

## WHAT IF YOU DISPUTE OUR ASSESSMENT?

If you believe that the assessed value of your property is higher than its market value, you may notify us that you disagree with our valuation. You and an appraiser will review your claim and any supporting information you can provide. If we can reach an agreement, we will adjust your assessment.

### How To Apply:

Use the online Decline In Value Form or download a paper copy to return by fax or mail. The review application for the current year can be submitted between March 1<sup>st</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup>. The forms are available at [www.smcacre.org](http://www.smcacre.org).

If we cannot agree, we'll instruct you on how to you apply to the County Assessment Appeals Board. The Assessment Appeals Board is comprised of an independent panel of three private citizens appointed by the Board of Supervisors. At a formal hearing the Appeals Board will review the evidence submitted by you and the Assessor's Office. They will subsequently render a decision. Appeals from annual assessments may be filed only from July 2 to November 30. Appeals from supplemental assessments (issued following a change in ownership or new construction) may be filed within 60 days of the date of the notice of supplemental assessment.

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

### ASSESSOR

[www.smcacre.org](http://www.smcacre.org)  
e-mail: [assessor@smcacre.org](mailto:assessor@smcacre.org)

### REAL PROPERTY

Owner & Parcel Info .....650.363.4500  
Exemptions .....650.363.4500  
Maps .....650.363.4502  
Recorded Document Info .....650.363.4500

**BUSINESS PROPERTY** .....650.363.4501  
Boat & Aircraft .....650.363.4501

### ASSESSMENT APPEALS BOARD

[www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/assessmentappeals](http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/assessmentappeals)  
Appeals Board .....650.363.4573

### CONTROLLER

[www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/controller](http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/controller)  
Tax Rates .....650.363.4777

### TAX COLLECTOR

[www.sanmateocountytaxcollector.org](http://www.sanmateocountytaxcollector.org)  
Tax Bills & Payments .....650.363.4142

### STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Controller .....800.952.5661  
[www.sco.ca.gov](http://www.sco.ca.gov)  
Franchise Tax Board .....800.852.5711  
[www.ftb.ca.gov](http://www.ftb.ca.gov)  
Board of Equalization .....800.400.7115  
[www.boe.ca.gov](http://www.boe.ca.gov)

SAN MATEO COUNTY  
ASSESSOR-COUNTY CLERK-RECORDER-ELECTIONS  
555 County Center  
Redwood City, CA 94063  
650.363.4500  
[www.smcacre.org](http://www.smcacre.org)  
Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

## ASSESSMENT INFORMATION FOR THE PROPERTY OWNER



SAN MATEO COUNTY



**Mark Church**  
Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder  
& Chief Elections Officer

**San Mateo County**  
555 County Center  
Redwood City, California 94063  
650.363.4500

# About property assessment...

## WHAT ARE THE ASSESSOR'S DUTIES

The Assessor's Office is responsible for determining the assessed value of all taxable property located in San Mateo County. With approximately 240,000 real and business personal property assessments each year, the Assessor's Office creates the official record of taxable property (the local "assessment roll"), shares it with the County Controller and Tax Collector, and makes it publicly available. The local assessment roll is determined by identifying, mapping, inspecting, and calculating the assessed value for all real (land and structures) and business personal properties.

## WHAT TYPE OF PROPERTY IS ASSESSED?

All tangible property in the state is taxable unless state law excludes it. Generally speaking, assessed property includes real property, business personal property, boats, airplanes and manufactured homes.

### Real Property

Real Property – "real estate" – includes land and the buildings attached to it. The Assessor identifies each unit of real

property – a "parcel" – with a unique identifying number called the Assessor's Parcel Number or "APN." The assessed value on each parcel is "secured," meaning the property becomes collateral for unpaid taxes and the Tax Collector may sell the property if the taxes remain unpaid after five years.

### Business Personal Property

Taxable business personal property includes business supplies, equipment and fixtures. Boats and general aircraft are also items of personal property that are assessed, whether or not they are used for business. Businesses, boats and general aircraft are assigned "account numbers" that identify the property and its owner.

Business personal property is generally "unsecured" because the tax debt is against a "movable" asset.

## HOW IS MY REAL PROPERTY ASSESSED?

### Assessment Begins with "Base Year Value"

State law (Proposition 13), passed by the voters in June 1978, established 1975-76 as the "base year" for property assessments in California. This base year value is the starting point that is used to calculate annual assessments in the following years.

The base year value is adjusted annually for inflation. Annual increases in assessment are limited to not more than 2%. This adjusted value is known as the "factored base year value."

### Base Year Value Increases or Changes

Base year value may also be adjusted in the following situations:

- A change in ownership, such as a sale, in which case the property is assigned a new base year value (typically, the same as the purchase price), or
- New construction on the property.

Generally, remodels, repairs or replacements may not require reappraisal or change the base year value.

### Assessed Value Decreases

Generally, real property is to be assessed at the lesser of two values: 1) the "factored base year value" or 2) the current market value on January 1. When the market value is the lesser value, the "Decline in Value Assessment Program" (provided for by Proposition 8, enacted in 1978) allows for a temporary reduction in assessed value.

### Assessed Value Increases Over Two Percent (Restoration)

Some San Mateo County property owners whose properties were in the Decline in Value Assessment Program may see an increase (restoration of "factored base year value") in their assessment values by more than two percent (2%).

Note: Although Proposition 13 expressly limits annual increases in real property's factored base year value to not more than two percent per year, there is no such limitation on annual increases to a property's assessed value, as long as the factored base year value is not exceeded.

## HOW IS BUSINESS PERSONAL PROPERTY ASSESSED?

Unlike real property, the laws affecting the assessment of business personal property are different, and consequently business personal property is assessed annually at its market value. And, unlike real property, the value of business personal property depreciates over time, therefore the assessment, unless new property is acquired, tends to be lower each successive year. The law requires that business owners who have taxable business personal property with an aggregate cost of \$100,000 or more on January 1, must report their property to the local Assessor on a "Business Property Statement." And regardless of the cost of a property, a business property statement must be filed at the Assessor's request.

Small business owners with personal property with a value of \$7,500 or less, may be exempt from personal property tax assessment in San Mateo County but are still required to file a statement if requested by the Assessor.