

Personal Property Tax

What Property is Taxable?

Tangible (that is, physical) personal property is subject to the personal property tax unless exempt by statute. Items defined as tangible personal property range from chairs in a barbershop to the furnishings of a doctor's office; from drills used by a dentist to the poles owned by a utility company.

What Property Is Exempt?

Tools employed by a plumber, carpenter, auto mechanic and other trade professionals are exempt from personal property tax. In legal terms, this exemption covers "tools of trade" of a "mechanic" (e.g. small tools that can fit in a toolbox).

Tools of other professionals not listed in the above paragraph are, however, considered taxable. These include dentist's drills and x-ray machines. Computers are also subject to the personal property tax, but in cases where a corporation for internal use uses them only, (e.g., for such functions as internal accounting or administrative operations), computers are not subject to taxation.

Tangible personal property subject to some other type of local tax is also exempt from the personal property tax. The Motor vehicle and trailer excise, ship and boat excise, the farm animal and equipment excise, and mobile home park license fees are all included in this category.

Intangible personal property is exempt from the personal property tax. Intangible property includes stocks, bonds and cash, mortgages and other evidence of ownership of property rights.

Information Requests

The Assessors may require an owner or lessee of personal property to provide certain information in writing, as may be reasonably necessary, to determine the actual fair cash valuation of the property. Failure to comply with the request within thirty (30) days will bar any appeal of the taxes assessed, unless the owner or lessee was unable to comply with the request for reasons beyond his/her control. Any false statement that is knowingly made will also bar the taxpayer from any statutory appeal.

Each year, prior to March 1st. all persons subject to taxation must submit a list of all their personal property, which is not exempt from taxation. These personal estate items must be included on the Form of List. Blank Forms of Lists are available from the Assessors Office, 157 Main St, Spencer, MA , 01562

Abatement of Personal Property Tax

Applications for abatement must be filed on or before February 1.

Applications may be obtained at the Assessors Office or under downloadable forms on the Assessors webpage

