



Helping newcomers and locals feel at home.

Bringing Your Car to South Carolina

WHAT TO DO, WHAT TO BUDGET

Your car is part of the move, too. Plan for the paperwork and the costs before arrival so a trip to the DMV does not become an unexpected strain on your moving budget.

As of October 2, 2026: This guide reflects the official guidance checked on that date. Fees, forms, deadlines, and county procedures can change. Confirm your situation with SCDMV, your county, and your insurer. The standard example covers an existing regular passenger car brought from another state.

Know the deadlines early

SCDMV gives new permanent residents with an out-of-state license 45 days to apply for an SC license or ID and 45 days to transfer vehicle registration. Use day 30 as a progress check, not permission to postpone urgent steps. Temporary residents and other special cases need separate confirmation. [1]

Separate arrival costs from recurring bills

COST	CURRENT STANDARD AMOUNT / TIMING
Infrastructure Maintenance Fee	\$250 for an existing out-of-state vehicle [2]
Title	\$15 [3]
Passenger-car registration	\$40; generally every two years [3]
Standard initial DMV total	\$305 per vehicle; excludes county tax [2]
Eight-year driver license	\$25 per driver [1]
County vehicle property tax	Additional; annual, address/vehicle dependent [4]

Ask about variations: Hybrids add \$60 and electric vehicles add \$120 to registration fees. Age/disability discounts, specialty plates, truck weight, and payment processing can change the total. Newly purchased vehicles follow different IMF rules. [3]

Your county matters: Greenville County calculates vehicle tax using vehicle value and the residential tax district. Ask your own county for an estimate, including local charges; do not assume a Greenville estimate applies elsewhere. [4]





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Get the Paperwork in Order

A PRACTICAL ROUTE THROUGH THE PROCESS

1 Speak with your insurer

Update your SC address and confirm the insurer is authorized in SC. Ask about effective dates, premiums, and uninterrupted coverage. [2] Check your previous state's plate-return and cancellation rules before closing old arrangements.

2 Prepare your license documents

Bring identity/citizenship documents, Social Security number, physical-address proof, and name-change records if applicable. REAL ID requires two address proofs, even if you already held one elsewhere. Review SCDMV's citizen or international checklist; a vision test is required. [1]

3 Arrange county taxes and the paid receipt

Contact your county auditor for the vehicle tax bill and pay the county treasurer before registration. [2] Greenville County lists an unexpired SC license/ID and ownership documents for its process. It also warns that website receipts are not accepted by SCDMV and mailed receipts may take 5-10 days. Confirm receipt timing before your DMV visit. [5]

4 Confirm the packet for your particular car

Prepare Form 400, title/registration, identification, insurance information, paid tax receipt, and fees. For a loan, confirm lender details; for a lease, confirm authorization paperwork. [2] Ask SCDMV which supporting forms apply before visiting.

5 Keep records and calendar the next bill

Keep receipts and confirmations together. Record county tax and registration renewal dates separately. Verify previous-state closeout requirements and retain proof of completion.

Official sources | checked October 2, 2026

1 | [SCDMV: Moving to SC - License](#)

2 | [SCDMV: Moving to SC - Vehicle](#)

3 | [SCDMV: Fees](#)

4 | [Greenville County: Vehicle taxes](#)

5 | [Greenville County: Registration procedures](#)

Links are clickable. For another Upstate county, contact its auditor and treasurer for local procedures and estimates. This is a planning guide, not a personalized tax or legal determination.





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Your Vehicle Move Checklist

ONE PAGE TO TRACK TASKS, COSTS & DEADLINES

Move date: _____ County: _____ Vehicle: _____

License deadline: _____ Registration deadline: _____

- ☐ Confirm current deadlines and any exception that applies to my situation.
- ☐ Arrange SC insurance; confirm effective date and premium with the insurer.
- ☐ Gather the required license documents; confirm appointment or branch arrangements.
- ☐ Ask my county for a vehicle tax bill and confirm acceptable documents and receipt timing.
- ☐ Pay county vehicle tax and obtain the receipt required for registration.
- ☐ Confirm title/registration packet with SCDMV, including lender or lease paperwork.
- ☐ Complete license and vehicle tasks; retain receipts and confirmation copies.
- ☐ Check previous-state plates, registration, and insurance closeout requirements.
- ☐ Calendar annual county tax and registration renewal dates separately.

My confirmed costs | use a separate sheet for each vehicle

DMV title / IMF / registration, including applicable extras: \$ _____

County tax and local charges: \$ _____ License: \$ _____

Insurance premium change / payment due: \$ _____

TOTAL CASH NEEDED NOW: \$ _____ Source / date: _____

Finish and follow up

County contact: _____

DMV / insurer contact: _____

Unanswered question / next step: _____

County tax renewal: _____ Registration renewal: _____

