

APPLYING FOR A DRIVER'S LICENSE OR STATE IDENTIFICATION CARD

International students who want to drive in California must obtain a driver's license with the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). You are advised to obtain a State Identification Card to use as identification. This sheet has important information concerning both types of cards. Please read it carefully and follow all necessary steps.

California Driver's License and California State Identification Card

If you are planning to drive while you are in California and/or plan to purchase a motor vehicle (a car, scooter or motorcycle), you must get a California Driver's License. Most insurance companies will not provide coverage unless you have a driver's license, and having insurance is a legal requirement. Tourists may drive (rental cars) in California for one year as long as they have a valid driver's license from their home country or an International Driver's license.

If you are not planning to drive, the DMV can issue a California Identification Card with your photo and information on the card. This is an easily recognizable form of identification used for cashing checks, proving your age, etc.

How to Apply for the California Driver License

The DMV has the latest California Driver Handbook, forms, and instructions on how to apply for a [California Driver License](#). The handbook is available at <http://www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/dl600.pdf>. Check out the helpful section in the [handbook](#) on frequently asked questions. Please note: An F or J nonimmigrant is NOT required to have a Social Security number to be eligible for a driver license.

Tips: Getting Your Driver's License

Make sure to follow these five simple tips which will make the process much smoother and saves a lot of time in the end:

1. **Wait at least 10 days after you arrive in the United States.** You may want to apply for a driver's license right away, but be patient. The 10-day wait allows time for all the government databases to update with your arrival information.
2. **Make sure your record in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is up-to-date and in Active status.** SEVIS is the database that contains information for all F and J nonimmigrants in the United States. ISSP manages the F and J SEVIS records for students or scholars with a 1-20 or DS-2019. ISSP must place your record in Active status when you report to the campus. For students, this is done by attending mandatory orientation at the beginning of your first semester. If your record is not **Active** when you apply, your application will be rejected.
3. **Wait two days after your DSO or RO/ARO activates your record in SEVIS.** After ISSP, has activated your record in SEVIS, wait at least two business days before you apply for a driver's license. This gives all the databases time to update with your new information.
4. **Check your forms.** Check all your forms to make sure your information is correct. This is data integrity. Data integrity is very important because if you have different information on different forms, it will cause delays. Specifically, check your on-line I-94 information at www.cbp.gov/i94. If the information on your I-94 electronic record is different than on your passport or Form I-20 or DS-2019, please contact ISSP.
5. **Bring all your paperwork.** When you go to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) – remember to bring the following documents:
 - Form I-20 or Form DS-2019
 - Form I-94, "Arrival/Departure Record" This may be the white, paper I-94 card stapled in your passport or an electronic I-94 record if you received a passport admission stamp. If you received the passport admission stamp, please go to www.cbp.gov/i94 to access your electronic I-94 record.
 - Passport (with visa, if applicable)

How to Schedule a DMV Appointment

You should schedule an appointment before going to the DMV. If you don't schedule an appointment than you will be required to wait for a considerable amount of time so schedule an appointment or get there early.

To schedule an appointment on-line: <http://www.dmv.ca.gov/foa/welcome.do?localeName=en>

Fresno and Clovis have various DMV offices. The locations of the DMV branches in the Fresno/Clovis area are listed below for your reference.

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|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Clovis DMV Office | 2103 Shaw Ave. | Clovis, 93611 | (800)777-0133 |
| Fresno DMV Office | 655 W. Olive Ave. | Fresno, 93728 | (800)777-0133 |
| Fresno-North DMV Office | 6420 N Blackstone Ave. | Fresno, 93710 | (800)777-0133 |

Potential Problems in obtaining a California Driver's License/Identification card

If you are denied a driver's license or identification because of discrepancy on your Form I-94 or your record than

- Meet with the Student Immigration Specialist at Fresno State to determine the best way to correct your I-94 data. In most cases, a call the deferred inspection site at San Francisco (415-844-5227) to correct information can be done. If it cannot be handled over the phone you will be sent to the closest deferred inspection site in San Jose to correct your I-94 information.

If there are other non I-94 issues, and you are unable to obtain a driver's license or ID at the DMV, than your Student Immigration Specialist will send an e-mail to SEVP (DMVSSA.SEVP@DHS.gov) for assistance. Make sure you meet with the Student Immigration Specialist at Fresno State to verify that your SEVIS record is active and to determine the reason for your denial. Please bring any important documentation that DMV provided to you. Please also make sure you have the following items listed below so a request can be made to review your situation.

1. SEVIS ID
2. Family name
3. First name
4. Date of Birth
5. Form I-94 admission number (11 digits)
6. Applicant's physical address
7. Applicant's phone number
8. Applicant's e-mail address (not required but helpful)
9. Address of the DMV office where problem occurred
10. Date of the latest DMV office visit
11. SAVE case number and/or Form I-797 receipt number (if available)
12. Alien registration number (9-digit A number, if available)
13. Current driver's license/ID/customer number and/or DMV receipt number (if available)
14. Explanation of the problems

For questions or concerns regarding DMV procedures, please contact California State University, Fresno's International Student Services: intlstudentservices@csufresno.edu