

An Overview of the Property Tax and Assessment Process

It takes three separate Fresno County offices, Assessor, Auditor-Controller, and Treasurer and Tax Collector to produce and account for a property tax bill and payment. (See the diagram below that shows the flow of the process.)

Assessor

The Fresno County Assessor establishes the assessed value of property by appraising the value of that property under applicable State laws. The assessed value is then placed on a list with all other properties in Fresno County and this list is called the "Assessment Roll." The Assessor also approves and applies all exemptions, which are added to the Assessment Roll. The Assessment Roll is then presented to the Fresno County Auditor-Controller for further processing.

Auditor-Controller

The Fresno County Auditor-Controller adds direct assessments to the Assessment Roll then applies the tax rates, which consists of general (1%) levy and debt service (voter & bonded) tax rates to the value to create an Extended Assessment Roll. The Extended Roll is then sent to the Fresno County Treasurer and Tax Collector for individual tax bill distribution and payment collection.

Treasurer and Tax Collector

The Fresno County Treasurer and Tax Collector receives the Extended Roll, prints and mails the property tax bills to the name and address on the Extended Roll. The Treasurer and Tax Collector collects secured and unsecured taxes. Secured taxes are taxes on real property, such as vacant land, structures on land, i.e. business/office building, home, apartments, etc. Unsecured taxes are taxes on assessments such as office furniture, equipment, airplanes and boats, as well as property taxes that are not liens against the real property.

Fresno County Assessor Information

The Assessor has the following basic responsibilities:

- Locate all taxable property in the County.
- Identify the ownership for each property as of the lien date.
- Establish a taxable value for all such property.
- Complete an assessment roll showing the assessed values of all such property.
- Apply all legal exemptions.

The **Deeds** and **Sales** department reviews recorded documents to track ownership interests and to properly identify reassessable changes of ownership as defined by law.

The **Cadastral** department creates parcel maps identifying each parcel to be assessed by a unique number. This is generally done using recorded parcel maps and legal descriptions on recorded documents.

A staff of real property **Appraisers** and personal property **Auditor-Appraisers** is used to determine and track the proper assessed value.

The **Exemptions** department reviews submitted applications and determines if the qualifications have been met for a variety of legally permissible exclusions and exemptions.

Assessment Appeals

Revenue and Taxation Code §1600, etal.

Differences over the valuation of property may be resolved by making a formal appeal before the Assessment Appeals Board (AAB). The AAB, usually a three member panel, considers evidence presented by the property owner and the Assessor's staff during a formal hearing.

The evidentiary rules are more informal than in court. Evidence that is expected to be provided includes details of sales of similar properties, listings, income and expense information, etc. Generally, an appraisal made by a fee appraiser made be admitted as evidence only if the fee appraiser is present to testify to details regarding the appraisal.

The Board makes its determination based on a Preponderance of the Evidence, with the presumption of correctness given to the Assessor's office in all but Owner Occupied Single Family Homes.

Requests for an Assessment Appeal must be filed by:

For the Current Tax Roll:	July 2 - November 30
(Example: For tax year 2000, beginning July 1, 2000, appeals must be filed between July 2, 2000 and September 15,2000)	
For Supplemental Assessments and Escape Assessments:	Within 60 days from the mailing date of the Notice of Supplemental Assessment or Escape Assessment Notice.

To file an Assessment Appeal, contact the Clerk of the County Board of Supervisors at 488-3529.

Assessment Reviews

Revenue and Taxation Code §1600, etal.

If there is a disagreement with the taxable value of a property, the owner may request an informal review of the assessment. All original data used to assess the property and any additional information provided will be reviewed by the Assessor's staff to determine if the assessed value should be changed. Any reductions made are generally done under the rules and authority of Proposition 8.

To request a review, contact the Real Property Appraisal office (559) 488-3509.

Homeowner Resources

How A Property's Assessed Value is Determined

Assessment Begins with "Base Year Value"

State law (Proposition 13) established 1975-1976 as the "base year" for property assessments. This base year value is the starting point that is used to calculate annual assessments in the following years.

Base Year Value Increases or Changes

The base year value is adjusted annually for inflation, with any annual increase limited to not more than 2%. This adjusted value is known as the "factored base year value."

Base year value may also be adjusted in the following situations:

- A change in ownership, in which case the property is assigned a new base year value (typically, the same as the purchase price), or
- New construction on the property, in which the newly constructed property is assigned a new base year value (the market value of the new building or addition).

Assessed Value Decreases

Generally, property is to be assessed at the lesser of two values: (1) factored base year value (typically the purchase price adjusted annually for inflation, not to exceed 2% per year) or (2) current market value on January 1. When the market value is the lesser value, the "Decline in Value Assessment Program" (Proposition 8) allows for a **temporary** reduction in assessed value.

Once a property is enrolled in the Decline in Value Assessment Program, its assessed value is subject to annual review in subsequent years in light of current economic and market factors. For example, the assessed value may be: increased to no more than the "factored base year value", or

- Held at the prior year's assessed value, or
- reduced further.

Assessed Value Increases Exceeding Two Percent (Restoration)

Some Fresno County property owners whose properties were in the Decline in Value Assessment Program may see an increase (restoring to factored base year value) in their assessment values by more than two percent (2%).

Note: Although Proposition 13 expressly limits annual increases in a property's "factored base year value" to no more than two percent per year, there is no such limitation on annual increases to a property's assessed value, as long as the factored base year value is not exceeded.

General Information

The County understands property owners have concerns regarding the current real estate crisis and the impact it may have on their property taxes. Property tax law provides certain protections for taxpayers when property values decline. Under Proposition 8, qualifying properties will be given a temporary reduction in their taxable value which translates into a lower property tax.

The continued decline in residential property values throughout Fresno County has resulted in many reduced assessments. The Assessor will be reviewing properties purchased between January 1, 2001, and January 1, 2009. The assessed value is set based on a January 1, 2009 lien date and will be reflected on the 2009 tax bill due out no later than November 1, 2009.

Proposition 8 - Review Due to Decline in Value

This proposition allows the Assessor to temporarily lower assessments when the market value on January 1 is lower than the factored base year value for that year.

- If the market value of the property is less than its factored base year value, market value will be enrolled for that specific assessment year.
- Whenever such relief is provided, the Assessor is obligated to annually review and enroll the lesser of either market value or the factored base year value, but never higher than the factored base year value.

If it is determined that the market value of the property exceeds the factored base year value of the property, the factored base year value will be restored for that assessment year. At this point the property will no longer be annually reviewed and will be subject to regular annual 2% increases.

Property Assessment Facts

REAL ESTATE

- Based upon Proposition 13, passed by the voters in June, 1978, the Assessor is required to appraise real property as of the date of the change-in-ownership or as of the date of completion of any new construction. The property will be assessed on the basis of the new valuation.
- The assessed value then may only be increased each year by an inflationary rate not to exceed two percent (2%) per year, unless there has been new construction or a change in ownership.
- The maximum amount of property tax cannot exceed one percent (1%) of the property's appraised value, plus any bonded indebtedness or fees as approved by the voters.

MANUFACTURED HOMES

- All new manufactured homes purchased after June 30, 1980, and those on permanent foundations, are subject to local assessment.
- Manufactured homes bought before June 30, 1980, may not be subject to property taxes. They may be on license fees, which are under the jurisdiction of the State Department of Housing and Community Development.

CHANGE-IN-OWNERSHIP APPRAISALS

- When a change in ownership occurs, the Assessor receives a copy of the deed and determines if an appraisal is required under State law. If it is required, an appraisal is made to determine the current assessed value of the property. The property owner is then notified of the new assessment and has the right to appeal the value.

NEW CONSTRUCTION APPRAISALS

- Copies of all building permits are sent to the Assessor's Office by the cities and county. If the construction is new (such as a room addition), a reappraisal is required. If the construction is a replacement (such as a new roof), an appraisal is not required.
- In appraising new construction, the market value of the new construction is determined and added to the value of the existing property.
- The base value of the existing property does not change.
- As with a change in ownership, the property owner is then notified of the new assessment and has the right to appeal the value.

SUPPLEMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- The accelerated property tax law requires the Office of Assessor to appraise property as of the date of change in ownership or completion of new construction.
- The Office of Assessor must issue a supplemental assessment which reflects the difference between the prior assessed value and the new assessed value.
- This value is prorated based on the number of months remaining in the current tax year, ending June 30.
- This is *in addition* to the regular tax bill.
- Notices of the supplemental assessments are mailed out to property owners prior to the issuance of tax bills, and may be appealed.

BUSINESS PROPERTY

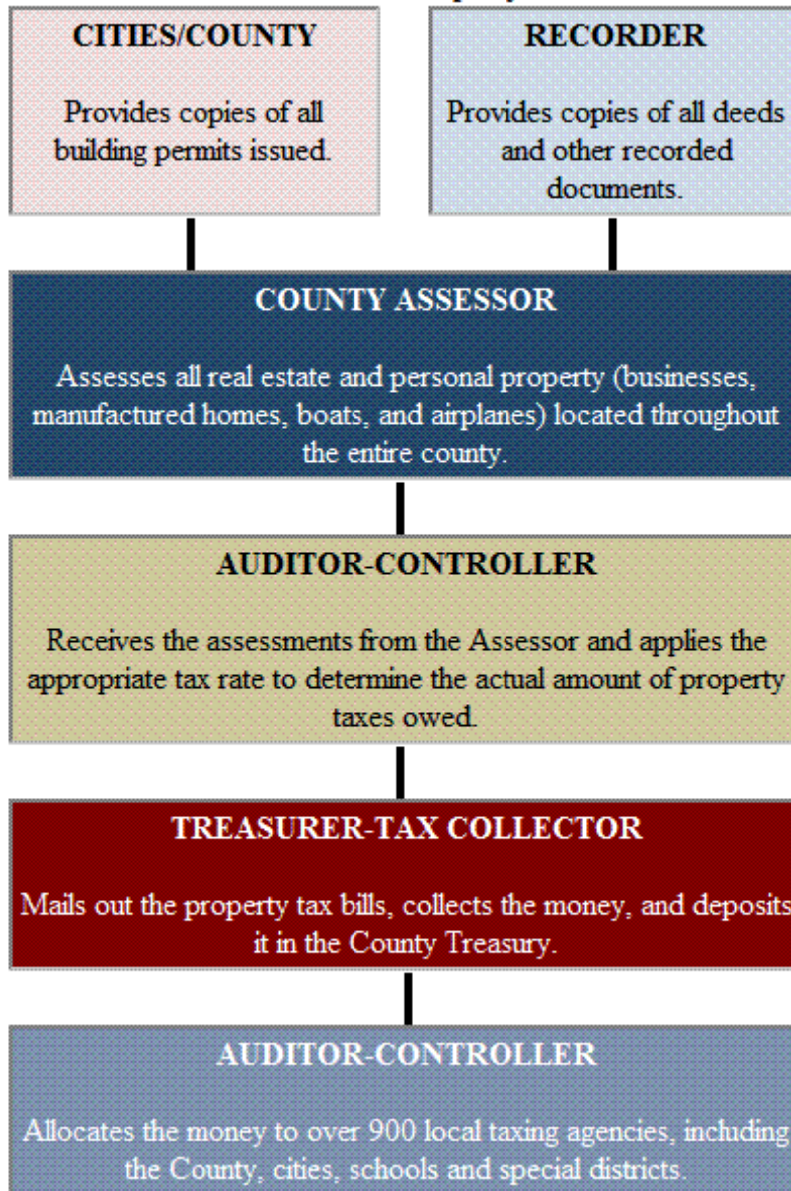
- Unlike real property, business property is appraised annually.
- The owners of businesses must file a property statement every year detailing costs of supplies, equipment, and fixtures for each location owned.
- Property statement forms are mailed each year.
- This annual statement is required unless the property qualifies for direct assessment.
- Business inventory is exempt from taxation.

MARINE AND AIRCRAFT

- Boats and aircraft are subject to annual appraisal.
- Their value is determined by reviewing the purchase price and the sales of comparable boats and aircraft.
- Information on their location and ownership is obtained from the Department of Motor Vehicles, the United States Coast Guard, the Federal Aviation Administration and onsite inspections.

Fresno County Assessor Property Taxes

The Process of Property Taxes



Address:

Hall of Records, 2281 Tulare Street, Room 201, Fresno, CA 93721



Phone: (559) 488-3534



Email: AssessorWebmail@co.fresno.ca.us