

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · TUSCALOOSA

Registering a Car, Plates and the Toll Crossing in Tuscaloosa: 2026 Guide

The only toll facility in the state sits by this city and the state does not operate it. We write the structure of the yearly value tax and publish no figure for it.

SHORT ANSWER

Registration is handled by **the county license department**, and the department's own page states the requirements plainly: **before a vehicle is registered, the license or non-driver identification card of every owner on the vehicle is verified**. On the money side there are two items: the registration charges and **a tax on the value of the vehicle every year**. One multiplier in that tax is **your tax district**, and in this city the tax district is not the county but whether your address is **inside the city limits, in the police jurisdiction, or in the unincorporated part of the county**. **We publish no figure**, because the county rate could not be verified. And the item that sets this guide apart: **we open a toll section on this page alone among our Alabama guides**, because one of the facilities the federal inventory lists for the state sits by this city.

The counter and the identification it asks for

In the state revenue department's directory of county counters, the address given for this county is **2501 7th St., Suite 100, Tuscaloosa, AL 35401**, telephone **205-464-8233**. The county license department also keeps counters in towns outside the city; **confirm which counter keeps which hours from the department's own page**.

- The department's own text states the identification requirement more firmly than other counties do: **all owners on a vehicle must have their licenses and non-driver identification cards verified before the vehicle can be registered**. Most Alabama credentials can be verified electronically, **but a valid, unexpired out-of-state license or identification card has to be presented physically**.
- The same page asks you to bring **your valid license and your printed Alabama insurance card** so you are not delayed.
- **The same requirement is written at state level too**: the revenue department's mandatory insurance brochure says that, in addition to proof of insurance, **a valid state identification or license is required for every owner appearing on the title**. One phrase in the brochure can be read as covering a foreign license; **it was not explained in any other agency text in this research, so we do not write that registration can be completed with a foreign license**.

The yearly value tax: structure yes, figure no

In this state registering a car is not a single fee. The county department's own explanation splits the registration charge into three: the **plate fee** (which varies by plate type), a **\$1.25 issuance fee**, and the **yearly tax on value**, which in turn depends on **the market value of the vehicle and the owner's tax district**.

FEATURE	WHAT IT MEANS
Collected before the plate is issued	Budget for this item before you go to the registration appointment
It runs even if the vehicle is not driven	The department's own sentence: this is a property tax and it has nothing to do with use of the vehicle . A car sitting in a garage or parked on campus still generates it
Back assessments are possible	The department writes that back ad valorem tax can arise in some situations
Moving can change your tax district	The department's own warning: call if your address or insurance details have changed since the last renewal, because the amount on your renewal notice may be wrong . Even in a single-county city, moving from inside the city limits to outside them can change the district

We publish no figure and we say why plainly: one multiplier in the calculation is the county millage rate and **this research could not verify it**. Ask the county counter for your own rate.

A CONTRADICTION WE PRINT: TWO OFFICIAL PAGES DISAGREE ON A CLASS RATE

The state revenue department's **general property tax page** and its **vehicle valuation page** do not agree on one **class rate** that enters the calculation. Two official sources give two different rates for the same thing. **We take no side**; we have put both below and we ask you to **confirm at the counter** which one applies to your vehicle. The pages: [vehicle valuation](#) and [general property tax](#).

The registration order and the deadlines

- 1 Insurance first.** The policy must be **written for Alabama** and must begin **before** registration; the clerk checks insurance through the electronic verification system and asks for a **printed insurance card** if it cannot be verified.
- 2 Then the title and the inspection.** For vehicles that require a title, the title application comes first; every time ownership changes, the license official or an authorized deputy **physically inspects the vehicle**. There is no such inspection on a renewal.
- 3 The counter last:** the clerk collects the registration charges and the yearly value tax and issues the plate.

ITEM	DEADLINE OR RULE
A new resident bringing a car from another state	30 days
Buying a vehicle in Alabama	20 calendar days

ITEM	DEADLINE OR RULE
Late penalty	\$15 plus interest
Keeping the document in the vehicle	The statute requires the registration receipt to be kept in the vehicle; failing to produce it carries a fine of at least \$50
Plate renewal month	Set by the first letter of your surname ; table below
Renewal notice	The state department's own answer says many counties do not send one , and that not receiving a notice does not relieve the owner of the obligation
Emissions test	None. The state revenue department's own question and answer page states plainly that Alabama law does not provide for emissions testing of motor vehicles
Periodic safety inspection	Not found in the agency's list of registration prerequisites. We do not say there is none

The emissions line is one of the rare items in this series where we do not say **we could not find it**: the agency says in its own words that there is none. **But we do not say the same thing on the line right below it**, and we keep that distinction deliberately.

Your renewal month follows the first letter of your surname

Alabama plates are renewed **on a staggered schedule from January through November**. The state department does not publish the whole table on its own page; **the full table is published by this county's license department** and it matches the example the state department gives:

RENEWAL MONTH	SURNAMES BEGINNING WITH
January	A, D
February	B
March	C, E
April	F, G, N
May	H, O
June	M, I
July	P, L
August	J, K, R
September	Q, S, T
October	U, V, W, X, Y, Z
October and November	Commercial vehicles and certain specialty plates

- The table comes from **the county department's own page**; the state department's page does not carry the whole table, so we do not write that it is certain statewide.
- If a vehicle is in two names, the month follows the surname of **the person listed first on the registration**.

- **And the part that matters for a Turkish reader:** no equivalent for the Turkish-specific letters (Ç, Ğ, İ, Ö, Ş, Ü) was **found** in this table. It is likely that the letter as written on your document governs, **but we did not verify that**; have the counter confirm your renewal month.

The only toll crossing in the state sits by this city

We open this section on **this page alone** among our Alabama guides. Among the facilities the Federal Highway Administration's toll facility inventory lists for Alabama, one bridge sits by this city.

ITEM	WHAT THE FEDERAL INVENTORY RECORDS
Facility	Black Warrior Parkway Bridge , a bridge
Where	Over the Black Warrior river, between US-82 to the north and I-59
Operator	A private company (American Roads, LLC); not the state transportation department
Electronic toll	Alabama Freedom Pass
Rate structure	A flat toll ; for trucks, an additional \$0.50 per axle
Federal aid	Not a federally aided facility

LET US BE HONEST ABOUT FIGURES

- The inventory describes this bridge as flat-rate and gives an additional per-axle amount for trucks only; **it gives no toll amount for a passenger car**. The cover report of the dataset also carries the name of **an earlier year's compilation**. The per-axle amount above should be read as **the maximum the inventory records**, not as today's rate. **Get the current rate from the operator's own channel**.
- **There is no statewide toll road system**. The other facilities the same inventory lists for Alabama are not open-road highways either: each is a **bridge** or a **ferry**, and four of the bridges belong to the same private company. So there is no **buy one pass and use it everywhere** arrangement in this state.
- **Whether a free alternative crossing exists on the same route was not verified in this research**. Do not assume; run your route once in a map application with toll roads switched off and compare.
- **Do not click payment links that arrive by text message**. Messages claiming an unpaid toll are a common scam pattern; verify whether a balance exists at all **on the operator's own page**. **No official warning published by an Alabama agency on this was found in this research**; this advice is general caution.
- **If you will cross in a rental car, ask in advance** how the rental company bills tolls; many add a separate service charge per crossing.

Checklist for the counter

TASK	WHERE OR HOW
☐ Bring identification for every owner on the vehicle	A valid, unexpired license or identification card. An out-of-state credential has to be presented physically

TASK	WHERE OR HOW
☐ Bring your printed Alabama insurance card	The policy must be written for Alabama and must begin before registration
☐ Bring money for the yearly value tax	It is collected before the plate is issued and the amount depends on your tax district
☐ Confirm the class rate at the counter	Two official pages disagree on this rate and we take no side
☐ Ask for your renewal month and put it on the calendar	It follows the first letter of the surname; no equivalent was found for Turkish-specific letters
☐ Call the department when you move	Moving from inside the city limits to outside them can change your tax district
☐ If you will cross the toll bridge daily, work out the monthly cost	Buy the pass and pay through the operator's own channel ; the counterparty is not the state
☐ Close the registration properly if you sell the car	The tax runs even when the vehicle is not driven



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