

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · SEATTLE

Seattle Car Registration, Fees and Good To Go! Guide 2026

For people bringing a car from another state or abroad, buying a car in Seattle, or driving the SR 520 bridge and the SR 99 tunnel.

SHORT ANSWER

Washington license first, then registration within 30 days. Registration is not done at a DOL office but at a vehicle licensing office, **walk-in only**. In Seattle the county office is the King County Customer Service Center, 201 S Jackson St, 2nd floor (206-477-4000). Every car starts at a \$43.25 base fee, Seattle adds a \$50 transportation fee, and the Sound Transit RTA tax adds 1.1%. Emissions testing ended January 1, 2020.

Step by step

- 1 License first, then registration.** DOL wants a valid Washington license before it registers a vehicle. Vehicle licensing offices take no appointments, so you queue. Two offices, two separate 30-day clocks.
- 2 Documents.** Bring your current title and note the odometer reading. Done at an office, plates are issued the same day; by mail it can take up to 3 weeks.
- 3 If you bought the car,** transfer the title within 15 days. On day 16 a \$50 late fee starts, then \$2 a day, up to \$125.
- 4 Private sale.** You need the signed title, a Vehicle Title Application signed in front of the licensing agent, an odometer disclosure for model year 2011 and newer, and a bill of sale showing the price. Quick Title (\$89.50) cannot be used for an out-of-state vehicle.
- 5 A car shipped from abroad** must clear U.S. Customs, and the Customs paperwork (year, make, VIN) must be signed and stamped by Customs itself, not by a shipping broker.

Where do you register a car in Seattle?

OFFICE	ADDRESS · PHONE
King County Customer Service Center (the county's own office)	201 S Jackson St, 2nd floor, Seattle WA 98104 · 206-477-4000
Ballard Auto Licensing Agency	2232 NW Market St · 206-781-0199
Bill Pierre License Agency	12531 30th Ave NE · 206-361-5505
Georgetown License Agency	5963 Corson Ave S, Suite 162 · 206-767-7782

OFFICE	ADDRESS · PHONE
Rainier Vehicle and Vessel	3820 Rainier Ave S, Suite C
Seattle Auto License	2515 SW Trenton St, Suite 103 · 206-582-2747
University License Agency	5615 Roosevelt Way NE · 206-522-2166

Most subagents open around 9 a.m. on weekdays and some open on Saturdays. Hours vary and can change, so call before you go. King County keeps its [subagent list](#) up to date.

What does it cost in Seattle?

ITEM	AMOUNT
Basic registration fee	\$43.25
Annual tabs	\$30
Seattle transportation benefit district fee	\$50 per vehicle, every renewal
Sound Transit RTA excise tax	1.1% of depreciated MSRP
Filing and service fees	\$6 + \$11 for registration, \$12.50 + \$29 with a title
New plates (each)	\$50
Title application	\$15
Out-of-state service fee	\$50
Trip permit (3 days)	\$36

- **RTA tax:** if you live inside the Sound Transit district in King, Pierce or Snohomish county, you pay a 1.1% regional transit tax on the depreciated MSRP, at purchase and at every renewal. All of Seattle is inside that district. A new, expensive car makes the bill noticeably larger.
- **Use tax:** buy from a private party and you owe 0.3% motor vehicle use tax plus the sales tax rate at your address (10.55% in Seattle in the last quarter of 2026), calculated on fair market value.
- **New-resident exemption:** a private vehicle you acquired and used in another state more than 90 days before moving is exempt from use tax if you license it in Washington within 30 days. Whether a car brought from Türkiye qualifies is unclear; ask DOL and the Department of Revenue.
- **Tab renewal:** once a year, online, by mail or at an office. You cannot renew with unpaid tickets or unpaid tolls.

Is there an emissions test or safety inspection?

No. The state's emission check program ended on **January 1, 2020**, and no emissions test is required to renew registration. There is no periodic safety inspection for private cars either. Out-of-state vehicles get no physical VIN inspection; DOL runs an electronic stolen-vehicle screening.

How much insurance do you need?

COVERAGE	WASHINGTON MINIMUM
Bodily injury or death, per person	\$25,000
Bodily injury or death, per accident	\$50,000
Property damage	\$10,000

Driving uninsured brings a fine of \$550 or more. Carry your insurer's card. With no U.S. credit history your quotes may come back high, so shop several companies.

Good To Go! and the tolls

Every toll around Seattle is electronic: no booths and no cash on the bridge or in the tunnel, just a camera reading the plate. The cheapest way to pay is a free Good To Go! account with a \$5 sticker pass. With no account the bill goes to your DOL address and **Pay By Mail costs \$2 more per trip.**

ROAD	PASS RATE (2-AXLE)
SR 520 bridge (Seattle to Medina and Bellevue)	Weekdays \$1.35 to \$4.90 by time of day, charged in both directions
SR 99 tunnel (downtown)	Weekdays \$1.25 to \$2.80, calculated at the exit
I-405 and SR 167 express toll lanes	\$1 to \$15 depending on traffic
SR 509 Expressway (near Sea-Tac)	Weekdays \$1.20 to \$2.40

- **Account:** [MyGoodToGo.com](https://www.MyGoodToGo.com) or 1-866-936-8246 (free phone interpreter). No monthly fee. A sticker pass is \$5.
- **If you do not pay:** a \$5 late fee after the due date; a \$40 civil penalty per toll if it is still unpaid 80 days after the trip; then DOL puts a hold on your registration and you cannot renew your tabs.
- **Scam warning:** the only official site is [MyGoodToGo.com](https://www.MyGoodToGo.com). WSDOT says its texts come only from 75381 and that it never sends bills by text.

NOTE FOR IMMIGRANTS

After you move, update the address on your vehicle record and your Good To Go! account right away. Otherwise toll bills go to the old address and can run all the way to a penalty and a registration hold. If you are subject to address reporting, report the same move to USCIS within 10 days (AR-11).



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN SEATTLE

Have a question about your immigration status?

Attorney Asim Clinch serves clients in Seattle and the surrounding area, in Turkish and English. Free evaluation: clinchlaw.com/free-evaluation · +1 866-491-7669

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