

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · VIRGINIA STATE

Virginia Car Registration, Inspection and Toll Roads Guide 2026

For cars brought from another state or from Türkiye, cars bought in Virginia, emissions-inspection areas, and E-ZPass Virginia.

SHORT ANSWER

After moving to Virginia, you must first title your vehicle within 30 days, then register it within another 30 days; these are two separate deadlines. Get Virginia insurance first (minimums of \$50,000/\$100,000/\$25,000 since January 1, 2025), then handle title and registration at the DMV. Title costs \$15, and registration starts around \$30.75 a year depending on vehicle weight. In parts of Northern Virginia (including Fairfax County and the City of Fairfax), an emissions inspection is also required before you can first register. For toll roads, an E-ZPass Virginia account is the easiest option.

Step by step: title and registration

- 1 **Buy Virginia insurance.** Minimum coverage since January 1, 2025 is \$50,000 per person and \$100,000 per accident in bodily injury liability, plus \$25,000 in property damage (it was \$30,000/\$60,000/\$20,000 for 2022-2024 policies).
- 2 **Gather your documents.** A completed Application for Title and Registration, the prior state's title or registration card, proof of address, and proof of the purchase price if you bought the vehicle in the last 12 months.
- 3 **Title your vehicle within 30 days.** For a private sale of a vehicle already titled in Virginia, electronic title transfer is available online; no dealer needed.
- 4 **If you're in an emissions-inspection locality, get that done first.** It's required before registration unless your vehicle already has a valid emissions certificate less than 12 months old.
- 5 **Register at any DMV customer service center within 30 days.** Pay the fees and get your plates.
- 6 **Keep track of your annual safety inspection.** This is done at licensed private repair shops, not at DMV; call the Virginia State Police with questions.

Fees (2026)

ITEM	AMOUNT
Title (original/change/replacement)	\$15

ITEM	AMOUNT
Registration, passenger vehicle up to 4,000 lbs	\$30.75/year
Registration, passenger vehicle 4,001-6,500 lbs	\$35.75/year
Electric vehicle Highway Use Fee (on top of registration)	\$135.63
Sales and use tax	4.15% of sale price, minimum \$75
Insurance non-compliance fee	\$600
Late registration fee	\$10

Vehicles registered in an emissions-inspection locality pay an extra \$2 on top of the standard registration fee. Small multi-year discounts exist (2-year registration: \$3 off online/phone, \$2 off by mail/in person; 3-year registration: \$4 off online/phone, \$3 off by mail/in person), but vehicles garaged in an emissions locality and first-time registrations don't qualify for the 3-year discount.

Annual safety inspection and emissions inspection

TWO DIFFERENT INSPECTIONS

Every vehicle operated in Virginia must display a valid annual safety-inspection sticker; this is done at licensed private repair shops (not at DMV); call the Virginia State Police with questions: (804) 674-2000. A separate emissions inspection is required only before first registering a vehicle in these localities (unless you already have a valid emissions certificate less than 12 months old): the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William and Stafford; and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park. This is administered by the Department of Environmental Quality: 703-583-3900, or toll-free within Virginia at 1-800-275-3844.

Driving without a valid inspection sticker can lead to a ticket, a fine and a mark on your driving record.

The personal property (car) tax: a genuinely Virginia-specific feature

On top of the state DMV registration fee, the county or city where your vehicle is normally garaged separately charges an annual personal property tax (commonly called the "car tax"); the rate is set locally. A state law, the Personal Property Tax Relief Act (PPTRA), subsidizes the tax owed on the first \$20,000 of a personal (non-business) vehicle's assessed value; a vehicle assessed at \$1,000 or less owes no car tax at all (the registration fee still applies). Check your own county or city's Commissioner of the Revenue or Treasurer's office for the current rate.

Toll roads and E-ZPass Virginia

Tolling in Northern Virginia is split across several separate operators. E-ZPass Virginia (run by VDOT) is the statewide tag/account system; the Express Lanes on I-495, I-95 and I-395 are run by a private company

(Transurban); the I-66 Express Lanes have a separate operator; and the Dulles Toll Road is run by the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA). Express Lanes pricing changes with real-time traffic (dynamic pricing); check the relevant operator's own site or app for current amounts.

SYSTEM	DETAILS
E-ZPass Virginia (tag/account)	ezpassva.com · customer service 1-877-762-7824, weekdays 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Express Lanes (I-495 / I-95 / I-395)	Operated by Transurban, dynamic pricing; pay with an E-ZPass tag or Pay-By-Plate. Customer service 1-855-495-9777. Current rates: expresslanes.com
I-66 Express Lanes	The section outside the Beltway (66 Express Outside the Beltway) has its own operator; current rates at ride66express.com
Dulles Toll Road	Run by MWAA, accepts E-ZPass and Pay By Plate; current rates at dullestollroad.com

NOTE FOR IMMIGRANTS

Toll bills for untagged crossings go to the address on your vehicle registration, so update both your registration and your E-ZPass account after you move. If you're subject to the address-reporting requirement, you must also report your new address to USCIS within 10 days (AR-11).



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN VIRGINIA

Have a question about your immigration status?

Attorney Asim Clinch serves clients across Virginia, in Turkish and English. Free evaluation: clinchlaw.com/free-evaluation · +1 866-491-7669
Office: 321 N Central Expy, Ste 206, McKinney, TX 75070

Attorney responsible for this guide: Asim Clinch, Esq., Clinch Law Firm P.C. Attorney Asim Clinch is a member of the Missouri Bar (No. 76084) and practices U.S. federal immigration law.

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