

Facts and Information

Driver's License

All new residents who plan to drive must obtain an N.C. driver's license within 60 days of establishing a permanent residence. Most newcomers, unless they drive commercial vehicles, will want a Class C license, which permits operation of personal cars and small trucks. If you drive a motorcycle, you'll also need a motorcycle endorsement. Licensed drivers who are 16 or 17 years old must present proof of completion of a state-approved driver education course in their former state; otherwise, they receive a temporary license pending completion of the course here.

N.C. driver's licenses are good for up to five years. To get a license, apply in person at a driver's license office and take the vision, sign recognition and written tests. (It'll help to study the "Driver's Handbook," available at DMV offices or check the website below.) Tests are available in seven languages – English, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish, French and Arabic.

When you apply, present your current out-of-state license or two other accepted forms of ID, as well as proof of liability insurance (for example, the original policy, original binder or Form DL-123 from your insurance agent) from an insurer licensed in North Carolina. You'll also need to supply your Social Security number.

The cost of a license will depend on how many years the license is good for. A Class C license costs \$2.50 per year. You must pass a road skills test on your motorcycle to receive the motorcycle endorsement.

For more information on N.C. driver's license and motor vehicle registration rules, call DMV at 919-715-7000. You can access recorded information 24 hours a day using a touch-tone telephone. Or check the DMV Web site (www.dmv.dot.state.nc.us).

North Carolina Driver's License Offices

8446 N. Tryon St., Charlotte 704-547-5786

6016 Brookshire Blvd., Charlotte 704-392-3266

2192 Kannapolis Highway, Concord 704-782-7214

905 Carolina Ave. N., Statesville 704-878-4220

533 Patterson Ave., Suite 100, Mooresville 704-664-3344

1450 N. Aspen St., Lincolnton 704-735-6923

1033 Smyre Farm Road, Newton 828-466-5516

Motor Vehicle Registration

You must register your vehicle before the reciprocity agreement between North Carolina and your former state expires (usually 30 days). Registration is renewed annually.

To register your vehicle, apply in person at a license plate agency and present your title (unless title is held by a lien holder) and a valid registration card from your former state. If your title is held by a lien holder, you must provide

the lien holder's name and address on a state form for title release. You also must present proof of vehicle liability insurance at or above minimum standards (see driver's license information for the list of acceptable documents).

Payment due when you receive N.C. registration includes title fee, \$35; registration fee, \$20; and highway use tax, which is 3 percent of the value of your vehicle.

You also must get a vehicle safety inspection within 10 days of receiving your N.C. license plate. This costs \$9.25 and can be done at any state-authorized inspection station. Inspection is required annually. Some counties also require an emissions inspection, which is conducted at the same time as the safety inspection and costs \$30.

Although the state does not levy sales tax on motor vehicles, N.C. counties assess property taxes annually. Your car will be registered when you receive your license plate, and you'll receive a bill in about three months.

North Carolina Motor Vehicle Registration Offices

6016 Brookshire Blvd., Charlotte
704-399-8306

121 W. Water St., Statesville
704-873-3185

125-3 N. Main St., Mooresville
704-663-5472

759 Church St. N., Concord
704-788-1404

Rules of the Road

- Speed limits range from 55 mph to 70 mph on interstates and from 55 mph to 65 mph on open highways; the limit is 35 mph inside municipal corporate limits unless otherwise posted.
- Motorcyclists must wear helmets and drive with lights on at all times.
- Seat belt use is mandatory for driver and front-seat passengers. Approved child-restraint seats are required for children 4 years and younger or under 50 pounds; all children 16 and younger must be buckled up no matter where they sit in the vehicle.
- Right turn on red is permitted after complete stop unless otherwise posted. Left turn on red is not permitted.
- Drunken-driving rules are strict. A motorist is guilty of driving while impaired (DWI) if his blood alcohol level meets or exceeds 0.08 percent or if he is under the influence of or affected by alcohol and/or other drugs. Penalties can include fines, imprisonment and license revocation. The best rule: Don't drink and drive.

Voter Registration

To be eligible to vote in either North Carolina or South Carolina, you must be 18 or older, a U.S. citizen, a legal resident of the state and county where you register, and a resident of your precinct for at least 30 days prior to the election you wish to vote in.

To register to vote, pick up a registration form from one of the locations listed below, fill it out completely and mail it to the address on the form.

Your registration card will be mailed to you. Forms are available at individual county offices. The North Carolina State Board of Elections numbers is 919-733-7173.

The Web site for the N.C. Board of Elections is www.sboe.state.nc.us.

Mecklenburg County
Board of Elections
741 Kenilworth Ave., Suite 202, Charlotte
704-336-2133, www.meckboe.org

Iredell County Elections Office
233 Stockton St. B-1, Statesville
704-878-3140
www.co.iredell.nc.us/Departments/Elections/election.asp.

Catawba County Board of Elections
100A Southwest Blvd., Newton
828-464-2424
www.catawbacountync.gov/depts/elect

Lincoln County Board of Elections
115 W. Main St., Lincolnton
704-736-8480
www.lincolncounty.org/County/Departments/Elections/BOE.htm

Property Taxes

Rates are established in May or June of each year in conjunction with annual budget preparation. Depending on where you live, you may owe taxes to a combination of governments – for example, both Mecklenburg County and the city where you live. The list above doesn't include some extra taxes and fees you may have to pay, such as fire district, special development district and solid-waste fees. So your total tax rate may be higher than the figures listed above.

Local property taxes are assessed annually on real property, including homes, cars and boats. Bills for homes, land and the like are mailed in September and payable without penalty by the date specified in early January. Cars are handled differently. The state generates a list of motorists who receive motor vehicle licenses and forwards that information to the county, which generates property tax bills on the vehicles a few weeks later. Those fees are due just a few weeks after receipt of the bills.

For further tax information, call the tax office in your county: Mecklenburg, 704-336-4600; Iredell, 704-878-3000; Catawba County, 828-465-8414; Lincoln County, 704-736-8542.

Property Taxes

Rates for fiscal 2008-2009 (end June 30, 2009). All rates per \$100 assessed valuation.

Catawba County\$0.535
Iredell County.....\$0.445
Lincoln County.....\$0.57
Mecklenburg County.....\$0.8387

Charlotte.....\$0.4586
Cornelius.....\$0.275
Davidson.....\$0.365
Huntersville.....\$0.29
Mooresville.....\$0.58
Statesville.....\$0.38
Troutman.....\$0.43

Area Code Overlay

Because of the incredible growth in the number of telephone lines, the Charlotte area has been assigned a second area code, 980. The area code overlays, or exactly matches, the existing 704 area code. The two area codes mean that you must dial the entire 10-digit number – that is, area code 704 or 980, plus the seven-digit phone number – to reach a Charlotte-area number. For details, check BellSouth's Web site (www.bellsouth.com/areacode) or call toll-free 800-964-7941.

Government Information

Cabarrus County 704-920-2000
www.co.cabarrus.nc.us

Huntersville 704-875-6541
www.huntersville.org

Catawba County 828-465-8200
www.co.catawba.nc.us

Iredell County 704-878-3000
www.co.iredell.nc.us

Charlotte-Mecklenburg 704-336-7600
www.charmeck.org

Lincoln County 704-736-8432
www.lincolncounty.org

Concord 704-920-5215
www.ci.concord.nc.us

Mooresville 704-663-3800
www.ci.mooresville.nc.us

Cornelius 704-892-6031
www.cornelius.org

Rowan County 704-216-8100
www.co.rowan.nc.us

Davidson 704-892-7591
www.ci.davidson.nc.us

Statesville 704-878-3583
www.ci.statesville.nc.us

Gaston County 704.864.2621
www.co.gaston.nc.us

Troutman 704-528-7600
www.townoftroutman.org



Informative Websites



Cabarrus County

Cabarrus County Official Site
Visitor Information

www.Co.Cabarrus.NC.US
www.VisitCabarrus.com

Catawba County

Catawba County Chamber of Commerce
Catawba County Government Page

www.CatawbaChamber.org
www.Co.Catawba.NC.US

Charlotte

Charlotte Chamber
Charlotte Convention & Visitors Bureau
The Charlotte Observer
Go Carolinas
City of Charlotte & Mecklenburg
County Government Site

www.CharlotteChamber.org
www.CharlotteCVB.org
www.Charlotte.com
www.GoCarolinas.com
www.CharMeck.NC.US

Gaston County

Gaston County Chamber

www.GastonChamber.org

Lake Norman

RE/MAX at the Lake

www.homesatthelake.com

Lake Norman Chamber
Go Lake Norman
Lake Norman Guide
Lake Norman Activities
Duke Power

www.LakeNorman.org
www.GoLakeNorman.com
www.LakeNormanGuide.com
www.LKNfun.com
www.DukePower.com

Lincoln County

Lincoln County Online

www.Co.Lincoln.NC.US

Mooresville / Iredell County

Mooresville/South Iredell Chamber
Iredell County Government Page

www.Mooresvillenc.org
www.Co.Iredell.NC.US/welcome.htm

Rowan County

Rowan County Official Website
Salisbury/Rowan County

www.Co.Rowan.NC.US
www.GoRowan.com