



Roadmap to **WASHINGTON PROPERTY TAXES**

General Assessment Overview

Washington assesses real and personal property annually.

Senate Bill 5368 requires fair market values be reassessed every year and mandates that physical inspections of all properties take place at least once every six years.

At one time, assessors in Washington appeared to phase in purchase prices over three to eight years, with most counties taking about four years. However, over the past several years, counties like King, Pierce, and Snohomish began chasing higher dollar amount purchase prices within the next one to two assessment years.

If the transfer occurs late in the prior calendar year or early in the next year, the assessor has a good chance of enrolling the sale price in the current assessment year.

The sales comparison approach and the income approach are the two primary methods of valuation.

Construction is estimated every year as of July 31 and enrolled back as of January 1 of that same year. Thus, when a project is under construction, the estimate enrolled has an opportunity to be over or underassessed.

Value Notices

Annual assessments are issued beginning in May and, depending on the county, will continue throughout the remainder of the year.

If there is no roll change from the prior year, counties do not have to issue a notice, and the appeal deadline becomes July 1 for those rollover assessments. However, if a property value changes, a notice will be issued.

This assessment rollout takes a constant weekly vigil throughout the second half of the year to ensure your appeal rights are protected.

Property Tax Appeals

The appeal deadline for all counties is July 1 or 30–60 days after the Change of Value Notice is mailed, whichever is later.

The counties of Adams, Clark, King, Kitsap, Pierce, Snohomish, and Thurston allow 60 days from the mail date on the notice. Currently, all other counties only allow 30 days; however, this can change from year to year with the smaller counties.

The primary basis for an assessment challenge is that the assessor's value exceeds the actual fair market value. If either the assessor or the taxpayer is not satisfied with the Board's ruling, they may appeal the decision to the State Board of Tax Appeals within 30 days. The State Board will consider testimony pertaining only to market value and will not consider the aspect of equalization with similar properties.

Tax Bills

Tax bills are due in two installments, due April 30 and October 31 of the following year. Tax bills are finalized and issued February 14 of each year.

Typically, as assessments increase, tax rates will decline, and as assessments decrease, tax rates will rise.

Personal Property

The personal property lien date is January 1.

Personal property assessments are based on information provided by the taxpayer. **Affidavits are mailed to each year by January 1 and must be returned to the assessor by April 30.** Filing extensions are not granted.

Reporting items of furniture, fixtures, machinery, and equipment are assessed according to their original cost and year of acquisition using trend/depreciation tables provided by the State Department of Revenue. Inventory in Washington is exempt. King County and Pierce County do not assess personalty of multiresidential projects.

While it is not common for the counties to make independent audits of the affidavits, the Department of Revenue does. Annually, a random sampling is taken from each county by the Department for purposes of maintaining intercounty equalization.

These audits are furnished to the counties who may go back as far as three years to assess any taxable property which had been omitted.

Washington Tax Calendar

Real Estate

Assessment Date	Jan 1
Value Notices Issued	May - Nov
Appeal Deadline	Jul 1 (30–60 days after issued)
Tax Bills Issued	Feb 14
Tax Bills Due	Apr 30 (First Installment) Oct 31 (Second Installment)

Personal Property

Assessment Date	Jan 1
Tax Returns Due	Apr 30
Value Notices Issued	May - Nov
Appeal Deadline	Jul 1 (30–60 days after issued)
Tax Bills Issued	Feb 14
Tax Bills Due	Apr 30 (First Installment) Oct 31 (Second Installment)