

Registration Related Fees

What Fees Are Due When Registering a Vehicle?

Various fees are due upon initial registration and annual registration renewal. Some fees are due for every vehicle upon registration. Assessment of other fees is based on:

- Type of vehicle (auto, trailer, etc.)
- Owner's county of residence
- Special license plates
- Unpaid Parking Violation/Toll Evasion Bail

The [registration fee](#) and the [CHP fee](#) are due for the vast majority of vehicles registered for use on the highway. This money is used by the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to offset costs. A [Reflectorized License Plate fee](#) is assessed upon initial registration on most vehicles.

Vehicle License Fee

Most vehicles are also assessed a Vehicle License Fee (VLF). The VLF was established by the Legislature in 1935 in lieu of a property tax on vehicles. The formula for VLF assessment established by the Legislature is based upon the purchase price of the vehicle or the value of the vehicle when acquired. The VLF decreases with each renewal for the first 11 years. The DMV returns almost all vehicle license fee revenue to the cities and counties. For more details on how your VLF money is used, contact your local city or county government officials.

Permanent Trailer Identification (PTI) Fee

All trailers, except trailer coaches and park trailers, are assessed a [Permanent Trailer Identification \(PTI\) fee](#). Once a trailer is in the PTI program a [service fee is due every five years](#). PTI trailers are not subject to other Registration Fees, California Highway Patrol Fees, County Fees, Vehicle License Fees, and Weight Fees.

[Commercial Vehicle Registration Act \(CVRA\) Fee](#)

Trucks operated at a gross or a combined gross weight of [10,001 lbs. or more](#), will be assessed a CVRA fee in addition to other registration fees (including but not limited to a CVRA Motor Vehicle fee and a CVRA CHP fee). Trucks operated at a gross weight of [10,000 lbs. or less](#) will continue to be assessed a weight fee based on

the truck's unladen (empty) weight.

Cargo Theft Interdiction (CTIP) Fee

Commercial motor vehicles operating at 10,001 lbs. or more are assessed a Cargo Theft Interdiction Program (CTIP) fee. This fee is not due for pickups, tow trucks, or vehicles used solely to transport persons for hire, such as ambulances, buses, electric-powered vehicles, limousines, taxis, or some vans. This fee is used by the California Highway Patrol to recover stolen cargo and promote security for commercially registered vehicles.

Use Tax

Use tax rates vary by county and are generally assessed at the same rate as sales tax in the registered owner's county of residence. When a vehicle is brought to California within 12 months from the date of purchase, use tax may be due. An applicant who purchases a vehicle out-of-state may receive a credit toward the California use tax due for any sales or use tax paid to another state prior to entering California. The tax credit shall not exceed the California tax that is due. For additional use tax information, contact the [Board of Equalization](#) online, or by phone at 800-400-7115.

Nonresident Service Fee

In addition to the registration fee and any weight fee, a nonresident service fee for the registration within this state of every vehicle purchased new outside this state or previously registered outside this state is due.

Motorcycles

Motorcycles are assessed a one-time [Motorcycle Cross-Index Fee](#) and an annual [Motorcycle Safety Fee](#). Motorcycle Safety Fee money is used to promote motorcycle safety programs throughout the state.

County and District Fees

DMV collects additional money for the following special programs on behalf of local districts or counties.

- Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE).
- Air Quality. Amounts vary because they are set by specific Air Quality Management Districts. Air Quality fees are used by the districts to reduce air pollution from motor vehicles and for related planning, monitoring, enforcement and technical studies needed to implement the California Clean Air Act of 1988.
- Auto Theft Deterrence/DUI. This revenue helps counties provide the public with theft prevention education and allows for additional enforcement of existing antitheft and driving under the influence programs.
- Vehicle Abatement. These funds allow participating counties to remove and dispose of abandoned vehicles.
- Fingerprint ID. These monies allow participating counties to fund local Fingerprint Identification Programs.

Special Plate Fees

California drivers may purchase [special interest license plates](#) for use on their vehicles. The privilege to retain certain kinds of special plates requires the payment of an annual special plate renewal fee, assessed at the same time as the annual registration renewal. Revenue generated from the sale and renewal of these plates helps fund environmental and other special programs.

Parking Violation Bail

DMV cooperates with local agencies in the collection of delinquent parking violation/toll evasion bail. If you have received parking or toll evasion violations and have not paid the bail, the bail plus a small service charge for each violation is added to your annual registration renewal billing notice. The bail money is returned to the local agencies. Parking/Toll Evasion Bail is not included in the chart shown below.

Where Your DMV Fees Go

Fees come from:

- [Vehicle License Fee](#) in lieu of Local Property Tax
- [Vehicle Registration Fee](#), Driver License and other Product & Service Fees
- Weight Fees (Commercial Vehicles)
- [Miscellaneous Fees](#)
- Use Tax, Motor Carrier Permit & Trailer Coach fees, Financial Responsibility Penalties

Fees go to:

- Cities and Counties
- California Highway Patrol
- Department of Motor Vehicles
- State Highways
- Various State Agencies
- State's General Fund

[Registration Related Fees](#) (All fees are subject to statutory change).

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