

# How do I qualify for property tax exemption or deferral?

## If you are a senior citizen or disabled person

RCW 84.36.381 grants property tax exemptions if your total annual income is \$35,000 or less and if you are 61 years of age or older, or you are retired because of physical disability, or if you are a widow or widower at least 57 years of age whose spouse had an exemption at the time of his or her death. Once you have applied for an exemption and received approval, you need file only once every four years to maintain the exemption. The Assessor's office will notify you when it is time to refile. The exemption ceases immediately upon the death of the qualified person, unless survived by an eligible spouse. Legislation passed in 1995 also provides that the claimant's assessed valuation is frozen as of January 1, 1995 or January 1 of the first year of eligibility, whichever is later. The 2004 legislature increased income criteria, allows Medicare part B insurance premiums as a deduction, and adult family day care facilities and boarding homes are also allowable expenses.

## If you wish to have property tax payments deferred

The claimant must have combined disposable income of \$40,000 or less as defined for the senior citizen exemption in RCW 84.36.383, and must be at least 60 years old at time of filing, or retired because of disability. Chapter 84.38 RCW permits the claimant to defer payment of special assessments and/or real property taxes up to 80% of the amount of the claimant's equity value in the residence. The residence must meet all the requirements for an exemption under the senior citizen exemption (RCW 84.36.381) other than the income and parcel size limits. Deferred taxes become a lien on the property payable upon sale or transfer. A declaration to defer taxes must be filed with the Assessor no later than 30 days before the tax is due. The 2004 legislature changed the wording of the disability section to include mental as well as physical disabilities.

### Qualifying Income Criteria for 2012 Tax

<i>Income (for 2010)</i>	<i>Levies Exempt (in 2012)</i>
\$30,001 - \$35,000	100% of excess levies
\$25,001 - \$30,000	100% of excess levies, plus \$40,000 or 35% of valuation up to \$60,000, whichever is greater, exempt from all property tax.
\$25,000 or less	100% of excess levies, plus up to \$50,000 or 60% of valuation, whichever is greater, exempt from all property tax.

### AVERAGE TAX SAVINGS AVAILABLE TO QUALIFIED SENIOR CITIZENS/DISABLED PERSONS — 2012\*

Income Level	# of Participants	Average Appraised Value	Average Frozen Value	Average Taxable Value After Exemption	Tax Savings*	Savings Percentage
\$25,000 or less	12,976	\$257,675 Rate 10.16567	\$199,502 Rate 10.16567	\$80,595 Rate 7.54654	\$2,011.23	77%
\$25,001 - \$30,000	4,531	\$268,189 Rate 10.16567	\$230,272 Rate 10.16567	\$149,677 Rate 7.54654	\$1,596.78	59%
\$30,001 - \$35,000	4,165	\$278,478 Rate 10.16567	\$261,689 Rate 10.16567	\$261,689 Rate 7.54654	\$856.07	30%

\*Tax savings are typical for a single-family residence in the City of Seattle Savings include the effects of freezing the value as well as the effects of further value reduction for each level, and of exemption from excess levies. Figures shown are for illustrative purposes only; actual tax savings depend on the taxable value of the subject parcel.

## Is all church-owned property exempt?

RCW 84.36.020 allows exemption of church-owned property used for church purposes. Property must be used for such things as church, parking, parsonage, convent, and caretaker's residence. The land on which an exemption is granted may not exceed five acres.

## What other kinds of property are tax-exempt?

RCW 84.36.030 through 84.36.350 allow tax exemptions for property used in character building, benevolent, protective or rehabilitative social services; camp facilities; veterans and relief organizations; libraries; orphanages; day care centers; nursing homes and hospitals; schools and colleges; art, scientific and historical collections; fire companies; humane societies; musical and artistic associations; public assembly halls; certain public authorities, and sheltered workshops for the disabled.

**Exemption must be claimed annually and ceases upon cessation of the exemption-qualifying use of the property. Applications must be made to the state Department of Revenue.**

## What if I buy or sell real property?

RCW 84.60.020 provides for proration of taxes on real property between seller and buyer unless there is an agreement to the contrary.

EXAMPLE: If A sells a house to B on March 1, 2012, A (the seller) is responsible for two months of 2012 tax, and B (the purchaser) is responsible for 10 months of the 2012 tax.

## If I move, where do I send my address change?

Please send mailing address changes to:

King County Treasury Division  
500 Fourth Avenue - MS 6A  
Seattle, WA 98104-2387

## How do I question or appeal the value placed on my property?

First, you should feel free to contact us. Call or write the Department of Assessments (Room 700B King County Administration Building, 296-7300) if you believe an error has been made in valuing your property. If it appears an error may have been made, the Department can conduct an assessment review, and, if indicated, adjust the assessed value of your property (through May 31 of the year preceding the year in which taxes are due).

You can also appeal to the King County Board of Equalization through July 1 of the year before the tax is due, or up to sixty (60) days after you receive a revaluation notice. The Board of Equalization is independent of the Department of Assessments. You must present proof that the Assessor has erred in the appraisal. The information you present to the Board should include sales of comparable properties in your area. You should also submit other pertinent information that demonstrates the difference between the Assessor's value and the correct value.

If you do not agree with the county Board's decision, you may appeal to the State Board of Tax Appeals. You must again present proof that the Assessor has erred in the appraisal.

Assistance may be obtained from the King County Property Tax Advisor at 296-5202.

## How do I obtain other information and assistance?

Anyone desiring information or having a question about the assessment of property should call 296-7300 or write the Department of Assessments, Room 700B King County Administration Building, 500 Fourth Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104-2384. Information can also be obtained through our web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/assessor](http://www.kingcounty.gov/assessor). You may also e-mail us at [Assessor.Info@kingcounty.Gov](mailto:Assessor.Info@kingcounty.Gov).

The Assessor's Public Information unit, Room 700A, is open to the public Monday through Friday from 8:30-4:30 for assessment information and research. The service counter is staffed to assist you in finding property information you may be unable to locate on your own. In addition, appraisers are available to assist on more technical questions.

Property information is also available at the following King County Community Service Centers: Northshore, Vashon-Maury Island, Lake Wilderness, Cottage Lake, Sammamish, Fall City, and the Regional Justice Center.

## How is the value of Personal Property determined?

Most personal property assessments are based on information provided by the taxpayer on personal property affidavit forms furnished by the Assessor. The affidavits are mailed to established accounts by January 1 each year, and must be returned to the Assessor by April 30. Affidavits for new businesses reporting for the first time may be mailed after January 1. Extensions of filing date are not granted. A tax penalty of 5% per month will be applied to affidavits received after April 30. The Assessor may waive the penalty if the late filing is due to reasonable cause. A penalty of 25% of the tax due in the following year will be applied for failure to file an affidavit.

The Assessor uses information provided by the taxpayer to determine value, taking into consideration the age, cost, and type of property. When the affidavit is processed and the property valued and entered on the assessment roll, a Personal Property Assessment Notice is mailed to the taxpayer.

## Is property assessed at its full value?

Yes, the state constitution requires property to be assessed at 100% of its true and fair value. The appraisal process is the responsibility of the Assessor, who values property on a cyclical basis according to a revaluation plan filed with the state Department of Revenue. At a minimum, real property must be revalued every four years. King County began an annual revaluation program in 1995.

## What determines the amount of property tax?

The costs of state and local government determine how much property tax will be levied. These include operating costs of schools, city and county government, and other taxing districts such as the Port of Seattle, library, hospital, fire, and sewer districts. A large part of each property tax dollar goes to pay off bonds for such capital costs as school buildings and other public projects.

## How are property tax levies established?

The state constitution, statutory levy limits set by the legislature, and excess levies approved by the voters are used to calculate the total property tax levy. The tax rate on your property is the figure resulting from dividing the dollar amount required for the taxing district by the total value of property within the district, and then adding up the rates of the various districts in which your property is located. The assessed value of your property multiplied by the combined rate produces a tax amount which is your fair share of the total property tax levy in your area. The King County Treasurer issues tax statements and taxes are paid to the King County Treasury Division.

## What are the legal limitations on property taxes?

**The 1% constitutional limit:** The primary limitation on property taxes was established by the 17th amendment to the Washington State Constitution in 1972. Article 7, Section 2 of the Constitution and RCW 84.52.050 limit the total regular property tax levy to a maximum of \$10.00 per \$1,000 of the market value of property. Excluded from this \$10 limit are levies for ports and public utility districts.

**Statutory maximum rates for districts:** RCW 84.52.043 establishes maximum levy rates for the various types of taxing districts (the state, counties, cities and towns, fire districts, and the like). In addition, it establishes a maximum aggregate rate of \$5.90 per \$1,000 of assessed value for counties, cities, fire districts, library districts and other junior taxing districts. The state levy is not subject to the \$5.90 limit, although it is subject to the constitutional \$10 limit. Details of the rate limitations and levy authority for the various taxing districts may be found in the tables on pages 14-15 of this report.

**The new levy increase limit:** In November 2001, voters approved Initiative 727, which established a new limitation on the increase in regular property taxes for taxing districts (Chapter 84.55 RCW), beginning with the 2002 tax year. The new limitation each year for most districts is now 101% of their highest lawful levy since 1985, plus an additional amount to allow for new construction within the district. Referendum 47, passed in 1997 by Washington voters, requires taxing districts with over 10,000 population to establish substantial need to use any amount of this 101% limit that exceeds the rate of inflation, and to approve such an increase by a super-majority vote of its governing body (e.g. a city council).

**The levy increase limit applies to the total amount of regular property tax for a taxing district, not to individual properties.**

With majority voter approval, districts may raise the levy limit above 101% in order to exercise more levy authority under the statutory and constitutional limits.

**Excess levies:** Most districts can submit propositions for additional property tax levies to a vote of the people. Local school districts have no regular levy authority (although they are allocated funds from the statewide school levy), so they receive a substantial portion of their funding from voter-approved excess levies. Excess levies must be authorized by a 60% majority of the voters, and **such levies are not subject to any of the limitations described above.**

## What happens if levy limits are exceeded?

The regular levy for each taxing district is reviewed by county authorities for compliance with the levy increase limit, the district's statutory rate limit, and the \$5.90 and 1% limits before the levy is made. If the statutory or levy increase limits are exceeded by an individual district, then their levy is reduced to a lawful amount. The statutes establish a district hierarchy for rate reductions if the aggregate limits are exceeded, and rates are reduced accordingly.

# What do the notations on the Valuation Change Notice mean?

KING COUNTY DEPT OF ASSESSMENTS  
500 FOURTH AVENUE ROOM 740  
SEATTLE, WA 98104-2384

## OFFICIAL PROPERTY VALUE NOTICE

THIS IS NOT A TAX BILL

PRESORTED  
FIRST CLASS MAIL  
U. S. POSTAGE PAID  
SEATTLE, WA  
PERMIT NO. 213

**ACCOUNT NUMBER: 000000-0000-00**  
**LEVY CODE: 0010**

**PLAT NAME:**  
NEWPORT 2

**MAIL DATE: 7/16/11**  
**SEE BACK FOR APPEAL DEADLINE**

### ❶ 2011 VALUE FOR TAXES DUE IN 2012

	❷ APPRAISED VALUE		❸ VALUE AFTER EXEMPTION
	OLD VALUE	NEW VALUE	
LAND:	62,000	68,000	49,000
BLDGS:	188,000	204,000	167,000
TOTAL:	250,000	272,000	216,000

### MAILING ADDRESS:

JOHN DOE  
MARY DOE  
10000 SE STREENAME DR  
BELLEVUE WA 98005

- ❶ Taxes payable in 2012 will be based on values established as of January 1, 2011 (except for new construction, for which the valuation date is July 31, 2011).
- ❷ Old and new APPRAISED VALUE on this notice represent the market value of your property established by county appraisers for last year and for this year respectively. Your taxes will be based on this value unless you have a property tax exemption.
- ❸ VALUE AFTER EXEMPTION reflects reductions in your value to which you are entitled if you have applied for and qualified for a property tax exemption. You can find out about the various types of property tax exemptions on our web site ([www.kingcounty.gov/assessor/](http://www.kingcounty.gov/assessor/)).

# What do the notations on the tax statement mean?

SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION

**2012 KING COUNTY, WA, REAL ESTATE TAX**  
 RM 600 - 500 FOURTH AVE, SEATTLE WA 98104-2340

PROPERTY TAX ACCOUNT NUMBER  
 RP10  
 H 000000-0000-00 **1**

BRING ALL PARTS WHEN PAYING IN PERSON

YOUR NAME  
 YOUR MAILING ADDRESS

**KEEP THIS PORTION**

BILLING DISTRIBUTION		BILLING INFORMATION	
State .....	1,104.73	Land Value.....	163,000
Local School Support.....	2,167.43	Improvements.....	293,000
County.....	645.64	Less: Exempt Value.....	←
City.....	←	<b>TAXABLE VALUE.....</b>	<b>456,000</b>
Unincorporated/Road.....	1,026.00	Levy Rate.....	13.57237
Port.....	104.80	General Tax.....	6,189.00
Fire.....	456.00	*Other charges.....	392.68
Hospital.....	225.68	<b>TOTAL CURRENT BILL.....</b>	<b>6,581.68</b>
Library.....	259.89	Omitted Taxes.....	←
Other.....	7.36	<b>TOTAL CURRENT BILL INCLUDING OMITTS.....</b>	<b>6,581.68</b>
Emergency Med Svc.....	136.80	VOTER APPROVED	2,558.57
Ferry.....	1.70		
Flood Control.....	52.97		
<b>*OTHER CHARGES:</b>			
*FIRE FEE	247.45	*SWM	133.00
*NOX WEED	2.25	*KING CD	9.98

LOT	BLOCK CODE	SEC	TWP	RG
COTTAGE LAKE HEIGHTS	7570			

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 0000 194TH AV NE

DELINQUENCY INFORMATION		
YEAR	INTEREST PENALTY	PRINCIPAL
SWM DELINQUENT TOTAL		
<b>TOTAL CURRENT AND DELINQUENTS</b>		6,581.68

**10** First half must be paid or postmarked by April 30 or FULL AMOUNT BECOMES DELINQUENT and accrues interest and penalty as prescribed by law. If first half paid by April 30 second half must be paid by October 31 or it becomes delinquent and accrues interest and penalty.

**FULL AMOUNT MAY BE PAID APRIL 30th**

- 1** Identification of your property in Assessor's records.
- 2** These figures show the tax dollars allocated to each district within whose boundaries your property lies.
- 3** These figures are the assessed (market) value placed on your property by the Department of Assessments.
- 4** If you are a qualified senior citizen or disabled person with qualifying income, any assessed value exemption to which you may be entitled appears here.
- 5** This is the total of all rates (per thousand dollars of assessed value) that the various governmental units have levied to finance their operations in 2012. This total rate varies throughout the county, depending on the amount each government levies. In this example, the total rate is the sum of the following: State School Support: \$2.42266; Local Schools: \$4.75315; County: \$1.41588; Unincorporated Roads: \$2.25000; Port: \$0.22982; Fire District 36: \$1.00000; Library: \$0.56992; Emergency Med Svcs: \$0.30000. "Other" levies on this example are for Hospital District 2: \$0.49492, Northshore Park and Recreation District: \$0.01614; Flood District: \$0.11616; and Ferry District: \$0.00372.
- 6** This is the amount of current year property tax for which you are liable. It was calculated by multiplying the total Levy Rate (5) by the Taxable Value (3) divided by 1,000.
- 7** Other charges may include Drainage District Assessments (based on "benefit acres"), State Forest Fire Patrol assessment (based on a per-acre rate established by law), a conservation district fee, noxious weed fee, surface water management (SWM) fees, and/or a Fire District Service Charge. The charges that apply to you will be listed on your bill. Telephone numbers for the agencies imposing them are on the back of the bill.
- 8** The amount of your tax bill resulting from voter approval of specific projects (school levies, capital and construction projects, and the like) is shown here. This information was made a legal requirement for the property tax bill by the 1994 legislature.
- 9** Taxes for property value that should have been assessed in prior years but wasn't (for example, a new house). Omitted assessments can be made for up to three years. Taxes are based on the assessed values and levy rates appropriate for each back year.
- 10** The 2012 tax statement shown above has two tear-off half-year bills to accommodate payment in two installments.