

# **DOMICILE GUIDE – TEXAS**

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**Interested in establishing your domicile in Texas? Take a look at the steps below to understand what tasks and forms should be completed.**

*The information contained on these pages is not to be considered legal advice. You should always check with your attorney to confirm specific state laws and how they might apply to your personal situation.*

## **Steps to Becoming a Texas Resident** (See following pages for details)

**Step 1: Secure a Mailing Address with Escapees Mail Service.**

**Step 2: Establish professional and social connections within the county of domicile.**

**Step 3: Prepare the driver's license application, the vehicle registration, and voter registration forms.**

**Step 4: Create an official record of intent to domicile.**

**Step 5: Appear in the state.**

## **Documents to Bring With You**

- Vehicle Insurance for Your Texas Address**
- Current Valid Driver's License or Official Mail from Current Address**
- Driver's License Application (Available at Public Safety Office)**
- Proof of Current Vehicle Registration**
- Primary Identity Document (US Passport) or 2 Secondary Identity Documents Listed Below**
  - Original or Certified Copy of Birth Certificate**
  - Certificate of Report of Birth (DS-1350 or FS-545) or Consular Report of Birth (FS-240) for citizens born abroad, or**
  - Original or certified copy of a court order with name and date of birth indicating a name and/or gender change from a United States state, territory, the District of Columbia, or a Canadian province;**
    - If two of these documents are not available, present one secondary identity document (see above) and two supporting identity documents, such as:**
      - Social Security card,**
      - Form w-2, or**
      - Current unexpired driver's license issued by another state**
- Vehicle Inspection Report (VIR)**
- Current Title and Registration**
- If you are still making payments, complete Texas Certificate of Title (Form 130-U), the Application for Registration Purposes Only (Form VTR-272), and provide current proof of registration**
- RV owners must bring proof of weight and a photograph of the exterior of the vehicle**
- Complete the Affidavit of Domicile**

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## **Becoming a Resident - Details**

### **Step 1: Secure a Mailing Address with Escapees Mail Service**

- Contact Escapees RV Club at 936-327-4388.
- Escapees Mail service members who wish to use their Rainbow Drive address as their physical address for domicile purposes may do so.

### **Step 2: Establish professional and social connections within the county of domicile**

- If using your Escapees Rainbow Drive mailing address, your county would be Polk County.
- Contact professionals, e.g. lawyers, doctors, dentists, accountants, financial planners, and insurance agents, and social and/or religious organizations to begin your relationship with them. Escapees has established relationships with local professionals providing these services. We recommend you consider the following businesses.
  - [East Texas Legal, PLLC](#)
  - [Church Street Financial – Insurance](#)
  - [Church Street Financial – Investments](#)
  - [First National Bank of Livingston](#)
- Make appointments well in advance of your arrival as sometimes these professionals book up quickly.
- Contact an attorney to update estate planning documents in accordance with the laws of Texas, or create estate planning documents. The attorney may begin preparing those documents in advance of your arrival. (We recommend Escapees Commercial Partner, [East Texas Legal, PLLC](#).)
- Obtain quotes for vehicle and health insurance plans. Please note that quotes from insurance agents typically expire within a few weeks of receiving them, so time this according to your arrival date.

### **Step 3: Prepare the driver's license application, the vehicle registration, and voter registration forms**

#### **Driver's License Requirements**

- Apply in person at any Department of Public Safety office in Texas within 90 days of establishing residency.
- Current valid, unexpired driver's license must be surrendered when applying for the new license. If current license is unavailable, you must show mail (such as an insurance bill) received at that address.
- Complete the application provided in the Department of Public Safety office.
- Present proof of vehicle registration. (See Vehicle Registration Requirements section below.)

#### **Present either**

- One primary identity document, such as a passport.  
*If that is not available, two secondary identity documents such as:*
  - Original or certified copy of birth certificate,

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- Certificate of Report of Birth (DS-1350 or FS-545) or Consular Report of Birth (FS-240) for citizens born abroad, or
- Original or certified copy of a court order with name and date of birth indicating a name and/or gender change from a United States state, territory, the District of Columbia, or a Canadian province; *If two of these documents are not available, present one secondary identity document (see above) and two supporting identity documents, such as:*
  - Social Security card,
  - Form w-2, or
  - Current unexpired driver's license issued by another state.
- Proof of vehicle registration and financial responsibility. (See Vehicle Registration Section)
- Pass the knowledge and driving test, unless exempt (the Department of Public Safety will be able to provide exempt status).

## License Classifications

RVs operated for personal pleasure in Texas may require a non-commercial CDL class A or B driver's license if they exceed 26,001 pounds individually or combined when towing. Here's the relevant info, excerpted from the DPS Driver's License Handbook:

**CLASSIFIED DRIVER LICENSE** (Texas Transportation Code, Section 521) The following listed Class A, B, C, and M licenses will be issued to persons who are exempt from obtaining a Commercial Driver License or persons who are not required to obtain a Commercial Driver License:

- Class A** Any combination of vehicles with a gross combination weight rating of 26,001 pounds or more, provided the gross vehicle weight rating of the vehicle or vehicles towed exceeds 10,000 pounds;
- Class B** Any single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,001 pounds or more, any one of those vehicles towing a vehicle that does not exceed 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating, and any vehicle designed to transport 24 passengers or more, including the driver; and a Class B license will be restricted to operating busses under 26,001 pounds GVWR if the skills test is taken in a bus with a GVWR of less than 26,001 pounds; and
- Class C** Any single vehicle or combination of vehicles that is not a Class A or Class B if the vehicle is:
  - 1) designed to transport 16 to 23 passengers including the driver; or
  - 2) used in the transportation of hazardous materials that require the vehicle to be placarded under 49 CFR, Part 172, Subpart F.
- Class M** driver license permits a person to drive a motorcycle or moped.

## Voter Registration Requirements

- Obtained along with the acquisition of a driver's license

**Vehicle Registration Requirements** <http://txdmv.gov/forms-tac>

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- A vehicle owner has 30 days to register a vehicle after establishing residency in Texas.
- The vehicle has to be physically present in Texas to be inspected.
- Vehicle owners will be given a Vehicle Inspection Report (VIR).
- Once the inspection is completed and the vehicle has passed, the owner must go to the county tax office with the proof of inspection and proof of car insurance.
- Vehicle owners that are still making payments on their vehicle will need to complete Texas Certificate of Title (Form 130-U), the Application for Registration Purposes Only (Form VTR-272), and provide current proof of registration.
- Vehicle owners that are no longer making payments on their vehicle will need to produce the current title and current registration.
- RV owners must bring proof of weight and a photograph of the exterior of the vehicle
  - The registration fee is based on the weight of the vehicle. RV owners might find bringing a copy of the spec sheet, located in the RV, to be helpful.
  - The weight of 5th-wheels and travel trailers must be provided as gross weight.
  - The weight for motorhomes must be provided as unloaded weight.
  - A photograph is required simply for terminology purposes

## **Vehicle Inspections:**

- As of March 1, 2015, vehicles will no longer be issued an inspection sticker and your registration sticker will serve as combined proof of inspection and registration. See Texas Vehicle Inspection information for complete details.
- If you are an RVer and your vehicle is out of state and you are unable to complete a Texas vehicle inspection in order to renew your registration, you will be able to self-certify that the vehicle is out of state and will be permitted to register.

## **Additional Information**

- Texas Department of Public safety: <http://dps.texas.gov/DriverLicense/>
- Livingston Driver License Office : 936-327-6806

## **Step 4: Create an official record of intent to domicile**

- Complete the Affidavit of Domicile.

## **Step 5: Appearance in the state**

- File forms with various state agencies.
- Pay applicable taxes.
- Meet with aforementioned professionals.
- To the extent that is practical, bring your personal possessions, which are not housed in your RV, to your new county of domicile and store them there.

***Congratulations - You are now domiciled in Texas.***

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## **Voting Information**

### **Voter Registration**

- A voter registration becomes effective 30 days after it is received by the registrar of voters. You must register to vote in the county in which you reside. If you are submitting your application for registration by mail and registering for the first time in this county, you must enclose a copy of your valid driver's license (with an address in the same county in which you are applying) or one of the following:
  - A copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, pay-check, or other government document that shows your name and address.
  - It is our understanding that Escapees members could also use a copy of their Escapees Mail Service membership card (as long as it has their complete mailing address printed on it).
  - A Rainbow's End rent receipt.
- Texas voter registration applications are available through many sources. You can:
  - Download an application form from [www.sos.state.tx.us](http://www.sos.state.tx.us)
  - Request one from the county clerk.
  - Ask an Escapees operator to place one in your mail.

### **Applying for a ballot by mail**

- Once you have registered to vote, you may apply for a ballot. You can request a ballot application from the county clerk's office (See "Voter Resources" below) or download one from [www.sos.state.tx.us](http://www.sos.state.tx.us).
- It is very important that you fill out your application for ballot carefully and completely. There are eight critical boxes that must be completed:
  1. Name
  2. Residence Address (the same one you used on the residence line of your voter registration)
  3. Type and Date of Election (example: Primary/March 06)
  4. Party Preference (You MUST select a party if voting in a primary.)
  5. Reason for voting by mail (out of county traveling)
  6. Special Instructions For Mailing Ballot (Most of you would probably indicate "Address outside of the county.")
  7. Mail My Ballot To (When you are voting absentee, you cannot have your ballot sent to any address in the county in which you are registered, unless you are 65 or older or disabled.) Escapees Mail Service members who are traveling out of the state may have their ballots sent to the following address:
    8. Your Name c/o Escapees RV Club, PO Box 1578 Shepherd, TX 77371
- Sign Here (make sure you sign your application).  
*Including your phone number will allow the county clerk to contact you if needed.*

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## **Returning the absentee ballot**

- The voter must personally vote and sign the return envelope.
- For Voter Registration and absentee balloting:  
County Clerk's Office  
PO Drawer 2119  
Livingston, TX. 77351
- Polk County ballot applications fax: 936-327-6874
- Polk County Clerk's Office: 936-327-6805

## **Early Voting Application**

- To be eligible to vote early by mail in Texas, you must:
  - be 65 years or older;
  - be disabled;
  - be out of the county on election day and during the period for early voting by personal appearance; or
  - be confined in jail, but otherwise eligible.
- To request an Early Voting application from the Secretary of State website.
  - Go to [www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/reqabbm.shtml](http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/reqabbm.shtml) and enter your mailing address.
  - An application will be mailed to you directly. This will save the step of requesting an application by mail from the early voting clerk in your county!

*More information and helpful resources at: [www.escapees.com/education/domicile](http://www.escapees.com/education/domicile)*