

Reference Page 84

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The SC Bar has replaced page 84 in the 2012 edition of *South Carolina Senior Citizens Handbook* as follows:

Millage

Annually, each taxing entity, including each county and municipality, determines amount of money it needs to operate the following tax year. The total assessed value of property subject to tax within its jurisdiction is then multiplied by whatever number of mills required to raise the money necessary to operate. (A mill is a unit of monetary value equal to one-thousandth of a dollar or .001.)

Assessment of Residential Property

A person's primary residence and up to five contiguous acres is taxed at an assessment of 4% of the fair market value. (A second home or vacation home is taxed at an assessment ratio equal to 6%). A motor home may qualify as a primary or secondary residence for property tax purposes. To ensure that your primary residence is taxed at the 4% rate, you must inform the county assessor that the property in question is your primary residence. This rate is for primary residences whether the owner/occupier is over 65 or not. If you are not sure that you are being assessed at the correct rate you may obtain a legal residence application from the county assessor.

Exemptions for Residential Property

There are several exemptions for real and personal property tax providing certain South Carolina homeowners and residents tax relief in various circumstances. They are listed below.

Homestead Exemption for Elderly, Blind, or Disabled

If you are 65 or older, totally disabled or legally blind and have lived in South Carolina for at least one year, you may qualify for the homestead exemption. The homestead exemption excludes the first \$50,000 from the fair market value of your legal residence. Application for the homestead exemption should be made to the county auditor's office in the county of your residence and where the home is located.

Exemption for Certain Military Veterans, Law Enforcement Officers, Firefighters, Paraplegics and Hemiplegics

A house and up to one acre of land on which the house is located is exempt from property tax for the following: veterans who are totally disabled from a service-related disability or the surviving spouse; the surviving spouse of a military person killed in the line of duty; a former law enforcement officer who is permanently and totally disabled as a result of a law enforcement service-connected disability; a former firefighter, including volunteer firefighters, who is permanently and totally disabled as a result of a firefighting service connected disability; or paraplegics, hemiplegics or their surviving spouses.

Additional personal property exemptions, such as automobiles, may be available for Medal of Honor recipients, former prisoners of war, or individuals required to use wheelchairs. For more information, visit the S.C. Department of Revenue website at www.sctax.org. For a list of FAQs about exemptions, visit the DOR website at: <http://www.sctax.org/Tax+Information/Property+Tax/Exempt+Property+FAQs.htm>.

Sales and Use Tax

The State of South Carolina imposes a sales and use tax of five percent, and proceeds are used exclusively to fund the public school system. The sales tax applies to the retail sale, lease, or rental of tangible personal property, and the use tax applies to the storage, use, or consumption of tangible personal property purchased at retail in another state. (A credit is given against the use tax due in South Carolina for any state and local sales or use tax due and paid in another state.) Prescriptions, dental prosthetics and hearing aids are exempt