

*The following is intended to provide general information concerning a frequently asked question about taxes administered by the Mississippi Tax Commission. It is an informal interpretation of the tax law and is not intended to serve as a rule, regulation, declaratory opinion, or letter ruling. Legislation, regulations, court decisions, notices and announcements could affect the accuracy of this information. Please refer to the Mississippi Code Annotated and the Mississippi Administrative Code for the most current version of the law and administrative procedures.*

## **Property FAQs**

### **What is property tax?**

Property tax, or ad valorem tax, is a tax imposed on the ownership or possession of property and is generally based on the value of the property. In Mississippi, all property is subject to a property tax unless it is exempt by law.

### **Where do my property taxes go?**

Property tax revenues are used to support county and city governments, and local school districts. A significant portion of the county's revenue is derived from property tax.

### **Who values my property?**

State law requires that the county Tax Assessor appraise your property at its true value. The authority of the Tax Commission is to assist and provide guidance to the local governments with the appraisal of property so that the property taxes imposed are uniform and equal throughout the State of Mississippi.

### **Who decides how much the property tax rate will be?**

The various taxing entities where the property is located levy the tax. This includes the county, municipality, and school districts. Each taxing entity determines the amount of money needed and the local officials calculate the tax rate necessary to raise that revenue.

### **When will my property values change?**

Tax Assessors must revalue real property at least once every four years. Taxable personal property is valued annually.

### **Where do I pay my property tax?**

Generally speaking, property taxes are paid to local Tax Collectors where the property is located.

### **What should I do if I don't receive a tax bill?**

Contact your county Tax Collector.

### **Am I required to pay property taxes on personal property?**

For the most part, household personal property belonging to individuals is exempt from property tax. Individuals do pay property taxes on motor vehicles when they register (obtain a tag or license plate) their vehicle. Personal property such as inventory, furniture and fixtures, and machinery and equipment used in trade or manufacture are subject to property tax.

### **How is my property tax bill calculated?**

(True value x Assessment Ratio x Millage Rate = Taxes)

The true value of the property is multiplied by the appropriate assessment ratio to determine the assessed value. The assessed value is multiplied by the local property tax rate, or millage rate, to determine the property taxes owed.

### **What is the assessment ratio for property?**

The assessment ratios for property are set by the Mississippi Constitution. Properties are divided into five classes, each with its own assessment ratio. They are:

Class I. Single-family, owner-occupied, residential real property, at ten percent (10%) of true value.

Class II. All other real property, except for real property included in Class I or IV, at fifteen percent (15%) of true value.

Class III. Personal property, except for motor vehicles and for personal property included in Class IV, at fifteen percent (15%) of true value.

Class IV. Public utility property, which is property owned or used by public service corporations required by general laws to be appraised and assessed by the state or the county, excluding railroad and airline property and motor vehicles, at thirty percent (30%) of true value.

Class V. Motor vehicles, at thirty percent (30%) of true value.

### **What is millage rate?**

Property tax rates are commonly referred to as millage rates, figured in mills.

One mill is equal to 1/1,000 of a dollar. For instance, if the millage rate for your area is 100 mills, you would pay \$100.00 for every \$1,000 of assessed value. If your property's true value was \$10,000, and the assessment ratio was 15% (Class II as defined above), your tax would be calculated as  $\$10,000 \times 15\% = \$1,500$  of assessed value.  $\$1,500 \times 100 \text{ mills} (100 \text{ mills} = 100/1000 = 10\%) = \$150.00$ .

### **How are motor vehicle property taxes calculated?**

Values are determined by the State Tax Commission using information from a nationwide valuation service. Year models are depreciated using a State Tax Commission schedule.

### **Why did my property tax increase?**

Generally speaking, there are two factors that affect your property tax: your property value and the millage rate levied in your jurisdiction. Any increase in your property taxes is likely related to a change in one, or both, of these factors. Physical changes such as additions and/or improvements to your property, inflation, and other economic factors can affect the value of your property. Likewise, if the local taxing authorities increase the millage rate for your jurisdiction, you could see an increase in your property taxes.

### **What causes increases to Millage Rates?**

There are several factors that can contribute to an increase in the millage rate. Some of those include: the voters approve a millage increase to fund special projects; the legislature approves the creation of a special district and grants authority to levy a tax; the local taxing authorities adjust the millage rate needed to collect the amount required to support the county government.

### **Who do I contact concerning my property tax bill?**

Contact your county Tax Collector

### **When are property taxes due?**

Taxes are due on or before February 1 for property assessed the preceding year. If February 1 falls on a weekend or legal holiday, taxes may be paid the following Monday without penalties or interest.

### **What happens if I don't pay my real estate taxes on time?**

If your real estate taxes are not paid timely, your property is subject to being sold at the county's tax auction.

### **When would my real estate property be up for tax sale?**

Tax sales can be held on the first Monday in April and the last Monday in August.

### **How do I get homestead exemption?**

Eligible homeowners should make application for homestead exemption with the Tax Assessor in the county where the home is located.

### **When must I file my application for homestead exemption?**

Applications for homestead exemption must be filed between January 1 and April 1.

**Who is eligible for homestead exemption?**

Anyone owning a home in Mississippi may be eligible for homestead exemption. Contact your local Tax Assessor for further details.

**Are elderly persons or disabled persons exempt from property taxes?**

Persons 65 years or older and persons who are totally disabled, who are otherwise eligible for homestead exemption, are exempt from taxes on the first \$75,000 of true value on their home.

**Do I need to apply for homestead exemption each year?**

You do not have to apply for homestead exemption each year. You should re-apply if there were any changes in your homestead status (such as change in marital status, property ownership, etc.)

**When I bought my home, I forgot to file for homestead exemption. Is it too late to claim a homestead exemption and obtain a refund?**

You must file on or before April 1 in order to qualify for homestead exemption for the assessment year.

**What is needed to qualify for the disability exemption?**

To qualify for the disability exemption, you must provide proof of disability. Evidence that will be accepted as proof consists of the following types of documents: Veteran's Consent of Release (Form 72-042), Report of Confidential Social Security Benefit Information (Form 72-051), Letter from Railroad Retirement Act disability, Schedule R or Schedule 3 – Federal Income Tax Forms, letter from employer outlining the disability, detailed letters from two physicians outlining the disability and its expected duration.

**I'm in the military stationed outside Mississippi; however, I have a home in the state. Do I qualify for homestead?**

If a person in the military is stationed outside the state of Mississippi, has a home in Mississippi, claims residency in Mississippi, and is in compliance with all applicable Mississippi laws, they can qualify for homestead exemption. If the member of the military is married, both spouses must qualify.

**My Homestead Exemption was disallowed because of my Income Tax debt. Why?**

Mississippi law states that a person is not eligible for Homestead Exemption if that person, or his/her spouse, has failed to comply with the Income Tax laws of this state. That includes failure to file a return, not paying taxes, or the homeowner and/or spouse claiming non-resident status on the Mississippi Income Tax return.

**My Homestead Exemption was disallowed because my car was tagged in another county. Why?**

Mississippi Law requires that you must be in compliance with the road and bridge privilege tax laws of this state to qualify for Homestead Exemption. Your motor vehicle is required to be tagged where the vehicle is domiciled. To qualify for Homestead Exemption, the property must be your primary residence; therefore, the motor vehicle's place of domicile is your homestead property.

**How do I register my mobile home for property taxes?**

Contact your local Tax Assessor/Collector's office.

**Who do I contact for information about tax sales?**

Contact the Tax Collector in the county where the property is located. For information about property sold to the State, contact the Secretary of State at 1-866-835-2637.

**I disagree with the assessment on my property. What can I do?**

You should request a hearing with the county Board of Supervisors. For more information, contact your county's Chancery Clerk.

**When can I appeal my assessment?**

Normally, an appeal must be filed by the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday in August preceding the due date of the taxes.

**What gives the assessor the authority to come on to someone's property?**

Mississippi law makes it the assessor's responsibility to physically inspect property to determine value.

**Do I have to let the appraiser in my house?**

No. Interior inspections of residences are not required.

**Why did the appraiser measure that old barn at the back of my property when it's not worth anything?**

Your property includes all improvements to that piece of property. For property tax purposes, improvements include all structures.

**The appraisal has inaccurate information regarding the size of my home. Can I get a refund for prior years?**

In certain circumstances, you may receive a refund for prior years. Contact your local Chancery Clerk for more information.

**What is inventory tax?**

Inventory tax is a property tax imposed on the inventory held by most businesses for sale. Inventory includes raw materials, goods in progress, and the inventory of finished goods for sale. Inventory is considered Class 3 property.

**How is agricultural property valued?**

Agricultural property, including both farmland and forestland, is valued by the State Tax Commission. The soil type and productivity are criteria used for valuation.

**What is the exemption for Freeport Warehouse?**

Goods held in a Free Port Warehouse that will be shipped out of state may be exempt from property taxes. Contact your local Tax Assessor's office for more information.