

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · VIRGINIA STATE

How to Get a Driver's License in Virginia: 2026 Guide

For newcomers to Virginia, green card and visa holders, people without lawful presence status, and drivers arriving with a Turkish license: the standard license, REAL ID, the Driver Privilege Card, tests and fees.

SHORT ANSWER

You have 60 days after moving to Virginia to get a Virginia driver's license (30 days if you already hold a CDL). If you have lawful presence documents, you apply for the standard license; if you have an SSN, you provide it, and if not, proof of lawful presence is enough. If you cannot show lawful presence, there's the Driver Privilege Card: no SSN required, an ITIN is accepted, but you need to show Virginia-source income or be claimed as a dependent on a Virginia tax return. The knowledge test is offered in many languages including Turkish, but the road test is English only. There's no reciprocity with Türkiye, so both the knowledge test and the road test are required.

Before you start

- **Three separate deadlines.** After moving to Virginia, you have 60 days to get a license, 30 days to title your vehicle, and 30 days to register it. If you already hold a CDL, you also have 30 days to get a Virginia CDL.
- **REAL ID is optional.** A standard license is enough to vote, bank, and access federal benefits; REAL ID is required only to board a domestic flight or enter a secure federal building or military base (since May 7, 2025). You can upgrade anytime for a one-time \$10 fee.
- **No lawful presence status? There's the Driver Privilege Card (DPC).** It's a separate credential, not a "driver's license," but it lets you drive. It doesn't require proof of lawful presence or citizenship; if you have no SSN, an ITIN works instead. But you do need to have reported Virginia-source income in the last 12 months, or be claimed as a dependent on a Virginia tax return; this is verified electronically with the Virginia Department of Taxation.
- **A DPC doesn't work for flying or entering federal buildings,** and DPC holders can't get a CDL.
- **Turkish is on the knowledge-exam language list.** DMV's official language list includes Turkish alongside English, Arabic, Farsi, Russian, Vietnamese and more than 20 others. The road test itself is English only; a translator (at least 18 years old, holding a valid U.S. driver's license) may accompany you, though DMV doesn't provide one.
- **No reciprocity with Türkiye.** Only Canada, France, Germany, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan licenses are exempt from testing (Taiwan still requires the knowledge test). If you hold a Turkish license, you must pass both the knowledge test and the road test, but unlike a brand-new applicant, you may not have to hold a learner's permit for 60 days first.

Step by step (standard license, for lawful presence holders)

- 1 Gather your documents.** One proof of identity, two proofs of Virginia residency, one proof of lawful presence (a passport with a valid visa and I-94, a green card, or an EAD), proof of SSN if you have one, and proof of any name change. All documents must be originals.
- 2 Decide whether you want REAL ID.** If so, check the document list at dmv.virginia.gov before your appointment; a \$10 surcharge applies.
- 3 Check your foreign-license status.** If you hold a license from Canada, France, Germany, Japan, South Korea or Taiwan, you can apply to exchange it using Form DL 7; verification can take up to 15 days. If you're coming from anywhere else, including Türkiye, you'll book a DMV appointment for the knowledge test, road test and vision screening.
- 4 Take the knowledge test,** in Turkish if you want. Pass, and you get a learner's permit.
- 5 Take the road test.** Walk-ins are accepted; you must arrive by 4:30 p.m. on weekdays or 11:30 a.m. on Saturdays to test that day. You supply the test vehicle (it needs a valid inspection sticker, plates, registration, and working brakes/belts/horn/lights/signals/mirrors/speedometer).
- 6 If you fail,** you can retest after 2 days for the first or second attempt; after a third failure, you must complete the relevant part of a driver-education course before trying again.
- 7 Pay the fee and get your license.** A standard license is valid 8 years.

Driver Privilege Card (if you lack lawful presence status)

HOW TO GET A DRIVER PRIVILEGE CARD

- Non-U.S.-citizen Virginia residents can apply; no proof of lawful presence or citizenship is required.
- You need to have reported Virginia-source income in the last 12 months, or be claimed as a dependent on a Virginia tax return; this is verified electronically with the Virginia Department of Taxation.
- Documents needed: the application form, two proofs of identity, two proofs of Virginia residency, proof of SSN (if you have one) or an ITIN, and tax-return documentation. Documents not in English need a certified English translation by a professional translator.
- Age requirement: at least 16 years 3 months (a learner's permit is available from 15 years 6 months).
- Fee: \$50 for the first card or a renewal; \$53 for a combined learner's permit and DPC. The card is valid up to 8 years (5 years if you're 75 or older, or registered on the Sex Offender and Crimes Against Children registry).
- A DPC can't be used to board a flight, enter a secure federal building, or get a CDL.

Fees (2026)

ITEM	FEE
Standard license (8 years)	\$32
REAL ID surcharge (one-time)	\$10

ITEM	FEE
Driver Privilege Card (initial/renewal)	\$50
Learner's permit + DPC combined	\$53
Photo ID	\$2/year, minimum \$10, maximum \$16
Replacement/duplicate license	\$20
90-day temporary license	\$10

Payment methods: Visa, Mastercard, American Express, Discover, Apple Pay, Google Pay, cash, check or money order.

Driving on a Turkish license

- **Virginia residents:** there's no reciprocity with Türkiye, so you must complete both the knowledge test and the road test, though unlike a brand-new applicant you may be exempt from the 60-day learner's-permit waiting period.
- **You can take the knowledge test in Turkish;** the road test is in English. A translator over 18 with a valid U.S. license may accompany you.

Common mistakes

- Confusing the 60-day license deadline with the 30-day title/registration deadline; these are separate.
- Showing up for a DPC appointment without preparing Virginia income or dependent-status proof.
- Not checking the extra documents REAL ID requires before you go.
- Arriving for the road test in a vehicle without a valid inspection sticker or registration.



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