

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · TAMPA

How to Get a Driver's License in Tampa, FL: 2026 Guide (FLHSMV, Hillsborough County)

For Tampa newcomers and drivers arriving with a Turkish license: documents, exams, fees and the Hillsborough County Tax Collector branches.

SHORT ANSWER

New Florida residents must get a Florida driver's license within 30 days of establishing residency. Since February 6, 2026, every knowledge and road exam is given in English only, with no interpreters or other-language exams. Florida waives its tests for licenses from only a few countries, and Türkiye is not one of them, so you will need to pass both tests. A first license costs \$48. In Hillsborough County the road test is given only at the Brandon, East Tampa and Plant City branches, by appointment only and only for Hillsborough County residents.

Florida's driver's license: the 30-day rule

- **How residency is established.** Starting a job in Florida, enrolling your child in a Florida public school, registering to vote, filing for a homestead exemption, or living in Florida more than 6 consecutive months all establish residency.
- **30 days.** Once residency is established, you have 30 days to get a Florida driver's license before driving on Florida roads.
- **Apply in person.** License and ID card applications are made in person at any office offering driver-license services; a vision test is given.

Since February 6, 2026: exams are English only

In a January 30, 2026 announcement, FLHSMV said that starting Friday, February 6, 2026, every driver's license knowledge (written) AND road (skills) exam, for every license class, is given exclusively in English, including exams administered orally. Previously, non-CDL knowledge exams were offered in several languages; now there are no interpreters and no printed exams in any language but English.

Arriving with a Turkish license

There is no reciprocity with Türkiye. Florida waives its tests only for licenses from other U.S. states and a few countries, and Türkiye is not among them. With a Turkish license you take the vision test, the knowledge exam and the road test, both exams in English.

NOTE FOR IMMIGRANTS

- Noncitizen applicants must show proof of lawful presence: an I-551 for green card holders, or a foreign passport with a valid visa and an I-94 record.
- If you provide an SSN, the name on your application must match Social Security Administration records; if you do not have one, a separate path applies depending on your eligibility.
- Original or certified documents are required, so gather them before you apply.

Fees (2026)

ITEM	FEE
Class E license (initial, includes learner's permit)	\$48
Commercial license (Class A)	\$75
License endorsement	\$7 each
ID Card	\$25

Some Florida counties add a local service fee on top of the state fees. We could not confirm whether Hillsborough County adds one or how much, so ask the branch for the total before you pay.

Hillsborough County Tax Collector branches (road test offered)

BRANCH	ADDRESS	ROAD TEST?
Brandon	3030 N. Falkenburg Road, Tampa, FL 33619 (the mailing address says "Tampa", but this is the Brandon branch)	Yes, by appointment, Hillsborough County residents only
East Tampa	2814 E. Hillsborough Avenue, Tampa, FL 33610	Yes, by appointment, Hillsborough County residents only
Plant City	4706 Sydney Road, Plant City, FL 33566	Yes, by appointment, Hillsborough County residents only

The Hillsborough County Tax Collector has other branches for license, ID and vehicle services, but the road test is given only at these three. Check hillstaxfl.gov for the other branch addresses and current hours. Main line: 813-635-5200. Driver-license services run weekdays 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; on Wednesdays the branches open at 9:00 a.m.

The road (driving-skills) test

- Offered only at the Brandon, East Tampa and Plant City branches.

- At all three it is by appointment only and only for Hillsborough County residents, with one attempt per day; book online at hillstaxfl.gov.
- The car you test in needs a valid plate, current registration and PIP and PDL insurance. Bring your learner's permit if you have one.

Common mistakes

- Counting the 30-day window from your move-in date rather than from when residency was actually established (job start, school enrollment, and so on).
- Assuming a Turkish license is exempt from testing and skipping exam prep.
- Going to a road test without an appointment; all three branches test by appointment only.
- Forgetting that road tests are open only to Hillsborough County residents.
- Searching the map for "Brandon, FL" and missing the branch; its mailing address is "Tampa, FL 33619" (3030 N. Falkenburg Road).



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN TAMPA

Have a question about your immigration status?

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

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