



Roadmap to SOUTH CAROLINA PROPERTY TAXES

General Assessment Overview

South Carolina reassesses properties on a five-year cycle. Counties assess all property at fair market value as of December 31. Property is first appraised at fair market value, then assessment ratios, caps, and exemptions are applied.

Assessment ratios vary depending on property type. Commercial properties are assessed at 6% of fair market value, certain agricultural property and primary residences are assessed at 4%, and manufacturing companies appraised by the state are assessed at 10.5%.

The assessor typically uses all three approaches to value but places the most emphasis on the income approach.

Comparable sales are considered, and derived cap rates from sales are often applied to income valuations. The assessor estimates the market rent, vacancy, and expense ratio to calculate the net operating income. The cost approach is typically only applied during construction or to specialized properties. Some assessors retain the cost approach until the next reassessment year.

A property's appraised value will remain in place for the five-year assessment period unless there are physical changes/improvements to the site, clerical errors are discovered, or if the property is transferred or sold.

New construction is reassessed at current fair market value, according to the cost approach, during the construction period. Once construction is completed, the value is determined by income approach at stabilized occupancy (even if the property is not yet stabilized).

Property Value Cap

By law, a property under the same ownership, and not significantly remodeled or added to, during a reassessment year cannot be raised in value more than 15% from the previous value.

For example, a property originally appraised by the county for \$1,000,000 is reassessed, and the fair market value becomes \$1,200,000. Because the same owner holds the property, the increase in taxable value can only be 15% of the taxable value or \$1,150,000 until the next reassessment year.

Assessment Notices

Assessment Notice issue dates vary by county but are usually published and mailed to taxpayers between June and October.

The ATI Law

The state of South Carolina has a point-of-sale reassessment, meaning that when property is sold or transferred, the appraised value is brought to the current market value (usually the sales price) for the tax year following the sale. The sale/transfer is referred to as an Assessable Transfer of Interest (ATI).

The assessor will take note of the transfer documents recorded and determine if it appears to be an open market/arm's-length sale. If so, next tax year's value will be set at the sale price. If not an arm's-length sale, the tax year value will be the assessor's determination of fair market value.

Because this ATI rule can cause significant increases in property taxes, the state passed an ATI exemption law, also called a **Point-of-Sale Exemption**. While this exemption was put in place to mitigate potential increases in property taxes, it is not automatic and only applies to qualified properties that were purchased in the prior calendar year. **The grantee may file the one-page exemption form by January 31 of the calendar year following the sale.**

The possible exemption is up to 25%, not to go below the previous market value. The exemption also applies only to commercial and non-primary residential properties with an assessment ratio of 6% and is invalidated by any county-wide reassessments.

If a property is purchased for less than the previous market value, the new value will become the sale price, and no exemption is involved.

South Carolina County Reassessment Schedule

Counties will implement the new assessments for the tax year following the year of completion.

2022

<i>Beaufort</i>	<i>Orangeburg</i>	<i>Spartanburg</i>
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2023

<i>Allendale</i>	<i>Darlington</i>	<i>Newberry</i>
<i>Bamberg</i>	<i>Dorchester</i>	<i>Pickens</i>
<i>Berkeley</i>	<i>Florence</i>	<i>Richland</i>
<i>Chesterfield</i>	<i>Horry</i>	

2024

<i>Barnwell</i>	<i>Greenville</i>	<i>Marlboro</i>
<i>Charleston</i>	<i>Lancaster</i>	<i>Union</i>
<i>Chester</i>	<i>Lee</i>	<i>Williamsburg</i>
<i>Fairfield</i>	<i>Lexington</i>	<i>York</i>
<i>Georgetown</i>	<i>McCormick</i>	

2025

<i>Abbeville</i>	<i>Edgefield</i>	<i>Laurens</i>
<i>Aiken</i>	<i>Greenwood</i>	<i>Marion</i>
<i>Calhoun</i>	<i>Hampton</i>	<i>Oconee</i>
<i>Clarendon</i>	<i>Jasper</i>	<i>Saluda</i>
<i>Dillon</i>	<i>Kershaw</i>	<i>Sumter</i>

2026

<i>Anderson</i>	<i>Cherokee</i>	<i>Colleton</i>
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Property Tax Appeals

During reappraisal years, any changes in assessment are normally issued by July 1. Property owners who disagree with the new value can notify the assessor of the objection in writing within 90 days from the assessment notice issue date.

Appeals may be initiated in a non-revaluation year by submitting a letter requesting a review of the value within 90 days after the county issues the tax notice.

After receiving the taxpayer's objections, the assessor, if in agreement with the taxpayer, can change the value or, if not in agreement, can schedule a preliminary conference within 30 days of the initial request.

If a value agreement cannot be reached during the preliminary conference, the taxpayer can formally appeal to the **County Board of Assessment Appeals** within 30 days. A new conference date will be set. Both parties must share their cases 15 days prior to the scheduled conference and will have the opportunity to present their evidence and defend their position. The Board will mail a written decision after the conference.

If the property owner deems the value to be excessive after the Board's findings, the property owner may appeal to the **Administrative Law Court (ACL)**.

If a decision still cannot be reached, the property owner can file an appeal to the state. In 1995, legislators changed the method of hearing appeals at the state level, dismantling the SCTC who heard property tax only issues and instead implemented a system where tax appeals are heard by one individual who is a duly elected official of the Court and a member of the Bar Association.

In accordance with State Code, while a property remains under appeal, taxes are paid at 80%. Once the appeal is settled, the taxpayer will either owe additional taxes or receive a refund for the overpayment. Interest accrues at 1% per month for a maximum of six months.

Counties require a Power of Attorney (SC 2848 Form) for all agents representing property owners. The form must indicate the specific property, be executed under the legal ownership name and be signed by the owner or an officer of the company.

Tax Bills

Property tax liability is calculated by multiplying the appraised value of the property by the appropriate assessment ratio by the millage rate.

$$[\text{Value} \times \text{Ratio} \times \text{Tax Rate} = \text{Taxes}]$$

County tax bills are normally issued in October and are payable without penalty on or before January 15 following the effective tax year. They are considered past due on January 16 and turned over to the county's delinquent section on March 1.

Some counties have due dates as early as December, and the city or town due dates vary by jurisdiction.

Personal Property

Business personal property tax returns are filed annually to the county where the business is located, with an assessment date of January 1 or the owner's fiscal closing date. **Returns are due April 30 or 120 days from the fiscal close date.**

Returns should contain the total acquisition cost of all assets, the accumulated depreciation, and the net depreciated value. Inventory and supplies are exempt. Taxpayers have the ability to file online.

The county will send a personal property tax notice after September 1 with the payment due on or before the following January 15 of each year.

To calculate total personal property tax liability, the value filed on the return is multiplied by 10.5% to calculate the assessment value. The millage rate is then applied to the assessment value to determine the total tax amount due.