

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO THEM**

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

#### **Q. What is the function of the Assessor's Department?**

*A. The Assessor is responsible for assessing all property within Solano County as required by law. The Assessor must produce and deliver an assessment roll by July 1 of each year. The Assessment Roll becomes the basis upon which local property taxes are levied, collected and distributed to the state schools, cities, development agencies, special districts, and the County of Solano.*

#### **Q. What does the Auditor-Controller do?**

*A. The Auditor-Controller determines property tax rates and ultimately the tax amount. They are also responsible for special assessment and bonds, as well as tax refunds. Their website address is [www.solanocounty.com](http://www.solanocounty.com), Auditor Controller Department. The phone number is 707-784-6283.*

#### **Q. What does the Tax Collector do?**

*A. The Tax Collector is responsible for the billing and collection of property taxes. Their website address is [www.solanocounty.com](http://www.solanocounty.com), Treasurer Tax Collector Department. The phone number is 707-784-7485.*

#### **Q. What does the Clerk of the Board do?**

*A. The Clerk of the Board's Office issues appeals forms and schedules property assessment appeals. Their phone number is 707-784-6100.*

### **INFORMATION REGARDING REAL PROPERTY**

#### **Q. When is Real Estate reassessed?**

*A. Under State law (Proposition 13), real property is reappraised only when:*

- 1. A change-in-ownership occurs*
- 2. Upon completion of new construction*

*Except for these, real property cannot be increased more than 2% every year, and that is based on the Consumer Price Index. Currently, the property tax rate is about 1% plus any special assessments and bonds which have been approved by voters.*

#### **Q. What is a Supplemental Assessment?**

*A. State law requires that any property that has undergone a change in ownership or new construction after July 1, 1983, be reassessed immediately. The supplemental assessment is a prorated assessment to reflect the difference between prior assessed value and the new*

assessed value. It is based on the number of months remaining in the fiscal year, which ends June 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Q. Why do I have two supplemental tax bills?**

A. Our tax year is fiscal. (July 1- June 30) If a change in ownership or new construction has taken place between January 1 and May 31, two supplemental assessments are issued. The first covers the portion of the current fiscal year remaining after the date of the event; the second covers the ensuing fiscal year in its entirety.

**Q. Am I going to receive a supplemental bill every year?**

A. No. You will receive a secured property tax bill every year. A supplemental bill is only generated when there is a change in ownership or new construction.

**Q. What is considered a “change-in-ownership”?**

A: In order to meet the definition of change in ownership for property tax purposes, a transfer of real property must convey

1. a present interest in the real property
2. the beneficial use of the property, and
3. rights that are substantially equivalent in value to that of the fee interest in the property. Gifts, inheritances, and purchases of real property can all qualify as changes in ownership; it may not matter whether the transfer is voluntary or involuntary.

When a sale or transfer occurs, the Assessor's Office receives a copy of the deed and determines if a reappraisal is required under State law. If it is required, an appraisal is made to determine the new market value of the property. The owner is then notified of the new assessment and their rights to appeal.

**Note:** Transfers of property between husband and wife do not result in a reappraisal. This includes transfers due to a divorce decree or the death of a spouse. Additionally, refinancing your home will not cause a reappraisal. To learn more about changes in ownership, see **“Change in Ownership and Transfers”**.

**Q. Shouldn't my property be assessed at the price I paid for it?**

A: Not always. Real property is valued at its current fair market value on the date it changes ownership. In a majority of cases, the sales price equals market value, but not always.

**Q. What about NEW CONSTRUCTION REAPPRAISALS?**

A. The Assessor's office receives copies of all building permits that are taken out with the city and the county.

- If the construction is **new** (such as a swimming pool or a room addition), a reassessment of the property is required. This can be any addition in square footage, and includes fixtures.

- If the construction is for **replacement, repair, or maintenance**, a reassessment may not be required.

**Q. Does that mean my whole house will be reassessed?**

A. No. Only the addition will be reassessed and added to the existing assessed value. The existing property, is not reappraised. In assessing new construction, the market value of the construction is determined and added to the value of the existing property. An owner will be notified of the new assessment as well as their right to appeal.

To learn more on what constitutes "new construction", please visit the California Board of Equalization website at [www.boe.CA.gov](http://www.boe.CA.gov), and view Property Tax Rule 463.

**Q. Is there a Builder's Exclusion?**

A. Many taxpayers in the construction industry are unaware that under Section 75.12 of the Revenue and Taxation Code they can be legally exempted from payment of supplemental tax bills resulting from the completion of new construction, simply by requesting a "Builder's Exclusion."

Effective January 1, 2006, developers of single-family subdivisions of five lots or more are granted an automatic builder's exclusion upon recording the subdivision map. To be granted the Builder's Exclusion on fewer than five single-family lots or on other types of property, you must submit a letter requesting the exclusion prior to or within 30 days of the start of new construction on land development and/or improvements. The parcels for which you are requesting exclusion must be intended for resale, and for no other purpose than that incidental to resale, such as a model home. In short, this means that builders should submit a request for exclusion as soon as they buy raw land intended for development.

We recommend that you apply for the exclusion as soon as the land is purchased. Apply for the whole tract. If builder's exclusion is granted on the parent parcel and the parcel splits there is no need to reapply. Builders should be aware that after the exclusion is granted they are still responsible for payment of supplemental tax bills based upon the purchase of land for development, and for payment of annual secured tax bills based on the value of land and new construction complete or incomplete on January 1 of each year. Builders owning parcels protected by a builder's Exclusion are also cautioned that should they begin using these parcels for a purpose other than resale, such as rentals, they are required to notify the Assessor's Office of this fact within 45 days after such non-resale use begins.

**Q. How can I request Builder Exclusion?**

A. Requests for Builder Exclusions should be addressed to Marc Tonnesen, Assessor/Recorder 675 Texas Street Suite 2700 Fairfield CA 94533-6338. For further information call (707)784-6200

**Q. Are Mobile homes subject to property taxes?**

A. Yes. Newly purchased mobile homes, and those on permanent foundations, are subject to property taxes. The process for assessing is the same as real property. The value will not be increased more than 2% per year unless there is a change in ownership, or new construction.

**Q. Are there any exceptions to this?**

A. Yes,

- Older mobile homes bought before June 30, 1980 generally are not subject to property taxes. They are licensed under the jurisdiction of the State Department of Housing and Community Development.
- As a result of recent State legislation, the purchase of a mobile home park by the residents will not cause a reassessment. Property taxes will remain at their current level and be prorated among the spaces.

**Q. What is the Williamson Act (Ag Preserve)?**

A: The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly referred to as the Williamson Act, is a tax relief measure for owners of land. The act permits a landowner to sign a contract with the County or City guaranteeing that the land will be preserved for a period of at least 10 years. In return for this guarantee, the Assessor annually values land and growing improvements in the Act using a restricted income approach rather than the market value. The owner will get the benefit of being taxed on the lower of the total base year value, current market value, or restricted (AG Preserve) value. Generally, this means the taxes for the farmer are reduced, sometimes greatly. You must apply to the County Planning Department by October 1 to receive Williamson Act benefits for the following tax year if you wish to place your farm property into the AG Preserve. The Assessor's Office may require you to report data pertaining to your agriculture parcels via an annual AG Preserve Questionnaire.

**Q. What if I do not agree with my assessed value?**

A. If you disagree with the value that your property has been assessed at, we recommend that you call our office 707-784-6200 to speak to an appraiser directly. We have an appraiser on duty Monday thru Friday between the hours of 8 and 5pm. If you still feel that the assessment is incorrect, you will have to go through the formal appeal process.

Appeals may be filed between July 2 and November 30 for the annual roll. For supplemental events, or escaped assessments, the appeal must be filed within 60 day of the mailing date of the notice. Appeal forms can be obtained and must be filed with the Clerk of the Board. For more information, call 707-784-6100.

**Q. What if the market has gone down, and my property value has decreased? Am I still responsible to pay a tax that isn't reflective of the current market value?**

A. Sometimes the market value of a property on January 1 has fallen below the adjusted base year value. State law provides for a temporary reduction of the assessed value of real property if its market value as of January 1st is less than its assessed value, commonly referred to as a "Proposition 8" reduction. If your property is eligible for this, and your value is lowered, your tax bill will be reflective of the lowered assessment.

If you feel that your home value has decreased below the assessed value as of the lien date of January 1, you must fill out a **Decline In Property Value (Prop 8) Request Form**, and submit it to our office.

**Q. Do I need to submit this form annually?**

A. No. If a property qualifies for Proposition 8, the Assessor reviews the value annually for increases or decreases and adjusts accordingly.

**Q. Is there a limit to how much my assessment can be lowered according to Prop 8?**

A. There is no limit on how much the value of a property on Proposition 8 status can be increased or reduced in any given year, the assessed value can never exceed the Proposition 13 factored base year value.

**Q. What and When is a lien date?**

A. The lien date is the "moment" of valuation for all property. Annually, the taxable status and value of property is determined as of 12:01 a.m. on January 1. This is the day that the taxes become a debt on the property and/or owners, even though the valuation and tax bills have not yet been computed and mailed. (R&T Code 2192)

**Q. Why are my neighbor's and my tax bills different when the houses are the same?**

A. In 1978, voters passed Proposition 13, which established 1975 as the original base year value and requires that the base value of a property be established as of the date of change in ownership, or as of the date of completion of new construction. Therefore, if you and your neighbor have purchased your home in different years, you have different tax bases, because they are based on different market values. Likewise, if construction was done on different dates, your tax bills will be different.

**Q. The assessed value of my property increased more than 2 percent this year. There was no change in ownership or new construction. Doesn't Proposition 13 limit annual increases in value to 2 percent?**

A. Under Proposition 13, base year values may not be increased more than 2 percent per year. A property assessed under **Proposition 8**, however, is not restricted to the 2 percent increase. For example, in a situation where a property's value increased 10 percent since the prior lien date, but the value is still below the Proposition 13 adjusted base year value, the new increased Proposition 8 value will be enrolled.

**Q. How do you calculate taxes?**

A. The taxes are calculated by the Auditor-Controller. Property tax rates vary by area. In Solano County the tax rates average approximately 1.1% of the property's taxable value. For instance, if the taxable value is \$10,000, the property taxes could be about \$110. The Auditor-

Controller website address is [www.solanocounty.com](http://www.solanocounty.com), Auditor Controller Department. The phone number is 707-784-6283.

**Q. What happens if I don't pay these taxes?**

A. The issue of non-payment of taxes needs to be addressed with the Tax Collector's office. Their phone number is 707-784-7485. Their website address is [www.solanocounty.com](http://www.solanocounty.com), Treasurer/Tax Collector Department.

**CHANGE IN OWNERSHIP AND TRANSFERS**

**Q. If I grant my property to my children or parents, will it be reassessed?**

A. No, as of 1986, California legislation excluded parent-child transfers from reassessment for principal residences, and up to \$1 million for all other properties. If the sale or transfer is between parents and their children, under limited circumstances, the property will **not** be reassessed if certain conditions are met and the proper application is timely filed. In general, the property will be excluded from reassessment.

For additional information regarding this exclusion, contact our office at 707-784-6200. Link to form [BOE 58 AH - Claim for reassessment exclusion for transfer between parent and child](#)

The claim should be completed and attached to the Preliminary Change of Ownership Report that is to be submitted at the time of the Recording of the deed that is changing the ownership.

**Q. If I grant my property to my grandchild(ren), will it be reassessed?**

A. Legislation was passed in 1996 excluding from reassessment transfers from grandparent(s) to grandchild(ren) of the principal residence and up to \$1 million assessed value of other property. A claim form must be timely filed with the Assessor's Office to qualify. In order to qualify, all the parents of that grandchild must be deceased as of the date of purchase or transfer. For additional information regarding this exclusion, contact our office at 707-784-6200. Link to form [BOE 58 G - Claim for reassessment exclusion for transfer between grandparent and grandchild](#)

The claim should be completed and attached to the Preliminary Change of Ownership Report that is to be submitted at the time of the Recording of the deed that is changing the ownership.

**Q. Why did I receive a Preliminary Change of Ownership Report (PCOR)?**

A. A Preliminary Change of Ownership Report (PCOR) is required whenever a document that conveys a change in ownership is recorded. It is usually recorded with the deed, but for whatever reason, it was not, the Assessor's Office will mail one out to the transferee. The owner of the property is required to complete and return the form, under Section 480.3 of the

Revenue and Taxation Code. The PCOR is not a public document and therefore not open for public inspection. BOE 502 A - Preliminary Change of ownership report

**Q. I completed a Preliminary Change of Ownership Report (PCOR) during escrow. Can I ignore the PCOR your office sent me?**

A. No. If you received a PCOR, it indicates the Assessor Department did not receive a completed PCOR.

**Q. Do I have to provide the purchase price and financing information?**

A. Yes. Purchase price and terms of the purchase are required under Section 480 of the California Revenue & Taxation Code. This information is for the Assessor's use only, **and will not be accessible to the public.**

**Q. How do I change the name on the Tax Bill Or Ownership Records?**

A. In order to change the name as it appears on assessment records, you need to record a new deed. Record the notarized deed in the County Recorder's Office along with a Preliminary Change in Ownership Report (PCOR).

We recommend that you seek legal advice and assistance from an attorney before filling out documents that affect the ownership of your property.

**Q. Will a Change In Ownership affect my Property Taxes?**

A. A change in ownership may result in an increase to your property taxes. If a transfer is between parent and child or between spouses, it may be excluded from reappraisal in certain circumstances. For more information please see **"INFORMATION REGARDING REAL PROPERTY"** If you have any questions, please call 707-784-6200.

**Q. My name is not spelled correctly on the property tax bill. How can I have the spelling corrected or changed?**

A. The name on a property bill must appear exactly as it did on the last recorded document. . If the name is misspelled due to a typographical error on our part, we will gladly correct it. If the name was spelled incorrectly on the recorded document, you must record a new document with the Recorder. Please call our office at 707-784-6200.

**Q. Where can I obtain the necessary forms to change title?**

A. Most stationery and office supply stores supply blank business forms/documents that can be used to change title, such as a Grant Deed or Quitclaim Deed. Some even have a notary on site. There are also title companies that have blank documents on their web sites.

**Q. Can you help me to fill out my deed so that I can change the title to my property?**

A. No. The Assessor Department **cannot** advise owners on title changes. You should contact an attorney, paralegal, or a title company for assistance.

**Q. Should I notify the Assessor Department when an owner of real estate dies?**

A. If you are authorized to act on behalf of an estate, you should file a Preliminary Change in Ownership Report (PCOR) with a copy of the death certificate, or Change in Ownership Statement - Death of Real Property Owner (COS-DORPO) with the Assessor Department within 150 days of the date of death. If the estate is probated, the PCOR, or COS-DORPO should be completed and returned to the Assessor Department when the inventory and appraisal is filed with the court. The death of a property owner is a change in ownership and may affect the estate's property taxes. However, failure to report the death may result in penalties.

**Q. What is an Affidavit of Death or an Affidavit of Death of a Joint Tenant?**

A. This is a legal document that may be required by title companies or attorneys in order to make the death a matter of public record. The notarized document should be recorded in the County Recorder's Office with a certified copy of the death certificate.

**Q. What information should appear on a Recorded Document?**

A. The document must be typed or filled out legibly in ink. It should include a complete legal description of the property and the parcel number. We recommend that you seek the advice of an attorney before filing documents that affect the ownership of your property. You should also file a Preliminary Change in Ownership Report with the deed when it is recorded.

**Q. Why is a PCOR or COS required if property is held in a trust, and the owner(s) of the trust dies?**

A. A change of ownership occurs as of the date of death. Even though the property remains in the trust, the beneficial interest has transferred from the owner (decedent) to the beneficiary of the trust. A PCOR or COS is required.

**Q. How do I change the mailing address for valuation notices and property tax bills?**

A. Send your signed, written request for a mailing address change to the Solano County Assessor/Recorder, 675 Texas Street Suite 2700 Fairfield CA 94533-6338.

**INFORMATION REGARDING BOATS AND AIRCRAFT**

**Q. Why am I receiving a tax bill for my boat or aircraft?**

A. Boats and aircraft are taxable and are subject to annual appraisal. Their values are determined by reviewing sales of comparable boats and airplanes. Information on their locations and ownerships is obtained from the Department of Motor Vehicles, the United States Coast Guard, the Federal Aviation Administration, on-site inspections, and other public and private sources.

**Q. Will I be assessed even if my boat or aircraft is out of the county on January 1?**

A. Temporarily removing a boat or aircraft from the county on January 1 will not exempt it from property taxes, if it is regularly or routinely located in the county.

**Q. Will I still be taxed if my boat was sold before January 1?**



A. No, the new owner will be responsible for paying the taxes. However, you may receive a Notice of Proposed Assessment if we do not receive the necessary information from the Department of Motor Vehicles.

If you receive a notice, you should send us a letter with the following:

- Vessel identification number.
- New owner's name and address
- Date of sale
- Copy of 'Release of Liability' from the DMV

**Q. What if I have sold my boat after January 1?**

A. To release the boat from our tax roll, you will need to submit a note to our office following the same procedure above. Please note that this only releases the boat from the upcoming tax year. **Because the sale was after January 1, you will still be responsible for the tax bill for the year.**

**INFORMATION REGARDING BUSINESS PERSONAL PROPERTY**

**Q. When is Personal Property appraised?**

A. Personal property is appraised annually. Each person owning taxable personal property of more than \$100,000, or any person upon request of the Assessor, must file a signed property statement each year with the Assessor's Office detailing the cost of all their supplies, equipment, and fixtures at each location. Inventory is exempt from taxation. For more information, call 707-784-6200.

**Q. Why did I receive a business property statement(571-L)?**

A. Our records indicate that you were doing business at this location on January 1. (California Revenue & Taxation Code 441)

**Q. Who must file a 571-L?**

A. All sole proprietors and/or business entities must file if they are sent a form 571-L. Any business or sole proprietor who owns \$100,000 or more of assessable personal property and fixtures must file whether or not the Assessor's Office sends them a form 571-L

**Q. I received a 571-F. What it is it for?**

A. The 571-F is sent to agricultural businesses. It is designed to allow easier reporting of farm equipment.

**Q. Do I have to file this return?**

A. Yes. Failure to complete and file this form (571-L) will result in the Assessor's estimating the value of your business property, and adding a 10% penalty to the assessment. (California Revenue & Taxation Code 441, 463 & 501)

**Q. Are there other forms I may have to file?**

A. Yes.

- The **576-D** should be filed by the owners of vessels.
- The **571-F2** should be filed by the owners of registered or show horses.
- The **571-J** should be filed by the owners of racehorses.
- The **571-K** for owners of horses which is occasionally sent with the 571-F.

**Q. Is my horse assessable?**

A. Only if it used in a business: for example, if the horse is shown or ridden for significant monetary prizes, or used to give riding lessons, or rented out, or used in a stud or breeding operation. Your personal mount is not normally assessable. If you have questions, please call an Auditor-Appraiser at 707-784-6200.

**Q. Can I amend a filing after it is mailed?**

A. Yes. You have until May 31 to amend your statement.

**Q. Does the Assessor prorate taxes between buyer and seller in the event a business is sold?**

A. No. Any arrangement regarding property tax liability must be strictly worked out between the buyer and seller, and is separate from our office.

**Q. What is business personal property?**

A. Business personal property includes all property, except inventory items held for sale or short-term rental and real estate owned and/or used by a business. Examples of business personal property include office furniture, computers, machinery, drill presses, spare parts and supplies. (Assessor Handbook AH 501 published by the State Board of Equalization) (California Revenue & Taxation Code Section 241)

**Q. What is the difference between inventory and supplies?**

A. Inventory consists of items subject to **sale, rent or lease**. Supplies would be **items consumed in your normal course of business**. (Assessor Handbook AH 501 published by the State Board of Equalization)

**Q. Who is required to file the Business Property Statement for leased equipment?**

A. When equipment is leased, either the lessor or the lessee may be the assessee. The law states that the assessor may assess leased property to either the lessee or the lessor, or both, whether or not there is a private agreement between the parties to the lease.

**Q. I received a letter saying that I was going to be audited. Did I do something wrong?**

A. No. The Revenue and taxation code requires the Assessor to audit businesses, trade persons or professionals with an assessed value of \$400,000 or more. These are routine mandatory audits and are usually done every 4 years with eligible businesses. The law also allows the Assessor to audit any 571 or 576 statement at any time. Non-mandatory audits are usually done at the taxpayer's request or in connection with an assessment appeal.

**Q. How does the Assessor arrive at the taxable value for personal property assessments?**

A. For most property, the Assessor uses the cost reported by the current owner and applies a depreciation/market price factor in order to estimate market value.

**Q. Why must sales tax be included in the reported cost?**

A. Sales tax is part of the original cost to the buyer, just like freight and installation costs it must be reported as part of your total cost. (Assessor Handbook AH 501 published by the State Board of Equalization)

**Q. What if I disagree with my assessment?**

A. If you disagree with an assessment made by the Assessor, we recommend you first discuss it with an Auditor-Appraiser of the Assessor's Office. An Auditor-Appraiser is available Monday through Friday 707-784-6200.

Whether or not you discuss the matter with the Assessor, you also have the right to file an 'Application for Changed Assessment' (assessment appeal) with the Assessment Appeals Board. Their phone number is 707-784-6100. The Appeals Board is an independent agency representing the Board of Supervisors and is not connected with, nor is it under the control of, the Assessor's Office in any way.

**Q. How do I file an Application for Changed Assessment?**

A. An application must be filed, in writing, with the Assessment Appeals Board. You may request an application by calling the Clerk of the Board 707-784-6100.

**Q. What if I sold/closed my business after January 1? Why would I be responsible for the Business Property Statement (BPS) or the taxes?**

A. Even though you may no longer own the property, you are still responsible for the taxes because you owned the business as of the lien date. When taxable personal property is sold after the lien date, it is the responsibility of the seller to pay the taxes on the property for the ensuing fiscal year. In addition, you must also complete the business property statement, including a note indicating that the business was closed/sold.

**Q. I was not open for business on January 1, do I still have to complete the Business Property Statement (BPS)?**

A. Yes. A business does not have to be open for its taxable personal property to be subject to assessment. For example, let's presume that on January 1, a new hair salon is being

constructed but has not yet had its grand opening. Even though the salon was not open for business on the lien date, taxable business personal property (such as furniture and supplies) was in the owner's possession on the lien date and the Assessor is required to assess it.

**Q. I went out of business prior to January 1; do I still have to complete the Business Property Statement (BPS)?**

A. Yes. Anytime a person receives a BPS from the Assessor and their business is no longer in operation, the BPS must still be signed and returned to the Assessor. You should also include a note on the BPS indicating that the business has closed, because if you don't, the Assessor will not be aware of that fact, and may continue to assess the property despite its true circumstance. On the BPS or an attachment to it, please write a note that includes the date you went out of business, as well as the status and disposition of any equipment owned or used by you at the time the business closed. If any of the property was sold to another person or business, please indicate the buyer's name and address. If any of the property reverted to your own personal use as household personal property, we need to know what property did that as well. Please then sign and return the BPS to the Assessor's Office.

**Note:** Where a business has closed but you still own equipment previously used in the business, it may still be taxable despite the fact the business is closed. If the equipment you still own can be converted to household uses (that is, could become your personal effects), then it may not be assessable.

**Calamities - Disaster Relief (Temporary Reduction)**

**Q. What is a major calamity?**

A. The courts have defined "disaster, misfortune, or calamity" as some event out of the ordinary; an unforeseeable, sudden, or unusual occurrence, in contrast to gradual deterioration or worsening condition over time. Damage to a building or land that occurs gradually due to ordinary natural forces is not caused by a major calamity.

**Q. What requirements need to be met to qualify for temporary tax reduction?**

A. The amount of damage must exceed \$10,000, and a completed Calamity Claim application must be filed with the Assessor within 12 months of the date of damage. However, if no application has been filed and the Assessor later determines that a property suffered a calamity within the preceding 12 months, then the Assessor must send an application to the last known owner of the property. The owner must then return the completed application to the Assessor within 60 days of the Assessor's notification but in no case may the application be filed later than 12 months after the date of calamity.

**Q. How does the disaster relief affect my property tax bill?**

A. The current property taxes will be reduced for that portion of the property damaged or destroyed. This reduction will be from the date of the damage, and will remain in effect until the property is rebuilt or repaired.

**Q. If household furniture was ruined by a flood, can my property taxes be reduced?**

A. No. Household furnishings are not assessed for property taxes and therefore do not qualify for property tax relief.

**Q. Do boats and airplanes qualify if they were also damaged by the disaster?**

A. Yes. A reduction is available for all damaged taxable property, including boats, aircraft or other business personal property.

**Q. After my property is rebuilt or repaired, will my property taxes be increased?**

A. Yes, but only to the level they were before the damage occurred, plus the appropriate inflation factor. This is true if the improvements are rebuilt in a like or similar manner, regardless of the actual cost of rebuilding. However, if additional living space or other significant improvements are made in addition to the repair, additional taxes may result.

**GOVERNOR-DECLARED DISASTER-REPLACEMENT PROPERTY**

**Q. How is the value of my new replacement property calculated?**

A. If the market value of the replacement is within 120 percent of the market value of the property substantially damaged or destroyed, the factored base year value of the damaged or destroyed property will be transferred to the replacement. Ref. California Revenue & Taxation 69(b)(1)

**Example:** Market value of damaged or destroyed property = \$220,000 Market value of replacement property = \$275,000 Percentage above value of damaged or destroyed property = 25 percent Base year value of replacement =  $\$220,000 + (275,000 - (220,000 \times 120\%)) = \$231,000$

**Q. If my property was severely damaged / destroyed by a calamity but no declaration of disaster was issued by the governor, would I still be able to transfer my old base year value?**

A. No. A disaster declaration must have been issued by the Governor for the event that caused the damage. Ref California Revenue & Taxation Code 69(c) (3)

**Q. What if the market value of my replacement property actually turns out to be LESS than the factored Prop 13 value of my original property?**

A. In that case, the Assessor would simply enroll the lower value. Ref California Revenue & Taxation Code 69(b) (3)

**Q. Can I transfer the base year value of my severely damaged / destroyed property to another county?**

A. In some cases yes, but only if the county in which the replacement property is located has passed a resolution allowing such transfers and you otherwise qualify. Ref. California Revenue & Taxation Code 69.3

**Q. Do I have to purchase an already complete replacement property or can I buy land and build a replacement structure on it?**

A. You may do either, as long as the comparable replacement property is acquired or newly constructed within three years after the disaster.

**PROPERTY EXEMPTIONS**

**Homeowners Exemptions**

**Q. What is a Homeowner's Exemption?**

A. If you own and occupy your principal place of residence on January 1, you may apply for a Homeowner's Exemption that would exempt \$7,000 of your home's assessed value from taxation. This would result in a savings of approximately \$70 per year on your property tax bill. A homeowners' exemption may also apply to a supplemental assessment. For more information, call 707-784-6200.

**Q. What sorts of properties can qualify for the Homeowners' Exemption?**

A. A single family residence, a duplex, a condominium or planned unit development, a unit of any multi-unit property, a mobile home, a houseboat or floating home that is subject to property tax, a living unit in a commercial or industrial property.

**Q. How do I get a Homeowner's Exemption?**

A. New property owners will usually receive an exemption application enclosed with their notice of supplemental assessment, approximately 90 to 120 days after the deed is recorded. If you acquired the property more than 120 days ago, and have not received an application, please call 707-784-6200 for an application.

**Q. What is the filing period for the Homeowner's Exemption on the annual secured property tax bill?**

A. The deadline to file for the full exemption is February 15. A partial exemption is available if filed between February 16 and December 10. You must still meet the own and occupy by January 1st eligibility requirement, even when filing late.

**Q. What is the filing period for the Homeowners Exemption on my Supplemental Assessment?**

A. You must return the exemption Claim Form that is enclosed with your notice of supplemental assessment, within 30 days after the date of the notice, to receive the full exemption. A partial exemption may be allowed if is returned after 30 days, but before the date the first installment of your supplemental tax bill is due.

**Q. Do I need to reapply for this exemption every year?**

A. No. Once you have filed for a Homeowner's Exemption and you continue to own and occupy the residence, you will automatically receive the exemption. It is, however your responsibility to apply again if:

- You have changed principal residences and would like to have the Homeowner's Exemption moved to that property.
- You no longer occupy the property as your principal residence.
- If you are moving, outside of Solano County, it is also your responsibility to contact our office so that the exemption can be removed from your property. If you fail to do so, it could result in problems when you try to claim the Exemption in another county.

Also, if a document is filed with the Recorder's Office that changes the way the title is held, you may be required to reapply.

It also your responsibility to notify the Assessor immediately whenever a property you own is no longer eligible for the homeowners' Exemption. Failure to notify the Assessor will result in escape assessments and penalties if an unauthorized exemption is discovered.

**Q. How can I verify I am receiving a Homeowner's Exemption?**

A. A Homeowner's Exemption will appear as a \$7,000 reduction in assessed value on the annual property tax bill, or a \$5,600 reduction for a partial exemption.

**Q. If I move out and rent my house to someone else, am I still eligible for the exemption?**

A. No. If your property is no longer your principal place of residence, you must cancel your Homeowner's Exemption. You can cancel the exemption by writing to our office. Please let us know the date you moved, and provide your new mailing address. To avoid penalties, you must notify us by December 10th when a property is no longer eligible for a Homeowners Exemption.

**Q. Why do I need to supply Social Security Numbers?**

A. Social Security Numbers are used to verify the eligibility of persons claiming the exemption and prevent multiple claims. Claim forms and Social Security Numbers are kept strictly confidential.

**Q. I also have a vacation home in the mountains. Can I get the exemption on it as well as my regular home?**

A. No. You are only entitled to one Homeowners' Exemption.

**Q. I just moved into a home I had previously rented out, Can I get a Homeowners Exemption on it now?**

A. Contact the Exemptions Division at 707-784-6200 to request a Claim Form, to file for the exemption on this property.

**Q. Would an extended stay in a convalescent hospital jeopardize eligibility for the Homeowners' Exemption?**

A. No. The exemption is allowed if the owner is expected to return. However, according to the State Board of Equalization, an absence of more than one year raises considerable doubt that the owner is expected to return, and in that case the eligibility may be terminated.

## **OTHER EXEMPTIONS**

### **Q. What are Examples of Tax-Exempted Properties?**

A. Property used exclusively for religious worship, colleges, cemeteries, museums, schools, or libraries may qualify for an exemption from property taxes. Properties owned and used exclusively by a nonprofit religious, charitable, scientific, or Hospital Corporation are also eligible for an exemption. For more information contact the Exemptions Division at 707-784-6200.

### **Q. Is there tax relief for Disabled Veterans?**

A. Yes. To qualify for this Exemption, you must be a veteran who is rated 100% disabled, blind, or a paraplegic due to a service-connected disability incurred while in the armed forces. You may also qualify as an unmarried surviving spouse of such veteran. The exemption may be up to 150,000 in value, and increases each year, due to inflation off the assessed value of their home. An application must be filed with the Assessor's Office to determine eligibility for this program. For more information, call 707-784-6200.

### **Q. Are there special programs available for Senior Citizens?**

A. The Property Tax Postponement Program allows qualified seniors to postpone payment of property taxes until the individual moves, sells the property or dies. For information, contact the State Controller's Office at 1-800-952-5661. The Property Tax Assistance Program for Seniors and Blind/Disabled Persons provides cash reimbursement for qualified individuals. For information, contact the Franchise Tax Board at 1-800-852-5711.

### **Q. I am over 55 and wish to move to another home. Will my taxes go up?**

A. Proposition 60 was passed by the voters in 1986 allowing those 55 and who essentially buy down in property value, to transfer the assessed value of their principal residence to a replacement residence in the same county.

- The replacement property must be of equal or lesser "current market value" than the original property. The "equal or lesser" test is applied to the entire replacement property, even if the owner of the original property purchases only a partial interest in the replacement property.
- Owners of two qualifying original properties may not combine the values of those properties in order to qualify for a Proposition 60 base-year value transfer to a replacement property of greater value than the more valuable of the two original properties.
- A claim form must be timely filed with the Assessor's Office to qualify. Solano County does not accept transfers from other counties.



*For additional information regarding this exclusion, see R and T code 69.5 or contact our office at 707-784-6200. BOE 60 AH - Claim of person(s) at least 55 years of age for transfer of base year value to replacement property*

**Q. What if I am from another county? Can I transfer my tax base to Solano?**

A. No. Solano County only honors the transfers that take place within Solano County. As of January 2007, there are 7 counties who do accept out of county transfers and they are: Alameda, Orange, San Mateo, Ventura, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Santa Clara. To see the most updated list of the counties that participate in this, see the State Board of Equalization's website at [www.boe.ca.gov](http://www.boe.ca.gov) or contact the individual County's Assessor's office.

**DISCLOSURE: The information on this website is a general overview of the law and is NOT meant to be relied upon as complete information.**

Link to State Board of Equalization website <http://www.boe.ca.gov/proptaxes/pubcont.htm>