

CHECKLIST · TEXAS

Moving to Texas Checklist: The first 30 days (2026)

An ordered plan for the first 30 days: week one, the first month, and what to finish before day thirty. Four habits you brought from another state break here.

SHORT ANSWER

We open this list with four warnings, because each one breaks a habit brought from another state. First: **you have 30 days for the vehicle registration and 90 days for the driver license**, two clocks running at once, and the **\$90.00 new resident vehicle tax falls inside the same 30 days**. Second: **your address decides who you deal with**; the door for water, trash, taxes and complaints changes depending on whether you are **inside or outside city limits**. Third: **the sentence that you choose your own electricity in Texas is wrong**; the right to choose does not cover customers of cooperatives or of municipal utilities that have not opted in. Fourth: **if you buy a home, the obstacle to the homestead exemption is not your citizenship, it is the address on your identification**.

Deadlines in one table

TASK	DEADLINE	WHERE
Federal address report	10 days. A move inside the state also requires a report	From your online account or with Form AR-11, uscis.gov/addresschange
Report to the immigration court	5 days if you have a pending case. A contradiction: the regulation says five days, the agency's own page says five working days; act on the shorter one	On the court's own form, through the respondent access system . A separate form for each pending case
Vehicle registration	30 days after moving to the state	County tax assessor-collector. Start the insurance first
New resident vehicle tax	30 calendar days from the vehicle's first use in Texas. The amount is \$90.00	The same counter. The deadline is 60 days for active duty service members
Driver license	90 days after establishing residency. The burden of proof is on you	Driver license office by appointment; the online application comes before the appointment
Driving on a foreign license	Up to one year or until you become a Texas resident, whichever comes first	Ages 18 to 75 and private vehicles only
Life of a marriage license	It expires if no ceremony is held before the ninetieth day after it is issued. There is also a 72-hour waiting period	Any county clerk in the state; there is no county of residence requirement

TASK	DEADLINE	WHERE
Homestead exemption application	Before May 1 , generally between January 1 and April 30	The appraisal district of the county where the property sits, not the comptroller

Three rows in this table mislead readers often. First: **a change of address at the post office does not satisfy the federal report**, and no address you give at a driver license office or a school enrollment takes its place. Second: **if you have a pending court case, report to the court first and to the immigration agency second**; failing to give the court your address can let a hearing proceed in your absence. Third: **we do not say the paper address form is free**; that sentence appears in the four city guides, but the agency's pages could not be read this round and we could not verify it.

Week one

TASK	WHERE OR HOW
☐ File the federal address report within 10 days	uscis.gov/addresschange ; update the address on your pending case separately. With a court case it is 5 days and a separate form
☐ Find out which government your address falls under	Ask three questions: am I inside city limits, which county am I in, which special purpose districts am I inside . All three answers are in the deed record and on the appraisal district's search page
☐ Do not treat the city name in your mailing address as an administrative fact	Your envelope can carry a city name while your address sits outside that city, in the unincorporated area of the county; then your police are the sheriff, your trash is a private company and your water rule belongs to a water district
☐ Ask the right question when opening power service	Do not say I have no number . Ask this: what do you accept as alternative identification . No statewide answer could be measured and we write no firm sentence about a path without a number
☐ Find out which electricity regime you are in	The statute grants the right to choose to everyone except customers of cooperatives and of municipal utilities that have not opted in , so the regime depends on your address . Ask before you sign a lease
☐ Turn on weather alerts on your phone	The transportation agency's own sentence: flash flooding is the leading cause of weather-related deaths in Texas . Driving onto a closed road carries a fine of up to \$2,000.00 and up to 180 days in jail
☐ Open your driver license file	Complete the online application, then book the appointment. Verification can run for months and many things stall until the card arrives
☐ Start the insurance policy	Before registration and written to your Texas address . A policy opened in another state does not become valid automatically when you move

The first month

TASK	WHERE OR HOW
☐ Register the vehicle within 30 days	County tax assessor-collector. Go to the counter with your Texas driver license ; even a limited term one satisfies the identification list by itself
☐ Pay the \$90.00 new resident tax inside the same 30 days	The same counter. A person who never registered the vehicle in their own name pays use tax instead
☐ Check whether you are in an emissions county	Covered today: Brazoria, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Montgomery; Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant; Travis, Williamson; and El Paso. Bexar from November 1, 2026
☐ Enroll the children in school	The statutory list has three items and a number is not one of them. Age limit: ninety days applies only to a child under eleven, thirty days above that
☐ Apply for health coverage	Three routes run independently of status: the perinatal program established for an unborn child, emergency coverage , and the family planning program . Another women's health program does require status ; do not confuse the two
☐ Get a toll tag	Carry only one. In Fort Bend County there is no pay-by-mail route at all ; driving without a tag draws a citation directly
☐ Do two things before signing a lease	Read every clause set in bold and look for the submetered electricity clause . The security deposit is returned within 30 days of move-out
☐ Update every record that holds your address, one by one	The school district, the health program, a benefits file and your tag account do not update automatically . Mail forwarding does not take the place of a report

IF YOU BUY A HOME, KEEP THE ORDER

- **There is no citizenship requirement:** the statutory definition of a residence homestead looks only at **ownership** and **use as a principal residence**. Neither the statute nor the application form asks about citizenship, residence status or immigration status.
- **But the real obstacle is elsewhere:** a **copy of a driver license or state-issued personal identification certificate** must be attached to the application, and the statute's own sentence says the chief appraiser **may not allow** the exemption unless **the address on that document matches the address of the property**.
- The exemptions from the address match are narrow: **active duty military personnel and their spouses**, and holders of certain special licenses.
- **The correct order is closing, then the license address, then the exemption application.** Because verification on the license side can run for months, start this the moment the sale closes.
- **The amounts: \$140,000** against school district taxes and **an additional \$60,000** for those 65 and over or disabled; both have been in force since **November 4, 2025**.
- **Two official sources disagree on the late application window and we take no side:** the statute runs the period from the **delinquency date** (February 1), while the comptroller's form instructions run it from the **application deadline** (April 30). The form is about **nine months narrower** than the statute. Ask your county appraisal district.

MARRIAGE LICENSE: YOU CHOOSE THE COUNTY

- The statute's sentence: a couple intending to marry by ceremony obtains the license from the county clerk of **any county in this state**. **There is no county of residence requirement** and no requirement to use the county where the ceremony takes place.
- **On the number the statute's own phrase is if any**, and the **closed list** of grounds for refusing a license **does not include the absence of a number**.
- **A valid Turkish passport suffices by itself;** so does an original or certified copy of a Turkish birth certificate.
- **Watch the third condition for the course discount:** the applicant must **prove to the county clerk's satisfaction that they are a resident of this state**. Without a Texas license or state identification card the discount may not be applied.
- **And a provision that runs the other way:** if no applicant proves Texas residency, the clerk **may collect an additional \$100.00** for the license. The statute's word is **may**, so the choice belongs to the county. **Ask your own county.**

AT THE VITAL RECORDS UNIT THE SAME PASSPORT IS NOT ENOUGH

- The state vital records unit takes identification in **three tiers**: one document from the first group, or two from the second group, or one from the second group plus two from the third.
- **A foreign passport with a visa sits in the second tier**: it does not suffice alone and needs a second document beside it. **A passport without a visa appears on none of the lists.**
- **A Turkish birth certificate sits only in the third tier**, the weakest group. The same document suffices by itself for a marriage license, but here it is only supporting.
- **There is an oddity in the agency's own list and we take no side: a visa by itself is in the first group** (sufficient alone), while **a foreign passport with a visa is in the second** (not sufficient). Both appear in the agency's own text.
- **The contrast in one sentence**: the same person, with the same visa-bearing passport, **can obtain a marriage license** from a county clerk but **cannot obtain a birth certificate** from the state vital records unit. Prepare your second document before you go.
- **A permanent resident card is in the first group**, so a reader holding one already has a document that suffices alone.

Before day thirty

TASK	WHERE OR HOW
☐ Vehicle registration and new resident tax should be done	Both have a 30-day deadline and both are handled at the same counter
☐ School documents should be delivered	A parent's document deadline is 30 days after enrollment; ninety days only for a child under eleven born outside the United States
☐ Your driver license appointment should be booked	You have 90 days, but verification can run for months; book within the first 30
☐ Dated copies of every immigration report should be in your file	If you ever miss a hearing, that is the only thing you will have
☐ Answer a jury summons if one arrives	Ignoring a summons risks a fine of \$100.00 to \$1,000.00 . Talk to an immigration lawyer before you send the response

One closing note: this list covers what the state has in common. For rates, counters, fees and local rules go to your own city: [Dallas](#), [Houston](#), [Austin](#), [San Antonio](#).



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN TEXAS

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