

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · VIRGINIA BEACH

How to Get a Driver's License in Virginia Beach, VA: 2026 Guide (Virginia DMV)

For newcomers to Virginia Beach, applicants of any immigration status, and drivers arriving with a Turkish license: the Driver Privilege Card, testing, and the DMV offices in the city.

SHORT ANSWER

New Virginia residents have 60 days to get a license. For anyone who does not qualify for a standard license because of immigration status, Virginia's own solution is the Driver Privilege Card (DPC): no SSN is required and an ITIN is accepted, but it does require proof of Virginia-source income or dependent status. Türkiye is not one of Virginia's reciprocal countries, so a Turkish license holder still has to pass the knowledge and road skills tests, though Turkish is one of DMV's official knowledge-exam languages. Virginia Beach has two full-service DMV centers: Buckner (3551 Buckner Blvd) and Hilltop (1712 Donna Dr). The DMV Select inside City Hall does not process licenses, permits, or ID cards.

The 60-day rule and REAL ID

- **60 days.** Per Virginia's own page, "When you move to Virginia, you have 60 days to get a Virginia driver's license to legally drive here." A current CDL holder must get a Virginia CDL within 30 days.
- **REAL ID is optional.** A standard license is enough for voting, banking, and benefits, but since May 7, 2025, you need a REAL ID (the star-marked card) or a valid passport to board a domestic flight or enter a secure federal building or military base. The one-time REAL ID surcharge is \$10.
- REAL ID requires one proof of identity, two proofs of Virginia residency, one proof of legal presence, and proof of your SSN if you have one; all documents must be originals.

The Driver Privilege Card: no immigration status question

Virginia takes a different path from New Jersey's "Standard License open to everyone." Instead, it issues a separate credential, the **Driver Privilege Card (DPC)**, for residents who cannot meet the legal-presence requirement. In DMV's own words: "A driver privilege card is a driver's license for non-US citizens. It gives Virginia residents who are not citizens the opportunity to be a legal driver, without requiring proof of legal presence or U.S. citizenship."

- **Eligibility:** a non-US citizen Virginia resident; reported Virginia-source income in the past 12 months, or claimed as a dependent on a Virginia tax return; no suspended or revoked driving privilege in Virginia or any other state; at least **16 years 3 months** old (a learner's permit is available from 15 years 6 months).
- **No SSN required.** An SSN is verified if you have one; without one, an ITIN is accepted. Income is verified electronically with the Virginia Department of Taxation.

- **Not a REAL ID.** A DPC cannot be used to board a domestic flight or enter a secure federal building. DPC holders are not eligible for a CDL.
- **Documents:** the "Driver and Identification Privilege Card Application" form, two proofs of identity, two proofs of Virginia residency, proof of SSN or ITIN, and tax-return documentation. Foreign-language documents need a certified professional translation; all documents must be originals.
- **Fees and duration:** \$50 for the first card and each renewal; \$53 for a combined learner's permit and DPC. Valid up to 8 years (5 years if you are 75 or older, or subject to the Sex Offender and Crimes Against Children registry).
- **First-time applicants 18 and older:** pass the knowledge exam, get a learner's permit, then either complete a state-approved driver-ed course and pass the road skills test, or hold the permit at least 60 days and pass the road skills test.

NOTE FOR IMMIGRANTS

For a Driver Privilege Card, if your Turkish license is valid or expired less than a year ago, you can usually follow the exchange path instead of every first-time step. Because Türkiye is not on the reciprocity list, the knowledge exam, road skills test and vision screening still apply.

With a Turkish license: testing required, but Turkish is supported

- **Türkiye is not on the reciprocity list.** Virginia recognizes reciprocity only with Canada, France, Germany, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan (Taiwan applicants still take the knowledge test). In DMV's own words: "If you are age 18 or older and you hold a valid driver's license issued by a country other than Canada, France, Germany, Japan, South Korea, or Taiwan, you are not eligible for foreign reciprocity and must pass the two-part knowledge exam, road skills test and a vision screening." This applies to a Turkish license too.
- The good news: holders of a valid foreign license **may not have to hold a learner's permit for 60 days.**
- **Turkish is one of the official knowledge-exam languages.** DMV's knowledge exam is offered in Turkish alongside English, Arabic, Farsi, Russian, Vietnamese, and more than 20 others. The CDL HAZMAT exam is English-only.
- The road skills test itself is conducted in English; a translator or interpreter (at least 18, holding a valid U.S. license) may accompany you, though DMV does not provide one.
- Applicants under 18 cannot exchange a foreign license and must complete the entire process from scratch.

Road skills test: practical details

- Walk-in testing is available, but you must be present by 4:30 p.m. on weekdays or 11:30 a.m. on Saturdays.
- Requirements: Virginia residency, a completed CSMA 140 form, and a passed knowledge exam.
- Fail once or twice: retest after 2 days. Fail three times (knowledge or road): complete the relevant portion of a driver-education course before a fourth attempt.
- You supply the test vehicle (a rental or Zipcar is allowed if you are a named authorized driver); it needs a valid inspection sticker, plates, registration, and working brakes, belts, horn, lights, signals, mirrors, and speedometer.

Fees (2026)

ITEM	FEE
Driver's license (8-year, standard)	\$32
REAL ID surcharge (one-time)	\$10
Driver Privilege Card (first or renewal)	\$50
Combined learner's permit and DPC	\$53
Photo ID	\$2/year, \$10 minimum, \$16 maximum
License/ID change or replacement of a lost card	\$20

Payment: Visa, Mastercard, American Express, Discover, Apple Pay, Google Pay, cash, checks, and money orders are all accepted.

DMV offices in Virginia Beach

The city has two full-service DMV centers: Buckner and Hilltop. Go to one of them for a license, learner's permit, ID card, REAL ID, or DPC. The **DMV Select** inside City Hall handles vehicle transactions and E-ZPass on a walk-in basis, but it does not process driver's licenses, learner's permits, or ID cards, so do not go there for a license.

OFFICE	ADDRESS · HOURS
DMV Virginia Beach / Buckner	3551 Buckner Boulevard, Virginia Beach, VA 23453 · weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m. to noon
DMV Virginia Beach / Hilltop	1712 Donna Drive, Virginia Beach, VA 23454 · weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m. to noon
DMV Select (City Hall; vehicle transactions only, no licenses or IDs)	2401 Courthouse Drive, Building 1, Virginia Beach, VA 23456 · weekdays 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., walk-in
DMV Chesapeake	813 Greenbrier Parkway, Chesapeake, VA 23320 · weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m. to noon
DMV Norfolk / Military Circle	5745 Poplar Hall Drive, Norfolk, VA 23502 · weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m. to noon
DMV Norfolk / Widgeon Road	850 Widgeon Road, Norfolk, VA 23513 · weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m. to noon

An appointment is recommended for a first license, an ID card, a permit, a DPC, and an out-of-state or foreign transfer; book at dmv.virginia.gov/appointments. Hours are from DMV's location page; check them before you go.

Common mistakes

- Going to the DMV Select in City Hall for a license; it only handles vehicle transactions. Go to Buckner or Hilltop for a license.
- Confusing the standard license with the Driver Privilege Card and trying to fly domestically on a DPC; neither is a REAL ID on its own.
- Assuming Türkiye has reciprocity like Canada or South Korea and expecting to skip the tests.
- Confusing the 60-day license deadline with the separate 30-day deadline to title and register a vehicle; these are two different dates.
- Submitting incomplete proof of Virginia-source income or dependent status for a DPC application; income is verified electronically with the Department of Taxation.



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN VIRGINIA BEACH

Have a question about your immigration status?

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

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