

Proof of Citizenship or Lawful Presence Required for Motor Vehicle Registration

Overview

Effective January 1, 2027, Public Chapter 954 (2026) establishes additional identifying requirements for applicants seeking initial registrations for certain motor vehicles.

Applications for Motor Vehicle Registration

Public Chapter 954 (2026) requires an applicant for the initial registration of a motor vehicle that requires a license plate to provide certain documentation that the applicant is:

- A citizen of the United States,
- A lawful permanent resident of the United States, or
- A person whose presence in the United States has been authorized by the federal government for a specific purpose and for a specified period of authorized stay.

This requirement does not apply to registration renewals.

Acceptable Forms of Documentation

The Department will publish a list of acceptable forms of documentation and identification on its website.

The following license types are deemed satisfactory proof for purposes of initial registration:

- REAL ID-compliant license,
- Tennessee driver's license,
- Tennessee temporary driver's license,
- Tennessee temporary photo identification license, or
- Tennessee photo identification license.

Documentation in either paper or electronic format is acceptable. Acceptable electronic formats include electronic images displayed on a cell phone or any other type of portable electronic device.

For More Information

Visit www.tn.gov/revenue. Click on Revenue Help to search for answers or to submit an information request to one of our agents.

References

Public Chapter 954 (2026). Tenn. Code Ann. § 55-4-144.