public benefit: a new public charge rule has been in effect since September 18, 2026.
- 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 JOSE

Have a question about your immigration status?

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

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