

## WHAT IS A MOTOR VEHICLE EXCISE TAX?

Chapter 60A of Massachusetts General Laws imposes an excise on the privilege of registering a motor vehicle or a trailer in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The excise is levied annually in lieu of a tangible personal property tax. Non-registered vehicles, however, remain subject to taxation as personal property.

The excise is levied by the city or town where the vehicle is principally garaged and the revenues become part of the local community treasury.

## WHERE DOES BILLING DATA COME FROM

The Registry of Motor Vehicles prepares data for excise bills according to the information on the motor vehicle registration and sends it to city or town assessors. Cities and towns then prepare bills based on excise data sent by the Registry in conformity with Department of Revenue requirements.

## HOW IS THE EXCISE DETERMINED?

Valuation figures are the manufacturers' list prices for vehicles in their year of manufacture. Present market value, price paid, or condition are not considered for excise tax purposes. The excise tax law (M.G.L. c.60A, s.1) establishes its own formula for valuation for state tax purposes whereby only the manufacturer's list price and the age of the motor vehicle are considered. Various percentages of the manufacturer's list price are applied. The percentages are as follows:

- In the year preceding the designated year of manufacture (brand new car released before model year) - 50%
- In the designated year of manufacture - 90%
- In the second year - 60%
- In the third year - 40%
- In the fourth year - 25%
- In the fifth and succeeding years -10%

## HOW IS THE EXCISE TAX CALCULATED?

Once the value of the vehicle is determined, an excise at the rate of \$25.00 per thousand is assessed. Excise tax is assessed annually, on a calendar year basis, by the assessors of the city or town in which the vehicle is garaged.

If the motor vehicle is registered after January 31, it is taxed for the period extending from the first day of the month in which it is registered to the end of the calendar year. For example, if a vehicle is registered on April 30, it will be taxable as of April 1, for the nine months of the year (April through December) and the excise due, therefore, will be 9/12 of the full excise. In no event shall the excise be assessed for less than \$5.00, nor

shall an abatement or refund under Section 1 of Chapter 60A reduce an excise to less than \$5.00.

#### WHO COLLECTS THE EXCISE TAX?

Local tax collectors are responsible for collecting the motor vehicle and trailer excise. Generally, tax collectors and deputy tax collectors do not accept partial payment of an Excise bill. Taxpayers should be prepared to pay the full amount due. There are no special considerations for financial hardship.

#### WHEN IS PAYMENT DUE?

Payment of the motor vehicle excise is due within 30 days from the date the excise bill is issued (not mailed).

**Note: A person who does not receive a bill is still liable for the excise plus any interest charges accrued. Therefore, it is important to keep the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles and the United States Postal Service informed of a current name and address so that excise bills can be delivered promptly. Vehicle owners who do not receive an excise tax bill should contact the Office of the Treasurer/Collector.**

#### WHAT HAPPENS IF MY PAYMENT IS LATE?

If the bill remains unpaid and outstanding more than thirty (30) days after its issue date, it will continue to accrue interest and other charges and fees for which you will be responsible. Your driver's license and/or vehicle registration will also be submitted to the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles for non-renewal action. For more information please visit the Office of the Treasurer/Collector.

#### HOW DOES NON-PAYMENT OF MY EXCISE TAX AFFECT MY LICENSE AND REGISTRATION?

If the service warrant demanding final payment is not paid, the deputy collector may then notify the Registry of Motor Vehicles of such non-payment. The Registry will then mark the individual's registration preventing the renewal of the motor vehicle registration and the owner's driver's license. The taxpayer will then be assessed a \$20.00 mark fee in addition to all other penalties and interest. It is the policy of the Town of Sandisfield to *not* release any marked bill until **all outstanding** Delinquent Excise Tax bills for a taxpayer are **paid in full**. Once full payment is made for all delinquent excise bills, the Deputy Collector will electronically release the Mark at the RMV. This will enable the motorist to return to the Registry and renew his/her license or registration. To request your balance on a bill that has gone to warrant, you may contact the Deputy Tax Collector at (413) 526-9737.

#### CAN I GET MOTOR VEHICLE EXCISE ABATEMENT?

Contact the Assessor's office at (413) 258-4711 for an application for abatement *or* you can fill in and print out a [Motor Vehicle Abatement Application Form](#). Follow the

directions on the form and send it to the Assessor's Office at PO BOX 145, Sandisfield, MA 01255 or visit the Assessor's Office at 66 Sandisfield Road, Sandisfield, MA 01255.

**Note: On unpaid excise tax bills, an owner risks incurring late fees and penalties if an abatement is not granted.**

#### WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR ABATEMENTS?

The Assessor's office must receive abatement applications within 3 years after the excise is due OR within one year after the excise is paid.

Example: Assume that an excise tax bill is due on February 25, 2018. The abatement deadline would be February 25, 2021, OR one year after the payment of the bill, whichever is later.

#### UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES MIGHT MOTOR VEHICLE EXCISE ABATEMENT BE WARRANTED?

Abatement applications can be filed if:

- the owner believes the assessment is incorrect, or
- if the vehicle was traded, or
- if the vehicle was stolen, or
- if the vehicle was sold during the year in which it is being taxed and the registration was properly cancelled, or
- if the owner moved from the Town of Sandisfield to another city or town, before January 1
- if the owner moved to another state and registered the vehicle and cancelled the registration in Massachusetts, or
- if the registration is cancelled, it is most important to return the plate(s) to the Registry of Motor Vehicles and to obtain a return plate receipt. When an abatement is granted, excise bills are prorated by the month, thus the owner is responsible for the excise accrued through the month in which the car was last registered to him/her.

#### WHAT IF I MOVED OUT OF SANDISFIELD?

Excise Taxes are due to the City or Town where the vehicle is registered, (garaged) as of January 1 of each year. In most cases, if you move out of Sandisfield during the year, the excise tax is still due to Sandisfield. You will receive an excise tax bill from your new community in the next calendar year providing you filed a change of address with the Registry of Motor Vehicles.

If you feel the wrong City or Town has billed you, you may qualify for abatement and rebill. To do this, contact the Assessor's office at (413) 258-4711 extension 6.

#### WHAT IF I SOLD MY CAR?

If an excise bill is received for a vehicle or trailer that has been sold, the seller must:

- Return the plate(s) to the Registry of Motor Vehicles and obtain a return plate receipt.
- File an application with the Assessor's office for abatement together with the following:
  - return plate receipt *and*
  - the bill of sale *or* transfer letter

Contact the Assessor's office at (413) 258-4711 extension 6 for an application for abatement *or* you can fill in and print out a [Motor Vehicle Abatement Application Form](#). Follow the directions on the form and send it to the Assessor's Office at PO BOX 145, Sandisfield, MA 01255.

The Assessor's Office can then adjust the bill to reflect the ownership for only part of the year, and grant the proper abatement. The bill is prorated back to the last day of the month in which the vehicle was owned and the excise bill on the new vehicle will be prorated as of the date the new vehicle was registered. In no event shall the excise abatement be for less than \$5.00, nor shall an abatement or refund under Section 1 of Chapter 60A reduce an excise tax to less than \$5.00.

**Note: It is important to remember that the bill for a vehicle you no longer own should not be ignored. On unpaid excise tax bills, an owner risks incurring late fees and penalties if an abatement is not granted.**

#### WHAT IF I TRADED MY CAR?

If an excise bill is received for a vehicle which was traded and which was not owned in the calendar year stated on the bill, you should:

- Pay the bill and file an application for abatement with the Assessor's Office.
- If the license plates were transferred to the new vehicle provide a copy of the New Registration Form *and* the Purchase Agreement citing the vehicle as Trade-In.

*or*

- If the license plates were returned to the Massachusetts RMV provide a copy of the Plate Return Receipt *and* the Purchase Agreement citing the vehicle as Trade-In.
- Provide a copy of your completed application for abatement along with all supporting documentation to the Assessor's Office.

Contact the Assessor's Office at (413) 258-4711 extension 6 for an application for abatement *or* you can fill in and print out a Motor Vehicle Abatement Application Form. Follow the directions on the form and send it to the Assessor's Office at PO BOX 145, Sandisfield, MA 01255.

The Assessor's Office can then adjust the bill to reflect the ownership for only part of the year, and grant the proper abatement. The bill is prorated back to the last day of the month in which the vehicle was owned and the excise bill on the new vehicle will be prorated as of the date the new vehicle was registered. In no event shall the excise abatement be for less than \$5.00, nor shall an abatement or refund under Section 1 of Chapter 60A reduce an excise tax to less than \$5.00.

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#### WHAT IF MY CAR IS STOLEN?

If the vehicle is stolen and not recovered within 30 days, the owner will be entitled to an abatement if he/she provide the Assessor's office with a copy of the following documentation:

- Insurance Company Settlement Letter *and*
- C-19 form (Affidavit of Lost or Stolen Plates) from the Registry of Motor Vehicles *or* New Registration if plate transferred

Falsely reporting the theft of a motor vehicle or trailer will result in severe penalties and a person may be charged up to three times the excise due on the vehicle for an entire year.

Contact the Assessor's Office at (413) 258-4711 extension 6 for an application for abatement *or* you can fill in and print out a [Motor Vehicle Abatement Application Form](#). Follow the directions on the form and send it to the Assessor's Office at PO BOX 145, Sandisfield, MA 01255.

The Assessor's Office can then adjust the bill to reflect the ownership for only part of the year, and grant the proper abatement. The bill is prorated back to the last day of the month in which the vehicle was owned and the excise bill on the new vehicle will be prorated as of the date the new vehicle was registered. In no event shall the excise abatement be for less than \$5.00, nor shall an abatement or refund under Section 1 of Chapter 60A reduce an excise tax to less than \$5.00.

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## AM I ELIGIBLE FOR ANY EXEMPTIONS?

Chapter 60A, Section 1 of the Massachusetts General Laws provides excise tax exemptions for vehicles owned by certain disabled individuals and veterans, ex-prisoners of war and their surviving spouses and certain charitable organizations. Please contact the Assessor's office at (413) 258-4711 extension 6 for further details on eligibility.

## WHAT IF I MOVED OUT OF MASSACHUSETTS?

- If a motor vehicle owner moves out of Massachusetts and has not paid an excise tax for the current year, he / she should:
  - File an application with the Assessor's office for abatement together with the following:
    - Registration form from the new State or Country, *and*
    - Plate Return Receipt from the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles

Contact the Assessor's Office at (413) 258-4711 extension 6 for an application for abatement *or* you can fill in and print out a [Motor Vehicle Abatement Application Form](#). Follow the directions on the form and send it to the Assessor's Office at PO BOX 145, Sandisfield MA 01255.

The Assessor's Office can then adjust the bill to reflect only the part of the year the vehicle was registered in the state, and grant the proper abatement. The bill is prorated back to the last day of the month in which the vehicle was registered in the state of Massachusetts. In no event shall the excise abatement be for less than \$5.00, nor shall an abatement or refund under Section 1 of Chapter 60A reduce an excise tax to less than \$5.00.

**Note: It is important to remember that the bill for a vehicle that is no longer registered in the state of Massachusetts should not be ignored. On unpaid excise tax bills, an owner risks incurring late fees and penalties if an abatement is not granted.**

## WHAT IF MY CAR IS TOTALED?

If the vehicle is totaled the owner may be entitled to an abatement if he/she provides the Assessor's office with a copy of the following documentation:

- Insurance Company documentation stating the vehicle is a total loss and showing the date of loss *and*
- Plate Return Receipt from the Registry of Motor Vehicles OR New Registration if plate was transferred *and*
- A completed application for a motor vehicle excise tax abatement.

Contact the Assessor's Office at (413) 258-4711 extension 6 for an application for abatement *or* you can fill in and print out a [Motor Vehicle Abatement Application Form](#). Follow the directions on the form and send it to the Assessor's Office at PO BOX, Sandisfield, City, MA 01255.

The Assessor's Office can then adjust the bill to reflect the ownership for only part of the year, and grant the proper abatement. The bill is prorated back to the last day of the month in which the vehicle was owned and the excise bill on the new vehicle will be prorated as of the date the new vehicle was registered. In no event shall the excise abatement be for less than \$5.00, nor shall an abatement or refund under Section 1 of Chapter 60A reduce an excise tax to less than \$5.00.

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#### HOW DO I CHANGE MY ADDRESS FOR MY EXCISE TAX?

Change of addresses for Excise Tax are done through the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles. When you change the address for your vehicle registration plates, the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles will send that information to our office and our files will be changed.