How Do I Apply for a Texas Driver's License?

Driver’s license office closest to UT Dallas:

Address:
2109 W. Parker Road, Ste 224
Plano, TX 75023-7739

Phone:
972-867-4221 General info only

Hours:
Monday 8:00-5:00
Tuesday 8:00-6:00
Wednesday 8:00-5:00
Thursday 8:00-5:00
Friday 8:00-5:00

International Student Services
The University of Texas at Dallas
800 W Campbell Road SSB34
Richardson, TX 75083-3021
www.utdallas.edu/student/international

Phone: 972-883-4189
Fax: 972-883-4010
Email: ISSOCurrent@utdallas.edu
Applying for a Texas Driver’s License

Driver’s licenses in Texas are managed by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS). The following information is based on the DPS web site: www.txdps.state.tx.us/.

Can I drive legally with a driver’s license from another country?
Yes, if you are between 18 and 75 years old, have a valid driver’s license from your home country, and your country recognizes the equivalent U.S. license, you may drive a private vehicle for up to one year. To find out if your country meets this requirement, also known as reciprocity, email: license.issuance@txdps.state.tx.us.

How do I get a Texas Driver’s License?
After residing in Texas at least 30 days you may apply at any Texas DPS license office.
Requirements:
- DPS application
- Application and exam fees - $36
- Proof of identity
- Proof of residing in Texas at least 30 days*
- Proof of lawful presence
- Social Security Number - If you are not eligible for a Social Security Card, you will be asked to sign an affidavit
- Proof of vehicle registration - vehicle owners only
- Proof of sufficient liability insurance - vehicle owners only
- Pass the DPS written test
- Pass the DPS driving skills test - you provide the vehicle
- DPS vision test

* Students with unexpired licenses from other states are exempt from the 30-day requirement.

What do I need to prove identity, lawful presence and residency?
The following is general information only. For full information, check the DPS website before going to the license office: http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/DriverLicense/ApplyforLicense.htm.

Identity and lawful presence
The documents required depends on your visa category. Most international students will present:
- Foreign passport
- U.S. visa (expired or unexpired)
- I-94
- Plus
  - F-1s/F-2s: Most recent Form I-20
  - F-1 OPT: OPT I-20 and EAD
  - J-1/J-2: DS-2019
  - Other visa types: I-94

Residency
Present two acceptable documents showing you have resided in Texas for at least 30 days. The documents must include your name and a Texas address. Acceptable documents include rental contracts, pre-printed checks, insurance policies and bank statements. For a full list of documents, see: http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/DriverLicense/residencyReqNonCDL.htm. Students with unexpired out-of-state licenses must show residency but are exempt from the 30-day requirement.

What will the process be like?
The whole process usually takes more than one visit to the DPS office and wait times can be long.
- Upon arrival you will complete an application and present your documents to a clerk.
- If your paperwork is in order you will be given a written exam.
- Once you pass the written exam you can set an appointment for a driving skills test.
- The driving test involves an examiner riding with you as you drive a specified route.
- Once you pass both exams you will be given a driver’s permit which allows you to drive legally until you receive the driver’s license.

This is required of all Texas drivers.
- A paper driving permit will be given on site which allows you to drive legally until you receive the driver’s license.
- The license will be mailed in a few weeks.
- Currently DPS is requiring international students to renew licenses annually.

How can I prepare for the written exam and driving test?
The written exam is based on the Texas Driver's License Handbook. The handbook is free and available online in the Forms section of the DPS website. Sample test questions can be found at the back of the book.

Once you pass the written exam, you can request an Instruction Permit which will allow you to practice driving on public roads when accompanied by a licensed, adult driver. The permit is optional. Professional driving lessons can also be arranged through private driving schools and some public schools.

What is liability insurance?
Liability insurance reduces the financial impact of claims filed against you should you become involved in a car accident. An automobile insurance card is the required form of proof. If you do not own a car, when at the DPS office you will be required to sign and swear to a statement that you do not own a vehicle. This exempts you from the Texas vehicle registration and liability requirements. You will still need to provide a vehicle for the driving test.

Applying for a State ID
If you do not drive but want a state identification document, learn how to obtain a Texas ID at: http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/DriverLicense/applyforID.htm.

All information is subject to change without notice. Revised 5-7-12/ISSO links 9-26-12