

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the prior owner's name on the assessment notice or tax bill?

The county uses January 1st of the current year as the "date of record". Therefore any ownership changes made after that date will result in both the previous owner's name as well as the current owner's name appearing on any tax bills or assessment notices. The prior owner's name will drop off and only the current owner's name will appear in the following tax year.

What is the difference between the appraised value and the assessed value?

The **appraised value** is the value estimate established by the assessor from the last reassessment, an assessable transfer of interest, the value as a result of an appeal, or the value after new construction/remodeling. The appraised value may be capped based on the last reassessment (15% limitation)

The **assessed value** is the result of multiplying the appraised value by the assessment ratio.

What is the legal residence exemption? ([Reference S.C. Code of Laws 12-43-220](#))

"Legal residence" refers to the special 4% assessment for owner occupied homes, including a tax credit in which the school operation tax is exempted.

To qualify, the owner-occupant must have actually owned and occupied the residence as his legal residence and been domiciled at that address for some period during the applicable tax year and remain in that status at the time of filing the required application.

You must file an application and **provide all required documents listed on the application** as proof that your only legal residence is in Greenville County. Applications are available at the Assessor's Office or online. Applications can be hand delivered or postmarked no later than January 15. Applications cannot be filed electronically. Applications require an original signature, therefore the original must be sent or hand delivered.

Incomplete applications or those missing information/documents will not be processed.

What is homestead exemption? ([Reference S.C. Code of Laws 12-37-245](#))

Individuals age 65 and over, blind, disabled or surviving spouses may be eligible for a \$50,000 deduction from the assessor's market value appraisal for their legal residence. The homeowner must have been a legal resident of South Carolina for at least one full calendar year prior to the exemption. Proof of age and residency, such as SC driver's license or SC identification card, is required. If you are applying due to disability or blindness, you must submit your certification indicating the original award date from the state or federal agency authorized to make the declaration. **Eligibility is based on status January 1 of the tax year.**

What is agricultural use value? ([Reference S.C. Code of Laws 12-43-232](#))

Agricultural use value refers to the appraisal value assigned to those acreage tracts of land that qualified based on bona fide agricultural use of the property.

- If the tract is used to grow timber it must be five acres or more or be contiguous to or under the same management system as a tract of timberland which meets the minimum requirements.
- For tracts not used to grow timber, tracts must be ten acres and up.
- Tracts not meeting the acreage requirements may qualify if the person making the application earned at least \$1,000 of gross farm income for at least three of the five taxable years preceding the year of application.

The Assessor may require the applicant to give written authorization consistent with privacy laws allowing the Assessor to verify farm income from the Department or Revenue or the IRS and to provide Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service farm identification number of the tract and allow verification with the ASCS Office.

An application must be filed with the Assessor's office along with all required documents. Applications are available at the Assessor's Office or online. Applications require an original signature, therefore the original must be sent or hand delivered. Applications cannot be filed electronically.

Incomplete applications or those missing information/documents will not be processed

What are rollback taxes? ([Reference S.C. Code of Laws 12-43-220](#))

When real property valued and assessed as agricultural property is changed to a use other than agricultural it is subject to additional taxes, referred to as rollback taxes. Rollback taxes are calculated on the difference between what was paid under agricultural use verses what would have been paid as non-agricultural property. The rollback taxes can be applied to the property for the preceding three (3) years.

What is an assessable transfer of interest? ([Reference S.C. Code of Laws 12-37-3130 and 12-37-3135](#))

An assessable transfer of interest (ATI) means a transfer of an existing interest in real property that causes the property to be revalued at a more current date of value in between reassessments. For purposes of this definition, an existing interest in real property includes life estate interests. A non-exclusive list of events that constitute an ATI is provided in [South Carolina Code §§12-37-3150](#).

Why are my taxes higher than my neighbors?

The amount of property tax due is based upon three elements: (1) the property value, (2) the assessment ratio applicable to the property used to determine assessed value, and (3) the millage rate imposed by the taxing jurisdictions.

- Have you applied for the legal resident exemption?
- Are you age 65 or over and qualify for homestead exemption?
- Do you qualify for an agricultural use value?
- Was your property affected by an “assessable transfer of interest” (ATI)?
 - The neighbor’s tax bill is \$600, but your tax bill is \$900. Your “neighbor” bought his house in 2005 and you bought your home in 2008.
 - SC voters approved a 15% cap to be applied against the prior-year value for all conveyances occurring prior to the 2007 tax year. The prior year value of your neighbor’s property is capped at 15% when implementing county-wide reassessment
 - SC state law requires the removal of the 15% cap when an assessable transfer of interest occurs after the 2006 tax year. SC law requires a “point-of-sale” reassessment with a current market value having an effective appraisal date of December 31st of the year that the “ATI” conveyance occurred.

What are the methods for determining my property value?

There are three methods typically used by appraisers to value real property. These are the Cost Approach, Sales Comparison Approach and Income Approach. Not every method is applicable to every property.

Cost Approach: This approach is based on the principle of substitution that a rational, informed purchaser would pay no more than the cost of building an acceptable substitute with similar utility after accounting for land and any depreciation or deterioration.

Sales Comparison Approach: This approach is also based on the principle of substitution. It uses sales of similar properties as a basis for comparison. It is rooted in the principal that the arm’s length, negotiated sale price of similar properties best indicates the market value of the subject property. Adjustments must be made for differences in attributes, such as location, size, quality, condition and special features.

Income Approach: This approach is based on the anticipated income stream generated by the use of the property and the desired return on investment. In this approach, the income (net or gross) a property will generate is estimated. Capitalization rates (rate of return) or multipliers are used to predict value. This approach is used primarily for commercial and rental property.

Why did I receive an assessment notice?

A notice of property tax assessment is not a property tax bill. In general, a *Notice of Change of Classification, Appraisal and Assessment* informs the owner of a value change, or of approval, removal or denial of various exemptions or special assessments. Notices relating to value changes are sent primarily the year after a change is made to a property, after an error is discovered, after the property transfers, or there is a countywide reassessment. Some of the changes that may trigger a notice are new buildings, new improvements, renovations, additions, subdividing property, etc.

How can I appeal my property value? ([Reference S.C. Code of Laws 12-60-2510](#))

Objections must be in writing and will not be accepted by email, fax or other electronic means. You are responsible for meeting all deadlines. Postmarks are used to determine if the deadline was met.

If you received an assessment notice the deadline is printed on the notice that informs you of a change.

If no notice is sent the taxpayer has until the last day to pay taxes without penalty to appeal for that tax year. Generally that date is January 15th, but it is extended until the next working day if that is a holiday or weekend.

Your objection must contain the following:

- Identification of the property in question, preferably the tax map number
- Basis of your appeal
- Your opinion of Value
- Contact name and telephone number

You may be contacted by a representative of the assessor's office to discuss your issues, either by telephone or scheduled conference

Step 1. Informal Review A certified appraiser will conduct an informal review of all timely-filed appeals.

Step 2. Notice of Decision The assessor will notify the property owner of the results of the review by mailing a notice of decision

Step 3. Board of Appeals After receiving the assessor's notice of decision you can appeal to the County Board of Assessment Appeals by filing a written protest with the board within 30 days of the notice of decision date.

Step 4. Administrative Law Court Division If you are not satisfied with the decision made by the County Board of Assessment Appeals, you may appeal to the Administrative Law Judge Division within 30 days of the County Board of Assessment Appeals written decision.