

Lister and Assessor Handbook

A Guide for Vermont Listers and Assessors

FEBRUARY 2025

Call Us

PVR Main Phone.....802-828-5860
Homestead, Property Tax Credit, Renter Credit Issues802-828-2865
Property Transfer Tax Return and Real Estate Tax Issues.....802-828-6851

Email Us

General PVR Mailbox.....tax.pvr@vermont.gov
Lister Education Questions.....tax.listered@vermont.gov

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Using the Lister and Assessor Handbook

The Lister and Assessor Handbook is best viewed electronically. Users may print it, but for hyperlink functionality it should be viewed either online or downloaded.

Introduction to Listing

The job of Lister¹ is unique to Vermont. Listers are municipal officials. A lister's job is to collect data on new and improved properties to produce a defensible grand list.

One of the most important responsibilities of a lister is to be knowledgeable in listing practices and real estate. The lister must be fair and thorough. Annual training and attendance at classes is recommended. Beginning January 1, 2026, training is required. To demonstrate professionalism and commitment to the position, it is highly recommended that listers are certified by the Property Valuation and Review (PVR) Division of the Vermont Department of Taxes through the Vermont Property Assessors Certification Program.

Job Description

The overarching responsibility of listers (and municipal assessors) is to maintain assessment equity in the grand list. Assessment equity is the degree to which assessments bear a consistent relationship to market value. To achieve assessment equity, listers must understand appraisal methods and property assessment administration in Vermont.

Inflation, development, and subdivision can quickly make the grand list obsolete. Between townwide reappraisals years, listers need to make corrections, additions, and adjustments to maintain equity among properties. This process requires the lister to analyze and interpret sales data.

To determine the value of property, listers must consider the governmental regulations that affect potential uses and value. This includes town plan and zoning regulations, the method for determining a house site and homestead value, the Use Value Appraisal Program, and Health Department subdivision regulations. Listers may have to interpret Act 250 or determine how to assess property subject to federal housing subsidies, or property subject to a conservation easement. The Secretary of State also [publishes land use regulations](#) that may impact values.

Municipalities that elect to tax business personal property inventory, machinery, and equipment require their lister to know how to assess such properties, which includes understanding local businesses and depreciation impacts.

Many lister responsibilities have strict timing, notification, format and substance requirements. Towns lose appeals due to overlooked procedural details. You must carefully read, understand, and follow the statutes. [Vermont statutes](#) can be accessed online or in the town clerk's office.

The Vermont Department of Taxes Property Valuation and Review division recommends training and resources from the following sources:

- [Vermont Department of Taxes](http://tax.vermont.gov) (tax.vermont.gov)
- [Vermont Assessors and Listers Association \(VALA\)](http://valavt.org) (valavt.org)
- [International Association of Assessing Officers \(IAAO\)](http://www.iaao.org) (www.iaao.org)
- [Vermont League of Cities & Towns \(VLCT\)](http://www.vlct.org) (www.vlct.org)

¹ For brevity, the term "lister" used in this publication generally describes listers and assessors, their assistants, firms who may be contracted to complete these prescribed duties, and more.

- [New England Municipal Resource Center](http://www.nemrc.com) (www.nemrc.com)—offers tutorials & seminars
- [UVM Extension Service](http://www.uvm.edu) (www.uvm.edu)—sponsors annual conferences and seminars
- [PVR's Annual Report](http://tax.vermont.gov) (tax.vermont.gov)—provides a wealth of information related to your job

The Lister as a Public Official

As a lister, you have been elected to determine everyone's fair basis for taxation. You are now a public trustee and servant. [Article VI of the Vermont Constitution](#) states:

“all power being originally inherent in and consequently derived from the people, therefore, all officers of government, whether legislative or executive, are their trustees and servants; and at all times, in a legal way, accountable to them.”

Although you have been elected by townspeople and you are a town officer, it is important to remember that “towns are mere creatures of the Legislature constituted for governmental purposes, possessing only such powers as are expressly granted or implied . . . Like all corporations, both public and private, they necessarily act through agents; but municipal officers derive their authority, largely, if not wholly, from the law and not the municipality” . . . *New Haven v. Weston*, 87 Vt. 7, (1914). You cannot, for example, decide that your town will exempt a property from taxation without clear legislative authority to do so.

The Legislature has declared, “public commissions, boards and councils and other public agencies in this State exist to aid in the conduct of the people's business and are accountable to them under Chapter I, Article VI of the Vermont constitution.” To be properly accountable to the people, you must make it possible for those interested to inform themselves of your actions and to review and comment on your decisions.

The [Open Meeting Law in 1 V.S.A. Chapter 5](#) states that the public must be warned of all lister meetings, that meetings must be open to the public, and that listers must take minutes. This includes grievance hearings and any meetings where the board of listers takes official action, such as the lodging of the abstract of the grand list. The Secretary of State [has an excellent resource on open meeting law](#) including requirements for hybrid and remote meetings, notifying taxpayers of meetings, and more. These requirements do not apply to the daily work of a lister (viewing properties, running cost valuation, etc.), as these activities are not considered “meetings.”

The law gives guidelines for allowing the public to review or copy all of your records, with the exception of inventories and confidential rental information, such as income and expense. The records should be available during customary office hours. It is recommended that listing records are kept at the municipal office and that you have an arrangement with the town or city clerk so citizens can review a record in your absence. If records are being kept outside the municipal office, you must still respond to requests and make reasonable arrangements for viewing and copying. The Secretary of State [has published “A Matter of Public Record: A Guide to Vermont's Public Records Law.”](#)

If a person requests a photocopy or electronic file of certain records, you must provide them with the information, and you can charge for it. Your town or city clerk will have guidelines on how much you can charge. The Secretary of State's [fee schedule for copying public records is available on its website](#).

Listers frequently ask about their relationship to each other and to the selectboard. The listers are elected by the voters and operate independently of the selectboard, with a few exceptions.

- The selectboard sets the listers' pay, unless the town has set the compensation. [24 V.S.A. § 933](#).
- The selectboard authorizes the expenditure of funds, including employing assistance. [32 V.S.A. § 404](#).
- The approval of the selectboard is required for the listers to ask the Director of Property Valuation and Review (PVR) for an extension of time on their schedule. [32 V.S.A. § 4342](#).
- The approval of the selectboard is required for the listers to correct an error in the final grand list after lodging. [32 V.S.A. § 4261](#).

Although many boards of listers divide the duties for efficiency, each lister is equally responsible for the work of the board. Cross-training is essential. The lister board chair typically acts as the primary contact person for the board.

Some public officials choose to be on more than one board, or spouses seek to be on the same board. Some positions are incompatible, and it is recommended that you [check with the Secretary of State's Office](#) to see if being on more than one board is advisable or allowed. Incompatible offices are addressed in [17 V.S.A. § 2647](#). Please see “**Incompatible Offices**” in the **Subjects** section of this handbook.

Career Development Training Opportunities

PVR offers a [Vermont Property Appraiser Certification Program](#). There is a [Program Handbook](#) that details the process. In addition there are:

- [State-sponsored courses](#). PVR holds in-person classes and webinars for Vermont officials.
- [Vermont Assessors and Listers Association](#). VALA provides education and information for listers and assessors.
- [International Association of Assessing Officers](#). IAAO serves professionals working in property valuation, property tax policy and related fields. They set the standards for mass appraisal and provide education and designations for assessors, appraisers and others in the industry.
- [New England Municipal Resource Center](#). NEMRC offers classes and information regarding their grand list and CAMA (MicroSolve) procedures.
- [Vermont Property Information Exchange](#) (login required). VTPIE is a web application designed to enhance and streamline the processes for Grand List management, and state education tax administration and equalization.

Course Funding

Courses presented by Property Valuation and Review are offered free of charge to municipal officials.

Our classes are reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. If your plans change, let us know as we often have a waiting list. We reserve the right to charge your city or town a fee if you fail to notify us of your inability to attend.

Property Valuation & Review (PVR) also partners with organizations such as the Vermont Assessors and Listers Association (VALA), the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT), and the New England Municipal Resource Center (NEMRC) to directly sponsor events to reduce, and in some cases eliminate, training charges for listers and assessors. This includes VALA trainings, VLCT workshops, International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO) courses, workshops, and NEMRC trainings.

Grants

Grants are available for municipal listers and assessors for training not sponsored by PVR. In addition, certain related expenses for a training may be reimbursed through the grant application process. Applications for grants **must be preapproved** prior to attending training. [See the Department's Education Grant page](#) for more information or to apply for a grant, follow the Course Funding link. If you need assistance with this process, please contact PVR at 802-828-5860.

Listers and assessors may apply for grants toward courses not listed on the [State-Sponsored Education Course List](#).

Legislative Updates

The Legislature often makes changes that impact Listers' work. It is important to remain up-to-date with current legislation. The Department hosts and presents at multiple events each year, providing legislative updates and it is encouraged to attend. The Department also provides [Highlights of Tax Legislation](#) each year, including all initiatives that impact the Tax Department. Reach out to your District Advisor with questions.

Grand List Timeline

PVR posts a monthly newsletter on Comp-60 (Listserv) that includes tasks and reminders. PVR also publishes an annual monthly calendar beginning in March. The full [annual lister's calendar](#) is on the Vermont Department of Taxes website for regular access.

Figure 1. Table: Grand List Statutory Dates

Task or Event	Population <u>less than</u> 5,000	Population <u>more than</u> 5,000
Assessment Date	April 1	April 1
Latest Abstract of Individual Lists can be lodged	June 4	June 24
Latest Change of Appraisal Notices can be sent	June 4	June 24
Grievances must be filed by (above date plus 14)	June 19	July 9
Grievance hearings end	July 2	July 22
Results of grievances mailed (Results must be mailed within seven days of close of hearings. Send via certified mail, registered mail, or certificate of mailing to avoid controversy).	July 9	July 29
<u>Latest</u> Grand List can be lodged	July 25	August 14
<u>Deadline</u> for filing appeal to BCA	14 days from date of mailing of result of grievance	14 days from date of mailing of result of grievance
BCA hearings begin	14 days from date of mailing of result of grievance	14 days from date of mailing of result of grievance

Filing may occur any time after April 1 and prior to these dates. [Read 32 V.S.A. § 4111](#) and [§ 4341](#) together. The May 5 date in § 4111 is extended 30 days for those towns with a population of less than 5,000 and 50 days in towns with a population of 5,000 and more.

If a town lodges the abstract of individual lists and sends out Change of Appraisal notices on May 10, the last day a person could grieve would be May 24 (the date of lodging plus 14 days). Note that when counting the 14 days, **the first day is the day after mailing**. Extensions may be granted under [32 V.S.A. § 4342](#). If extensions are granted, the letter from the director of Property Valuation and Review (PVR) granting the extension must be lodged in the grand list book. [Use Form PVR-4342, Grand List Extension Request](#) to request an extension of filing beyond the June 4/June 24 date(s).

Some dates, marked with an asterisk (*), depend on the size of your town. **Fill in the appropriate dates for your town.** [See provisions of 32 V.S.A. § 4341](#) for automatic extensions of 30 and 50 days, depending upon population. When a due date is on a Sunday, the due date is extended to the following Monday. [32 V.S.A. § 3004](#).

Annual Activities by Month/Lister Calendar

January

Check for Homestead Declarations as well as Current Use files in your VTPIE work queues.

PVR requests final submission of your electronic 411 and Final As-Billed (January submission) grand list for the prior year. This final submission is used for the reconciliation (true-up) by the Agency of Education.

February

Check for Homestead Declarations as well as Current Use files in your VTPIE work queues.

If, on the first Tuesday in February, there is no appeal or suit to recover taxes pending, the lister and selectboard must certify in the grand list book [using Form PVR-4155, Certificate - No Appeal or Suit Pending](#). If an appeal or suit is pending, certify as soon as it is settled, to ensure the grand list cannot be challenged. [32 V.S.A. § 4155](#). Form PVR-4155 was printed with your signature pages when you lodged your grand list to become part of your (final) grand list document.

The first batch of homestead declaration files are made available in VTPIE on a weekly basis. Listers begin review and response submission. [See GB-1071, How to Download and Report to the Vermont Department of Taxes](#).

March

Check for Homestead Declarations as well as Current Use files in your VTPIE work queues.

Current Use parcels that have received preliminary approval for the upcoming tax year are available for review. Confirm:

- Parcel owner
- Total acreage
- SPAN number, if changed
- Other parcel changes (reach out to your Current Use specialist is necessary)

Corrections and comments are due July 5 and/or must be submitted to PVR within 30 days of receipt [32 V.S.A. § 3756\(h\)](#).

PVR releases a list of sales to review for the equalization study. This is the town's opportunity to provide input on arms-length transactions, and ensure listed values, categories, etc. are accurate. Your District Advisor will meet with you (via phone or in person) to discuss this information as needed. Listers must continue inspections and working on the completion for the grand list, effective date April 1.

After Town Meeting Day, newly elected listers take the required oath. [32 V.S.A. § 3431](#).

The lister board meets and listers typically meet with the selectboard to discuss any reappraisal activity or concerns. PVR emails new lister training announcements.

If your town or city taxes business personal property, send inventory or personal property forms to potential owners of taxable business personal property on or before April 1. [32 V.S.A. § 4003](#).

If the town is conducting a reappraisal that includes subsidized housing, they must be appraised using market rents, actual expenses, and mandated cap rate. Request audited income and expense data at this time.

April

Check for Homestead Declarations as well as Current Use files in your VTPIE work queues.

April 1

This is the assessment date. [32 V.S.A. § 3651](#), [§ 3691](#), and [§ 4041](#). Listers must annually determine ownership and value of all property as of April 1. Properties in transition should be inspected as close to April 1 as possible.

Inspect new construction, mobile homes, and properties that have been recently improved, such as those with a new deck or addition. Changes made after April 1 cannot be reflected in this year's grand list, but should be noted for follow-up for next year.

April 15

The deadline for timely filed Homestead Declarations with the Vermont Department of Taxes.

Prepare to notify property owners of value changes, including changes from enrollment in use value appraisal, homestead, or housesite value. [32 V.S.A. § 4111](#) and [§ 3756 \(d\)](#).

Although there is no requirement to prepare Change of Appraisal (COA) notices when parcels have changed owners but not appraisal value, this alerts new owners of their responsibilities.

If applicable, after April 20, confirm personal property inventory forms have been completed and returned. Notify owners if owners have not responded, or if and an estimate of value has changed. [32 V.S.A. § 4084](#) and [§ 4085](#).

May

Check for Homestead Declarations as well as Current Use files in your VTPIE work queues.

PVR furnishes copies of inventory forms filed by public utilities in VTPIE by May 1. [32 V.S.A. § 4452](#). Listers use this information to establish utility listed values, [per Act 144 \(H.546\) of 2024](#), PVR may require that each municipality use certain valuations furnished under this section. The valuations provided by the Division for property used for the transmission and distribution of electricity shall be used by the lister as the valuation of that property for property taxation.

PVR provides assessed values of state buildings and lands, [as defined in 32 VSA § 3701](#) to each

municipality to which a payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOT) is due. Municipalities have 30 days to appeal these values.

June

Check for Homestead Declarations as well as Current Use files in your VTPIE work queues.

June 1

Homestead declaration files and Current Use files available for review.

On or before June 4* or June 24*

Abstract of individual lists (preliminary grand list) must be filed with the town clerk. On that same day, post notices of grievance day and send notices of change of appraisal. Notices must be sent for homestead and housesite value changes and for use value parcels with value or allocation changes. [32 V.S.A. § 4111](#) and [§ 3756\(d\)](#) Municipalities that tax personal property must mail “No or unsatisfactory inventory forms” if requested inventory forms have not been returned or value reported is not accepted.

About June 15

Grievance hearings begin 14 days plus one after the mailing of the Change of Appraisal Notices. Objections to individual appraisals must be submitted to listers in writing, on or before that date. [32 V.S.A. § 4111](#).

Grievance hearings continue until complete. [32 V.S.A. § 4221](#).

Notify the grievant(s) of decisions within seven days of the hearing’s close. Notices must be sent by certificate of mailing, registered mail, or certified mail and include appeal instructions to the Board of Civil Authority (BCA). Notify the Town Clerk when notices of grievances are mailed, as timely BCA appeals depend on the date Results of Grievance are mailed [32 V.S.A. § 4224](#).

June 30

Department of Taxes notifies towns of education property tax rates. [32 V.S.A. § 5402](#).

July

Check for Homestead Declarations as well as Current Use files in your VTPIE work queues.

Director issues ‘Order to Reappraise’ to towns whose most recent Equalization Study reflects a COD greater than 20. [32 V.S.A. § 4041a](#).

On or Before July 5

This is the deadline for listers to complete and submit their initial review to Current Use including listed values, acreage corrections, and comments re: change of ownership, eligibility, etc. [32 V.S.A. § 3756\(h\)](#).

The final version of the grand list, and Form 411 must be lodged with the town clerk. [32 V.S.A. § 4151](#) and [§ 4181](#).

Municipal tax rates are set by the selectboard.

August

Check for Homestead Declarations as well as Current Use files in your VTPIE work queues.

On or before August 15

An electronic copy of the grand list and Form 411 must be made available to PVR. [32 V.S.A. § 5404](#). PVR requests final submission of your electronic 411 and Final As-Billed (August submission) grand list for the prior year. This final submission is used for the reconciliation (true-up) by the Agency of Education.

[Form 427, Report of Municipal Tax Rate](#) is due.

Errors and Omissions—Once the Grand List has been submitted, value and homestead filing changes to the Grand List shall follow the Errors and Omissions process as described in [32 V.S.A. § 4261](#). All value changes with the exception of homestead classification changes, require selectboard approval.

[PVR provides courtesy forms](#) to be attached to the vault grand list.

Changes in Homestead filings [use Form PVR-4261, Errors and Omissions Certificate](#).

September

Check for Homestead Declarations as well as Current Use files in your VTPIE work queues.

September 1

Due date for new applications for the Use Appraisal Program (Current Use).
Homestead declaration files and Current Use electronic files available for review.

October/November

Check for Homestead Declarations as well as Current Use files in your VTPIE work queues.

Homestead Declarations may be filed up until October 15; the town may assess a late file penalty.

November 1

[Hold Harmless payments](#) are disbursed to towns. [32 V.S.A. § 3760](#).

State Payments-in-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILOT) are disbursed to towns. [32 V.S.A. § 3760](#).

Both of these payment calculations use grand list data from the previous year. For example, the November 2025 payments will be based on April 1, 2024, grand lists.

December

PVR completes the sales ratio (equalization) study and prepares to publish the equalized education grand lists, Common Level of Appraisals (CLA), and Coefficient of Dispersions (COD) in late December.

The Director of PVR will notify listers of the municipality's equalized education grand list, CLA, and COD. [32 V.S.A. §5406](#). Petitions for redetermination (appeals) can be filed under [32 V.S.A. § 5408](#). Such petitions must be timely and be filed by the town's legislative body. A COD higher than 20% will require a town to reappraise. [32 V.S.A. § 4041a](#).

December 31

Last day for Errors and Omissions changes to the grand list are due by this date. [32 V.S.A § 4261](#).

Appraisal at Fair Market Value

Fair Market Value Defined

Generally speaking, property is appraised at its fair market value as of April 1 each year. Fair market value is defined in [32 V.S.A. § 3481](#) as the following:

“The estimated fair market value of a property is the price that the property will bring in the market when offered for sale and purchased by another, taking into consideration all the elements of the availability of the property, its use both potential and prospective, any functional deficiencies, and all other elements such as age and condition which combine to give property a market value. Those elements shall include the effect of any State or local law or regulation affecting the use of land, including 10 V.S.A. Chapter 151 or any land capability plan established in furtherance or implementation thereof, rules adopted by the State Board of Health and any local or regional zoning ordinances or development plans. In determining estimated fair market value, the sale price of the property in question is one element to consider but is not solely determinative.”

This is not a handbook for conducting appraisals, and it contains only an overview of the appraisal process. There are many textbooks on appraisal and assessment. We recommend “Property Assessment Valuation” and “Property Appraisal and Assessment Administration,” published by the International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO). Other excellent texts are available from the Appraisal Institute.

[IAAO](#), 314 West 10th Street, Kansas City, MO 64105. Phone 816-701-8100.

[Appraisal Institute](#), 200 W Madison, Suite 2000, Chicago, IL 60606. Phone 1-888-786-4624.

Highest and Best Use

To estimate fair market value, you must first determine the highest and best use of the property. “Highest and best use” relates to the monetary return one can realize from a property. It is “that use that will generate the highest net return to the property over a reasonable period of time”¹ (. To determine the highest and best use, you must consider what is physically possible, what type or types of use are legal, what is financially feasible, and in today’s market and the near future, what use will bring the most monetary return.

Consider the following when determining the legal uses of Vermont property:

- Agency of Commerce and Community Development’s [Municipal Planning Manual](#)
- Public health regulations for water pollution [18 V.S.A. Chapter 23](#)
- Public water supply laws [10 V.S.A. Chapter 56](#)
- Town plans, local bylaws, local zoning regulations
- Permitting ([adminstered through the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources](#))
- Land Use and Development Plans, a.k.a. Act 250, [10 V.S.A. Chapter 151](#)
- [Vermont Planning Information Center](#)

1 [Property Assessment Valuation](#), 2nd Ed., IAAO, 1996

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) [has a Permit Handbook](#). [DEC regional offices and phone numbers](#) are also available online.

To further the town plan, local zoning regulations are adopted. To achieve town plan goals, regulations and zoning may restrict uses or density and should be considered during highest and best use analysis.

The state subdivision regulations set standards for water supply and sewage disposal. A permit certifying that water and sewage may be safely developed is required for any subdivision (unless the owner certifies that the use of the parcel will not require water or generate sewage). These regulations affect development potential and property value in three ways: 1) the amount of time involved to secure permits; 2) the risk that permits may not be granted; and 3) the cost of required systems to meet standards.

The Legislature is expected to review Act 250 criteria in light of the current housing shortage. [Review Act 250 criteria](#).

In most cases, a property's highest and best use would not fall under Act 250 review. However, an Act 250 permit affects property price due to the cost of requirements for changes or improvements required by the District Commission. A 100-acre lot without permits should not be valued as an approved subdivision of 10 lots with 10 acres per lot without making significant deductions for risk, time, work, and improvements (i.e. 'developer discount'). These types of considerations require an advanced knowledge of the appraisal process.

Appraisal Principles

There are 12 economic principles that form the basis for the highest and best use analysis. See the IAAO Glossary for definitions of these principles.

1. Anticipation
2. Balance
3. Change
4. Competition
5. Conformity
6. Consistent Use
7. Contribution
8. Increasing and Decreasing Returns
9. Progression and Regression
10. Substitution
11. Supply and Demand
12. Surplus Productivity

Approaches to Value

There are three approaches to determine the fair market value of a property—cost approach, market data approach, and income approach. In theory, if all three approaches are used to appraise any given parcel, the resultant values will be the same. In practice, however, some properties and some situations lend themselves to the use of one approach over another. Listers should have a general understanding of the income approach, and a more thorough knowledge of the cost and market data approaches.

Cost Approach to Value

This is sometimes called the summation approach, the theory being that the value of a property can be estimated by summing the land value and the depreciated value of any improvements. It is the land value, plus the cost to reconstruct any improvements, less the depreciation on those improvements. The value of the improvements is sometimes abbreviated to **RCNLD**—**R**eplacement **C**ost **N**ew **L**ess **D**epreciation. Replacement cost refers to the cost of building a house or other improvement with the same utility, but using modern design, workmanship and materials. The Marshall Swift version of Vermont's CAMA vendor systems produce an estimated replacement cost which is then adjusted to market value.

In most instances, when the cost approach is involved, the overall methodology used is a hybrid of the cost and market data approaches. For instance, while the cost to construct a building can be determined by adding the labor and materials costs together, land values and depreciation must be derived from an analysis of the market data.

It is best not to rely exclusively on a cost approach estimate of value for appeals—especially those that go beyond the Board of Civil Authority. Be prepared to explain the data and the calculations, especially the land schedules and depreciation schedules used. You should also be familiar with the market data approach, and be prepared to present comparable sales.

Market Data Approach (Sales Comparison Approach) to Value

With the market data approach, sales of properties similar to the subject are analyzed and the sale prices adjusted to account for differences in the comparable to the subject to determine the fair market of the subject.

Accurate updates require detailed sales data analysis that account for various attributes. This is the most difficult part of the sales comparison approach. The sales comparison model must be calibrated using one or more methods. The methods most often used are paired sales (sometimes called matched pairs), multiple regression analysis, and cost.

Typically, listers use the results of the study conducted by professional appraisal firms to maintain the grand list following a complete townwide reappraisal. This study will include a land schedule, depreciation schedule, neighborhood codes, and a time/location factor. Listers are expected to support the values established with these schedules and factors not only the year of the reappraisal, but in subsequent years.

The next step is to adjust the sales based on this data. This can be done using lump sum adjustments, cumulative percentage adjustments, multiplicative percentage adjustments or a hybrid methodology.

Because of the necessity to classify property as homestead and nonhomestead property, the requirement to value house sites, and the requirements for valuing farm buildings enrolled in Current Use, it is recommended that the market data approach not be solely relied upon. The cost approach is an excellent tool for those instances where a contributory value must be ascertained and should also be available.

PVR strongly suggests sales are analyzed on an ongoing basis for depreciation schedules and supporting values under appeal, and that a file be maintained on properties that have recently been sold; the District Advisor can assist with this. This information will assist in establishing time/location factors, land schedules and depreciation schedules, and will be a valuable resource when the listers are called upon to support assessments under appeal.

Income Approach to Value (Income Capitalization)

This method is most often used for appraisal of income producing properties—commercial, industrial and rental properties. The present worth of future benefits is determined. To do this, the income stream is analyzed in terms of quantity, quality and duration. It is then converted to market value by the application of a capitalization rate.

To conduct an income approach appraisal on an apartment building, identify:

1. Potential gross income from the market
2. Vacancy rate and collection loss from the market
3. Operating expenses
4. Capitalization rate

Allowable expenses are deducted from gross income. The resulting net operating income is capitalized (the conversion of income into capital) to determine value.

Note that income and expense figures should represent potential income from the market, not simply from the subject. If, for example, the property has a high vacancy rate, it does not necessarily translate into a lower value. Other factors, such as property management, may adversely affect income. The income figure should be the potential income, which can be significantly different than the actual income.

Grand List Software

The Department is transitioning to a new Grand List Software program. Some functions relating to grand list maintenance are conducted in the [Vermont Property Information Exchange \(VTPIE\)](#) and some are still conducted in the [New England Municipal Resource Center \(NEMRC\)](#). The [Tax Department](#), VTPIE, and NEMRC all have information and tutorials related to the software, and what functions are completed where.

Assessing Software

Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) Systems

The Division of Property Valuation and Review is required to develop improved methods for standardizing property assessment procedures and to provide technical assistance and instruction to listers in a uniform appraisal system, [32 V.S.A. § 3411](#). One way in which PVR fulfilled this requirement was with the development of a Vermont computer assisted mass appraisal (CAMA) system.

The NEMRC MicroSolve CAMA system was introduced in 1996 to Vermont listers and is currently used by the majority of towns as their assessing software. The appraisal modules are used to generate values using the cost approach, comparable sales analysis, and estimate values using the income approach. Towns wishing to use the MicroSolve appraisal modules must purchase a license from the vendor. NEMRC MicroSolve is no longer state-supported, and upgrades are not state-funded.

While NEMRC is the most commonly used CAMA system by Vermont Municipalities, towns determine which software to use. AssessPro (Patriot), ProVal (Aumentum), and Vision are other systems used across the state. All the CAMA software systems provide for systematic data entry and value generation based on valuation tables from Marshall & Swift (N/K/A Core Logic) adjusted by local sales. The tables and schedules entered at the time of your reappraisal are used until the next reappraisal.

With the implementation of the integrated property tax management system, the Vermont Property Information Exchange or VTPIE, all CAMA vendor software will be able to communicate with the new grand list system. The interactive District Advisor Map, a Microsoft Power BI feature, [is available on the Department's District Advisors page](#). The map allows you to select a town and view what CAMA system they use. PVR recommends that if a town decides to change assessing software, they do so as part of a town-wide reappraisal.

Common Reports

Property Record Card

This is a summary that includes a picture and sketch of the dwelling, summary of the total value(s) of the improvements/ land/ site improvements and outbuildings and total assessed homestead and housesite values. Ownership, SPAN, 911 location and general details are also included in this report. This is the most common report provided to the public.

PVR strongly recommends that towns invest in Marshall & Swift manuals at the time of reappraisal. The manuals closely follow the computer models, though some adjustments to the base numbers for local costs can be expected and are represented on cost sheets or property record cards by time and location factors. These are developed based on property sales to adjust the national tables for local conditions. (See Marshall & Swift topic.) Reappraisal contractors study your market to apply multipliers for your town at reappraisal time.

Web Contact Information for commonly used assessing software:

- [AssessPro \(Patriot\)](https://catalisgov.com) <https://catalisgov.com>
- [MicroSolve](https://www.nemrc.com) <https://www.nemrc.com>
- [ProVal](https://www.aumentumtech.com) <https://www.aumentumtech.com>
- [Vision](https://www.vgsi.com) <https://www.vgsi.com>

Annual Reporting and Maintenance

Ongoing Analysis and Maintenance

In a perfect world, each property would be visited and appraised on April 1 to determine fair market value, that would be frozen for 365 days, this is not feasible. Unfortunately, appraisals soon become out of date. The challenge is to maintain a fair and equitable grand list that accounts for changes in properties and the market.

Municipalities are required to reappraise all property if their Coefficient of Dispersion (COD), a measure of uniformity of appraisal, is above 20%. [32 V.S.A. § 4041a](#). Ongoing analysis of the market and property changes can make reappraisals less frequent and costly.

Sales should be routinely reviewed to determine the ratio of listed values and how grand list values compare to the current market. Review the annual Equalization Study results and the data statistics of each category to see how they vary from the other property types. You may decide land schedule need to be updated, depreciation schedules are no longer indicative of the local market, and that the time/location factor needs adjustment, or a combination of these which would indicate a reappraisal may be in order. Do not multiply all properties by a factor as this will increase inequity. Analyze the information and determine what changes are needed. Your District Advisor can assist in this analysis.

The assessment of subdivisions and new construction are an ongoing challenge. Even though the statutes direct you to appraise all properties at fair market value, you must ensure the value of new or changed properties is at the same percentage of fair market value as other properties. [Kachadorian v. Town of Woodstock, 144 Vt. 348 \(1984\)](#). This is accomplished by applying the same CAMA values, etc.

As an example, consider a town that reappraised four years ago. Although the property was listed at 100% of fair market value then, an analysis of sales indicates that residential property is now listed at about 85% of fair market value. This year a new house is built in town. Because it would not be fair to list a new house at its current value, appraise the new house using the same schedules and practices used to determine the values of similar properties. This is often referred to as “back-dating” the appraisal. Do not appraise the new house at fair market value and adjust that by 85%. Doing so violates the listers’ oath to appraise uniformly and undermines the equity already existing in the grand list.

In the years after a reappraisal, the grand list begins to display inequities. If all property values changed at a uniform rate, the grand list would remain a valid means of determining everyone’s just proportion, and thereby fairness in assessing taxes. However, different types of property tend to appreciate/depreciate more rapidly than other types. For example, lakeshore property may appreciate more rapidly than large tracts of forestland. Equity must be maintained not only within categories of property, but across property types as the goal is town-wide equity. Back-dating appraisals on new construction is an effective method for maintaining equity in the short term, but eventually a complete reappraisal of all properties is required to restore equity within the grand list.

Selective Reassessment

Adjusting individual property’s appraised value to the value reported in a recent sales transaction for that parcel (or the sale price adjusted by the CLA), is not an acceptable assessment practice. It’s sometimes called “welcome stranger” or “sales chasing.” The practice greatly undermines equity because it creates a dual system of valuation: one for newcomers to a neighborhood and one for

existing owners.

Similarly, listers cannot selectively reappraise discreet neighborhoods or discreet market sectors without compelling evidence that the neighborhood or market sector is appraised at a substantially different level from the rest of the town. If challenged, the listers must be prepared to show how any change brings such assessment into line with those of other properties whose assessments go unchanged. The goal is to ensure that a property's listed value corresponds with listed value of comparable properties so taxpayers do not pay more than their fair share of the property tax burden. [Allen v. Town of West Windsor \(2003\)](#).

Reappraisal

Because the recognition of an inequitable situation has not always convinced voters to reappraise, the Legislature provided additional incentives with the implementation of [32 V.S.A. § 4041a](#).

The CLA and COD are determined annually by the Vermont Department of Taxes. If the COD is greater than 20%, the town will be notified that a reappraisal must be conducted. The town is given an opportunity to develop a plan to comply with the reappraisal order. If the town fails to submit an acceptable compliance plan or fails to carry it out, the State can withhold education, transportation and other funds until such time as the Department certifies that the town has carried out the plan.

Each town receives an annual payment from the State to help with the cost of reappraisal and the maintenance of the grand list. The amount is \$8.50 per parcel per year.

[32 V.S.A. § 4041a. Reappraisal:](#)

(a) A municipality shall be paid \$8.50 per grand list parcel per year, from the equalization and reappraisal account within the education fund to be used only for reappraisal and costs related to reappraisal of its grand list properties and for maintenance of the grand list.

Towns should establish a reserve fund to ensure these funds are available for a future reappraisal.

When a full reappraisal is necessary, most municipalities choose to contract with professional appraisers. A [list of appraisal firms](#) that are PVR approved to contract for municipal reappraisals is available.

Even if the reappraisal is conducted by a contractor, listers should be involved. Although their participation varies from town to town, listers often provide measurements of buildings, acreage calculations, maps, and previous appraisal cards. They may also make appointments for site visits, accompany the contractor on site visits, compile sales information, and hold informational meetings with the contractor to explain the appraisal methods to the public. Lister involvement can often result in substantial savings in the cost of the reappraisal. More importantly, lister involvement in the reappraisal prepares them to uniformly maintain the grand list in the years after reappraisal.

Though towns hire contractors for the reappraisal, listers will later have to defend and update the values, and a thorough understanding of the appraisal methods is crucial. The [Vermont Assessors and Listers Association \(VALA\)](#) offers the following:

- Participate from the beginning: question, review and comment on values.
- Ensure the system is reasonable and consistently applied.
- Conduct a preliminary analysis of the sales data.
- Be accessible to the public, open, and candid.
- After a reappraisal, but before grievance hearings, give taxpayers an opportunity to come in and speak with a knowledgeable person about their values and how they were determined. This will point out mistakes, help the taxpayers understand the appraisal, and reduce the number of appeals.
- Retain the contractor for appeals.

Talk with listers and selectboard members in towns where a contractor has previously worked before deciding on a firm. Inquire as to whether the contractor completed the work in a timely manner. Ask whether the contractor provided sufficient training and documentation to allow the appraisal system to be used by the listers. Were the final results accurate and supportable? Was the contractor accessible to the public? Did staff demonstrate good public relations skills and professionalism? Ask what they would have changed about the process.

The Vermont League of Cities & Towns also provides Board of Civil Authority (BCA) training specifically for reappraisal towns. [See the BCA Toolkit.](#)

Life Cycle of a Reappraisal

1. Reappraisal
2. Aging of grand list information / property data
3. Changing of the Real Estate Market – Nationally & Locally
4. Erosion of Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) – sale prices / fair market values no longer align with assessed values
5. Erosion of Coefficient of Dispersion (COD) – assessments are no longer uniform from one property or type of property to another
6. New Reappraisal Needed

Grand List Book

The grand list is the basis for the collection of all property taxes in the State—almost \$2.1 billion in 2023. To ensure towns and cities receive fair treatment concerning the education tax, and to assist Vermont’s lawmakers with informed decisions relative to the property tax, the 411 and grand list must be accurate, complete, and timely.

The information contained therein is used to determine the average value of a home in a given area, and the amount of funding each town receives from the State for reappraisal. Towns and cities receive \$8.50 and \$1 per parcel payments for all assessed taxable and exempt real estate parcels. [32 V.S.A. § 4041a](#) and [§ 5405](#). Questions about the Grand List process can be directed to the District Advisor.

The grand list book must contain:

- Taxable parcels: A listing for every real estate parcel and taxable business personal property in alphabetical order by owner.
- All exempt property: Value and stated method of valuation (insurance or assessment) summarized on Form 411 (abstract of the grand list).

Under [32 V.S.A. § 4152](#), for each parcel, the grand list must contain:

1. Complete name and mailing address of owner
2. Brief description of property
3. School Property Account Number (SPAN)
4. Parcel size
5. Homestead Declaration receipt information (whether filed and if timely filed)
6. Homestead value (if applicable)
7. Housesite value (if applicable)
8. Nonhomestead value (if applicable)
9. Resident status (see following pages on these codes)
10. Real estate HBU (Highest & Best Use) codes—R1, R2, etc. (see following pages on these codes)
11. Listed value of real estate
12. Listed value of taxable business personal property, if applicable
13. Use value data, if applicable
14. If the property would be taxable but has been voted exempt, or the value or taxes stabilized, the taxable listed value must be shown along with the details of the contract or exemption.
15. Mobile home descriptions shall include, if available: manufacturer, model number, serial number and dimensions.

16. If a property is exempt, include the property's listed value without exemptions and the exemption's details including the method of valuation (insurance or assessment) and statute utilized.

Summaries listed by owner, must also be included:

1. Properties exempt by statute (churches, town owned property, etc.)
2. Local Agreements (exemptions)—Properties exempt by vote (grange halls, properties owned by fraternal organizations, farm buildings that have been voted exempt, etc.). The summary must contain: owner; property description; property category (Farm, Commercial, R1, etc.); statute utilized to vote exemption; full listed value of property (broken out by homestead and nonhomestead); listed value exempted; effective dates; and whether the local agreement is also approved for exemption from education taxes.
3. Local Agreements (contracts)—Properties subject to stabilization agreements must contain: owner; parcel description; statute granting authority to stabilize; property category; full listed value of property (broken out by homestead and nonhomestead); value subject to taxation; effective dates; and whether the local agreement is also approved for exemption.
4. Lease land—Names of lessee (occupant) and lessor, property description, category, size in acres and rent paid.

Common coding errors include improperly categorizing property, missing information on exemptions and contracts, and inaccurate acreage figures. Improper coding leads to errors in the sales ratio study and results in inaccurate information reported to the General Assembly and other users.

Notice and Certificates

Notices and certificates must be included in the grand list book as each step in the process is completed. Lister signed certificates are attached when the abstract of individual lists is completed and lodged with the town clerk who then signs a Town/City Clerk's Certificate.

A Notice to Taxpayers is signed by listers to give official notice of the abstract grand list lodging with the clerk and grievance meeting date(s). At close of grievance, listers complete the Oath per 32 V.S.A. § 4151. This Oath is then attached to the grand list which is submitted to the town clerk. It then becomes the town's grand list and the town clerk certifies its receipt.

Real Property Highest and Best Use Codes

Property must be listed in the category of its "Highest and Best Use." Highest and best use" relates to the monetary return one can realize from a property. It is "that use that will generate the highest net return to the property over a reasonable period of time."¹

Dwelling Codes

Residential (R1 and R2)—Include houses with four apartments or less and non-operating farms with a highest and best use as year-round residences. If the parcel would likely sell for seasonal occupation, it should be defined as a seasonal property. The present use of the property and the

¹ Property Assessment Valuation, 2nd Ed., IAAO, 1996

ownership of the property are not deciding factors.

If your town or city has enough condominiums to warrant a separate category, use the “Other” category for that purpose—especially if the market shows condo values changing at a different rate than other properties.

R1—residential property with less than six acres of land

R2—residential property with six or more acres of land

MHU—Mobile home unlanded. This applies to mobile homes on land not owned by the mobile home owner. This includes trailer coaches (also called travel trailers), taxable under [32 V.S.A. § 3692\(b\)](#)

MHL—Mobile home landed. A mobile home set up on land owned by the mobile home owner.

Seasonal (S1 and S2)—Include all properties with a highest and best use for seasonal occupancy. This may include summer homes with inadequate year-round heating/insulation, ski chalets, hunting camps, camps and cottages on lakes and ponds (such as with restricted zoning, poor insulation, heating and/or access), etc. The highest and best use of the property determines the category. The present use of the property and the ownership of the property are not deciding factors.

S1—Seasonal property with less than six acres of land

S2—Seasonal property with six or more acres of land

Commercial Codes

C—Commercial. Include properties whose highest and best use is to provide goods and services for sale. This includes retail stores, malls, motels, hotels, filling stations, restaurants, office buildings, bowling alleys, golf courses, etc. This excludes industrial manufacturing plants.

Utility property is distinguishable from commercial property by its specialized function, which limits its highest and best use to that of a public utility. For instance, a natural gas pipeline or a water filtration plant owned by a public utility would be coded UO. An office building not fitted especially for use by a public utility (e.g. administrative headquarters), should be coded Commercial. The market is the controlling factor.

CA—Commercial Apartments. Apartment buildings with more than four apartments.

Industrial Codes

Industrial property is distinguished from commercial property in that raw materials are used to produce a product, rather than a product or service simply being sold. There are three industrial categories—I, UE and UO.

I—Manufacturing Plants. Include properties such as cheese-making facilities, microchip manufacturing plants, sawmills, creameries, ice cream factories, etc.

UE—Electric Utilities. Property owned by a public utility and used in the production, transmission or distribution of electrical energy. This includes hydro plants, solar arrays, wind towers, substations, poles, lines and fixtures, etc. Property owned by a public utility that has a highest and best use other than for the production, transmission or distribution of electrical energy would be coded otherwise. For example, office buildings would be coded Commercial and vacant land would be coded Miscellaneous.

UO—Other Utilities. This includes real property owned by public utilities other than electric companies for which the highest and best use is in carrying on the business of that utility. This might include real property owned by water companies, cell towers, and natural gas distribution pipelines.

Utility owned property where the highest and best use is not the utility's business would not be included in the UO category. For example, a telephone company's vacant land would be coded **Miscellaneous**, or a house owned by a cable television company would be coded **R1** or **R2**.

Do not include property used in carrying on a propane business in the utility category. This is a commercial operation. Propane tanks owned by such companies are coded PP-M&E. Please see the "Subjects" section for more on propane tanks.

Cable TV: Note that cable television lines and fixtures are to be coded as Personal Property-Cable. An office building with a wider market than cable TV services would likely best be coded as a commercial property.

Farming Codes

F—Farm. Include operating farms with buildings involved. Do not include properties that were formerly farmed and now have a highest and best use as a residential or seasonal property.

Do not include vacant land in this category, even if it is used in the farming operation. Only include operating farms with buildings. A farmer's non-contiguous 15-acre parcel used to grow crops is not a farm, it is vacant land and is coded as M-Miscellaneous.

Vacant Land Codes

W—Woodland. Include large tracks of undeveloped land that is mostly wooded. Such parcels may have buildings of little value, such as the 100-acre parcel of forestland with a small deer camp of little value. Smaller wooded parcels can be coded as miscellaneous; be consistent and set parameters with a reappraisal contractor or District Advisor.

M—Miscellaneous. Include undeveloped land, shore lots, residential building lots, unimproved commercial lots, unimproved agricultural land, etc. Such parcels may have buildings of little or no value. Woodland tracts may be included here if they do not warrant a separate category.

Other Codes

O—Other. Contact PVR for guidance on the use of this category. It is only to be used for one specific type of taxable property.

The board of listers may choose to use **Other** for all condominium properties, rather than dispersing these within the **R1** and **S1** categories, if there is a distinguishable market for such properties. Listers may choose to use this category to separate the trailer coaches (travel trailers) if the town has many of these properties and their market is different than for MHUs. If the **Other** category is used, it must be designated for only one type of property.

Do not use this category for exempt properties. Do not use this category unless it has been specifically earmarked for one type of property. Be sure you specify what type of property you are including when reviewing sales with your District Advisor.

Business Personal Property Category Codes

PP-I—Inventory (stock-in-trade). Inventories of goods for sale, materials used in the manufacturing process, timber rights, etc.

PP-M&E—Machinery and equipment. Office furniture and equipment, equipment in a retail establishment not classified as fixtures, propane tanks, hotel and motel furniture and equipment, fixtures whose removal will not cause material injury to the real property, etc.

PP-Cable TV—Cable television lines and fixtures.

Ownership Codes

All types of property owned by a corporation, partnership or other entity must be coded as such. For instance, Brown Brothers Farm, Inc. or Jones Sisters, LLC, are corporate-owned. Seasonal and residential properties owned by business entities must be coded as such. State and federal government properties should be listed as owned by a corporation.

Review these codes for accuracy annually; ownership codes frequently change with new owners.

T—Town Residents. People who live in the town where the property is located.

S—State Residents. People who live in Vermont, but outside the property's town.

NS—People who live outside of the State of Vermont.

C—Corporations, partnerships and other entities (including governmental). Include all properties owned by business entities—regardless of the category of property. This ownership coding applies to all types of property and is not limited to commercial, industrial and utility.

Sales Reports from the Department of Taxes

Listers maintain equity within their town as economic forces impact portions of the grand list. Because the grand list forms the basis for the assessment of the statewide education tax, it is important to ensure fairness and equity among towns. The Department of Taxes conducts an annual study to determine the equalized education grand list of each town, the Common Level of Appraisal and Coefficient of Dispersion, as well as when a reappraisal is ordered. Listers actively participate in this study and analyze its results to ensure their town or city receives fair treatment.

Sales data is collected from the Property Transfer Tax Returns. Listers receive a list of transfers that occurred between April 1 through March 31 in their municipality (via VTPIE in the spring), review the data for errors and provide input on the validity of sales. The following are reasons a sale may not be used in the equalization study:

Either the sale may not be considered an arms-length transaction and therefore its sale price not indicative of fair market value, or there is no listed value which corresponds with the property as it existed at the time of sale, such as in the case of a subdivision.

- Sales between members of the immediate family
- Sales between a corporation and a stockholder
- Tax sales, sheriff's sales, bankruptcy, foreclosures, dissolution, liquidation
- Sales by guardians, trustees, executors and administrators
- Sales to or from any charitable, religious or benevolent organizations
- Sales where unusual financing significantly affected the sale price
- Sales where a significant amount of personal property conveyed that was not reflected separately in the sales breakdown on the property transfer return
- Sales where all assessed interests were not sold, e.g. a life interest retained
- Sales of property assessed in more than one town
- Sales of property with no corresponding listed value, such as subdivisions
- Sales where a significant improvement was made just prior to the sale
- Sales of property to an abutter

PVR audits sales information and contacts buyers and/or sellers of property to acquire sales details. Towns should consider using some form of verification letter to gain information on the sales as they occur. The District Advisor can help you with the sales verification process. For more information on the role of listers in the Equalization Study, [see the guide, Introduction to Vermont's Equalization Study \(tax.vermont.gov\)](https://tax.vermont.gov).

The “411” Form

Listers are required to provide an annual abstract of the grand list to the town clerk, which is then electronically [forwarded to PVR per 32 V.S.A. § 4181](#). This a “411 Form,” is a one-page summary of the grand list that includes: property counts for each category of taxable property, the homestead education grand list, the nonhomestead education grand list, the municipal grand list, exemptions and local agreements, total listed value for all taxable personal property and real property (including property exempt by vote or statute). Contact PVR or the District Advisor with questions.

Towns must file an electronic version of the 411 and grand list book. Failure to file complete information in a timely manner may result in the withholding of state aid. [32 V.S.A. § 5404](#). The 411 is the basis for many of PVR's required reports and compilation of the equalized education grand list.

There is [more information about the 411 form on NEMRC's website](#).

The total education grand list and the total municipal grand list will differ if:

- The town or city assesses and taxes business personal property (such property is exempt from the education grand list);
- The town or city has voted to exempt a property from the grand list, but it is not exempted from the education grand list; or
- The town or city has voted to stabilize the value or taxes on a property, but the stabilization agreement does not affect the education grand list.
- There are any special exemptions such as solar, qualified housing, or for veterans where the education exempt amount is different from the municipal.

Examples where the education grand list and the municipal grand list would differ:

Example 1: A town cannot tax an American Legion hall. Such property [is exempt under 32 V.S.A. § 3802\(2\)](#). However, a building owned by a fraternal organization (such as the Masons) is taxable unless the town [votes to exempt it under 32 V.S.A. § 3840h](#). The property owned by the fraternal organization must be detailed on the 411 as a local agreement. The American Legion hall is included on the 411 form as a statutory exemption—one in which the town has no choice but to exempt.

Example 2: Another example of a town voted exemption is that provided by [32 V.S.A. § 3836](#), which allows a town to exempt up to \$75,000 on new homes. Only properties which the town's voters have chosen to exempt and which would otherwise be taxable, are included under local agreements. If the property cannot be taxed (public school building, church edifice, Girl Scout camp, etc.), it is reported as a statutory exemption.

Be sure any exempted value is not included in the taxable listed values reported. For example, if the total value of a property is \$200,000 and it is subject to a \$20,000 veteran's exemption, only \$180,000 would be included in the taxable value section under the appropriate category. Failure to accurately apply the exemption can result in the equalized education property value being skewed. Any questions on these exemptions should be addressed to PVR or to the District Advisor.

The 411 also asks for the number of veterans' exemptions granted and the total amount exempted. If the town has voted to grant an additional exemption (up to a total of \$40,000 [as provided in 32 V.S.A. § 3802](#) that information must also be reported. A veteran exemption of \$10,000 is allowed from the education grand list by statute and any additional amount would require a local agreement rate. Local agreements mean the town is liable for the list education tax and must set a rate to make up for it.

The 411 asks for details on stabilization agreements by the selectboard. For example, the town may vote to give the selectboard the power to contract with owners of industrial property. Under such an agreement, the property owner is not required to pay the full tax, but rather a lesser agreed-upon amount.

It may be in the form of one of the following:

- Fixing and maintaining the tax rate
- Fixing and maintaining the listed value
- Fixing the tax paid

The 411 must contain complete information on these properties (listers should retain a copy of the stabilization agreements) and:

- The full listed value of the property if it were not stabilized
- The value taxed (homestead and nonhomestead)
- The value not taxed (homestead and nonhomestead)
- The date the agreement was voted
- First year stabilized (April 1, [year])
- Last year stabilized (April 1, [year])
- Whether the agreement affects the education grand list ²

The selectboard will need the above information to determine whether a local agreement rate must be set and if so, the amount of that rate.

Determining Acreage and Property Mapping

In many towns, grand list acreage is determined by a combination of deed records and casual agreements, supplemented by occasional survey figures. While some deeds may be very accurate, often the comparison of survey to deeded acreage will result in a notable deviation PVR recommends listing the acreage based on the best information available in the grand list. Recorded surveys, parcel maps, and deeds should all be weighed when determining a parcel's acreage.

When a parcel is sub-divided or sold, it is often surveyed, though this is not required. If the deed refers to a recent survey, the survey must be provided or referenced. [27 V.S.A. § 341\(b\)](#). Surveys prepared by non-licensed land surveyors may show parcel boundaries but should not be used to convey land or determine acreage.

Tax maps, although they do not carry as much weight as a recorded survey by a registered surveyor, can be an excellent tool for determining acreage if they are of high quality. Modern tax maps and the digital parcel boundary data used to make them (GIS data) are among the most important local

² A municipality shall assess a tax on its municipal grand list at a rate sufficient to raise an amount equal to the difference between the municipality's total education per property tax liability to the state under this chapter and the amount collected from education property taxes in the municipality after reductions for all tax agreements in effect in the municipality as defined in subsection (c) of this section. Any such tax assessed under this section shall be identified on the tax bill of the municipality as a separate tax for municipally voted tax agreements. [32 V.S.A. § 5404a\(d\)](#).

government information assets municipalities have. GIS parcel data is not the equivalent of legal property records or land surveys, but the data does assist municipal officials with accurate property tax assessment, conservation, planning, and zoning.

Contact your regional planning commission or the [Vermont Center for Geographic Information \(VCGI\)](#) for information on how to use or improve the town's digital parcel data.

PVR recommends annual tax map and digital parcel data review. If changes in acreage results in changes in listed value, listers must send out Change of Appraisal Notices to those affected and follow grievance procedures. (See the Grievance section.) [32 V.S.A. § 4111\(g\)](#).

VCGI has worked with municipal and regional partners and surveyors to develop the Vermont GIS Parcel Mapping Guideline, which provides information about the process and products involved in tax mapping. The most recent version of the Guideline is [posted at the VCGI website in the "Standards and Guidelines" section](#).

The Guideline provides template documents such as requests for proposals (RFPs) and contracts, as well as recommended best practices. VCGI can provide a list of companies who provide tax mapping services. VCGI also [manages the Statewide Parcel Program \(vcgi.vermont.gov\)](#), which supports towns with information about parcel mapping [as well as the Statewide Parcel Viewer \(experience.arcgis.com\)](#).

Determining the Owner

Taxable real estate is to be listed to the last owner or possessor on April 1. [32 V.S.A. § 3651](#). Title to property transfers when the deed is signed and delivered to the buyer, which usually occurs at closing. However, some towns use the recording date because this is when information becomes available to them. Listers may decide which date to use but should maintain consistency in practice.

For ownership questions, use the best information available to determine when the title transferred to the new owner. If the closing date is before April 1 and the recording date is after April 1, examine the transaction to determine ownership status on April 1 (even if the deed and PTTR are not recorded as of April 1). PVR uses the closing date for property transfer tax and Equalization Study sales purposes.

Generally, personal property is listed to the last owner on April 1 where the property is located. However, a taxable tangible personal estate owned by persons residing outside the state or owned by persons unknown to the lister shall be listed to the persons having possession or control over the property. [32 V.S.A. § 3691](#).

When real estate is mortgaged, the mortgagor (borrower) is the owner. But, if the mortgagee takes possession, the mortgagee (usually a bank or mortgage company) becomes the owner. [32 V.S.A. § 3652](#).

Undivided estates must be listed to the estate in care of the executor or administrator. [32 V.S.A. § 3654](#). Real estate held in trust must be listed to the trustee(s).

When property is conveyed by a deed which reserves the use and possession for the grantor for their life, the property is generally listed to the life tenant and not to the remainderman, according to

common law. [Wilmot v. Lathrop, 67 Vt. 671 \(1895\)](#). However, listers may choose to list it to either the owner or possessor. It may be advisable to list the property to the life tenant to accommodate those instances where the life tenant will be filing a homestead declaration.

In one instance, a town determined a remainderman was also a property “owner” and could be held liable for tax at the election of the listers. The court agreed, stating, “if the legislature had intended that in a case of divided ownership the life tenant, if any, should be the only one to be considered as the “owner” of the property it could easily have so provided in express terms.” [Brattleboro v. Smith, 117 Vt. 425 \(1953\)](#).

When real estate is subject to a perpetual or 99-year lease, it must be listed twice. Unless specifically exempted by the original grantor or by a statute, the lease is listed to the lessor at an amount of which the rent is 6%. For example, if the rent is \$6, the lease would be listed to the lessor at \$100. The property is listed to the lessee at its fair market value, except that the annual rent paid must be credited against the property tax payable. [32 V.S.A. §3609](#) and [§ 3610](#). When real estate is subject to a lease that is for a term fewer than 99 years, the listers may list it to either the owner or the possessor, but PVR recommends listing it to the owner of record.

Owner’s Death

In cases when property was held in joint tenancy, including by the entirety, ownership is necessarily changed by the death of the joint owner. In such cases, ownership is not vested in the estate of the deceased; rather, the transfer is automatic and without necessity of probate. Consult the town attorney with questions.

Changes to land records

Listers may not make changes to land records without supporting documentation. For example, a son or daughter builds a house on their parents’ land and asks that the house be listed separately to the child. Absent a record in the town office conveying the house to the child, listers must treat the house as part of the parcel on which it is situated. Also, listers may receive information that an owner has died or changed their name. Listers must have a death certificate or name change notice [as provided in 27 V.S.A. § 350](#) to make changes to the grand list.

What is a Parcel?

The grand list must contain “a brief description and the listed valuation of each parcel of taxable real estate in the town.” “Parcel” is defined as “all contiguous land in the same ownership, together with all improvements thereon.” [32 V.S.A. § 4152\(a\)\(3\)](#).

Parcel means all contiguous land in the same ownership regardless of the number of deeds. The definition of “homestead” [contained in 32 V.S.A. § 5401\(7\)](#) provides the parcel of land surrounding the dwelling shall be determined without regard to any road that intersects the land.

These definitions are for administrative purposes as they govern how to list properties in the grand list book but do not govern listers’ determinations of the highest and best use of a property and its fair market value.

The Court offered guidance regarding what factors must be considered when making a valuation determination. Those factors included whether property was conveyed in one deed; the land’s

character and use; whether separately deeded tracts are contiguous; and whether the property functions as one tract for the owner. [Neun v. Roxbury 150 Vt. 242, 552 A.2d 408 \(1988\)](#).

The above should still be considered when determining value. [The definitions in 32 V.S.A. § 4152 and § 5401\(7\)](#) do not preclude listers from determining the highest and best use of a tract as more than one parcel. For example, for a four-acre parcel acquired by two deeds, a landowner had one parcel with a house and two acres and an adjoining two-acre piece is acquired as protection land. The grand list will contain the four-acre parcel coded as an R1. However, valuation of that property may determine that the “highest and best use” of that parcel is two separate parcels for value purposes—a house and two acres, and a buildable two-acre lot—and the listed value should reflect that determination.

Listers may not group tracts together that are under different ownerships. The Court [held in *Petition of Mallery*, 127 Vt. 412](#), that properties owned by the petitioner could not be listed with properties owned by the petitioner and her husband jointly.

Noncontiguous land must not be grouped together into one parcel. Each separate tract is listed as a separate parcel. [Bullis v. Town of Grand Isle, 151 Vt. 503, 561 A.2d 1359 \(1989\)](#).

Contact PVR with questions on specific properties.

See more information about parcels in the “” section in this guide.

Grievances and Appeals

Lister decisions are subject to grievances and appeals. Taxpayers may appeal their property's assessed values, individuals and organizations may appeal denials of requests for exemptions, and values allocated to both homestead and housesites and current use may all be grieved. The Secretary of State's office [has an Appeals Handbook](#) for guidance.

Prior to Grievance—Listers are open and forthcoming about the assessment process and available to answer questions and hear concerns. This is especially important during a town-wide reappraisal. Listers find informal public meetings to explain assessment methods and answer questions from property owners helpful as they reduce the number of formal grievance hearings. However, these are not official grievances and values should not be changed through this mechanism.

Change of Appraisal Notices—Change of Appraisal Notices must be sent the same day the abstract of individual lists is lodged with the town clerk. Notices must be sent to each property owner whose value has changed since the previous assessment. This includes changes in homestead and housesite values, or a change in the allocation of value on properties enrolled in the Use Appraisal (Current Use) Program. [32 V.S.A. § 4111](#) and [§ 3756](#). The notice must include information on how to grieve and the deadline for filing a written grievance.

Notices are sent by certificate of mailing, certified mail, or registered mail to ensure proof of mailing. If listers cannot provide proof of mailing, it is presumed notices were not sent and the value of the property may be rolled back to the previous year's value.

Grievance Hearings—Briefly state how the value was determined, allow sufficient time for the taxpayer to make their case and answer their questions. If a site inspection is necessary, set an appointment. Decisions are not made during hearings, but property owner(s) are told when to expect a decision. [32 V.S.A. § 4221](#).

Result of Grievance Notice to Taxpayers—Notices must be mailed to taxpayers within seven days of the close of grievance hearings. Notices include lister decisions with respect to the grievance, and instructions on appeals to the Board of Civil Authority from this decision. [32 V.S.A. § 4224](#).

Appeals to the Board of Civil Authority (BCA)—Property owners have 14 days from the date of mailing of the result of grievance notice to appeal to the Board of Civil Authority. The town/city clerk will notify the listers if any such appeals are received, and of the date and time of the hearing. [32 V.S.A. § 4404](#).

Preparation for appeals to the BCA includes: support of the assessment value that includes relevant sales data, familiarity with the subject property and comparable properties, an explanation of cost data, how the time/location factor was determined, and land and depreciation schedules.

Appeals Beyond the Board of Civil Authority—Listers may be called upon to support or assist the Town's case in appeals from the decision of the Board of Civil Authority either to the Superior Court or to the State Hearing Officer (decision by the selectboard—court cases will involve an attorney). [32 V.S.A. § 4461](#). More market analysis is expected at this level of appeal. The Court or the State Hearing Officer will expect evidence of the fair market value of the subject property. Cost approach appraisals should be supplemented with market data appraisals and, when applicable, income capitalization appraisals.

Selective Reappraisal: Listers cannot selectively reappraise discreet neighborhoods or discreet market sectors without compelling evidence that the neighborhood or market sector is appraised at a substantially different level from the rest of the town. If such action has been taken and it is challenged, listers must show how any such change brought the changed properties into line with those of other properties whose assessments were not changed.

Q: Can we make house visits the night of grievance hearings?

A: Yes, provided office hours posted for grievance are kept.

Q: If someone walks into our office on grievance day without previous notice, do we have to hear them?

A: Yes, provided they submit a written and signed piece of paper stating their intent to grieve; schedule their grievance.

Q: If a lister wants to grieve their own assessment can they still sit in on other grievances?

A: Listers may grieve their own assessments and there is no tax law provision to prohibit them from sitting in on other grievances. However, as a general rule, they should not (it can be easily construed as a conflict of interest). If a lister is unsatisfied with their own assessment, PVR recommends the town have the other listers view the property beforehand. If they concur that adjustments are justified, then those listers make the agreed-upon changes.

The Board of Tax Abatement

Listers are members of the Board of Tax Abatement (BOA). The BOA is composed of listers, the selectboard, justices of the peace, the town clerk, and the town treasurer [24 V.S.A. § 1533](#) and [§ 801](#). The BOA may, [in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 1535](#), abate in whole or in part, municipal taxes, water charges, sewer charges, interest, collection fees, or any combination of those, under specific circumstances, including taxes or charges:

- Of persons who have died insolvent;
- Of persons who have moved from the state;
- Of persons who are unable to pay their taxes, interest and collections fees
- In which there is manifest error OR mistake of the listers;
- Upon real or personal property lost or destroyed during the tax year;
- The exemption amount (for qualified veterans) [available under 32 V.S.A. § 3802\(11\)](#) to persons otherwise eligible for exemption who file a claim on or after May 1 but before October 1 due to the claimant's sickness or disability or other good cause as determined by the board of abatement; but that exemption amount shall be reduced by 20% of the total exemption for each month or portion of a month the claim is late filed;
- Taxes or charges upon a mobile home moved from the town during the tax year as a result of a change in use of the mobile home park land or parts thereof, or closure of the mobile home park in which the mobile home was sited, [under 10 V.S.A. § 6237](#).

The abatement of a tax or charge automatically abates any uncollected interest and fees relating to the amount abated. Abatement does not require a change in the grand list; it is for taxes only.

Statute does not specify meeting times; boards typically meet at least once a year. After a board decision, justification must be put in writing and a copy forwarded to the affected property owner.

A record of the taxes, interest, and fees abated is recorded in the town clerk's office and a certified copy is forwarded to the collector of taxes and the town treasurer.

Abatement may be in the form of a refund or a credit, depending on the order of the board. Interest is payable in some instances. [See 24 VSA § 1535-1537](#).

The legislative body of a municipality has the authority in cases of hardship¹ to abate all or any portion of a homestead penalty appealable to the listers and any tax, penalty, and interest arising out of a corrected property classification. The legislative body may delegate the authority to abate in such instances to the Board of Tax Abatement or the Board of Civil Authority. [32 V.S.A. § 5410\(j\)](#). The Secretary of State's Office has a booklet called "About Abatement" that is worthwhile reading.

¹ Hardship means an owner's inability to pay as certified by the Commissioner of Taxes in the Commissioner's discretion, or means an owner's filing an incorrect, or failing to file a correct, homestead declaration due to full-time active military duty of the declarant outside the State; serious illness or disability of the declarant; serious illness, disability, or death of an immediate family member of the declarant; or fire, flood, or other disaster. [32 V.S.A. § 5410\(l\)](#).

Special Properties

PVR receives so many inquiries about the following types of property, we offer this compilation for reference.

Construction Equipment (“Yellow Metal”)

Very little “yellow metal” is taxable. Property tax law specifically exempts motor vehicles. The term “motor vehicle” is not defined in tax law, but per motor vehicle law the term includes “all vehicles propelled or drawn by power other than muscular power, except . . . motorized highway building equipment, road making appliances . . .” [23 V.S.A. § 4\(21\)](#).

The Supreme Court held that construction equipment including dump trucks, rollers, power shovels and backhoes are motor vehicles and not taxable unless they are used exclusively for the building, repair or maintenance of highways. [Pizzagalli Construction Co. v. Town of Whitingham, 146 Vt. 490 \(1986\)](#). Even unregistered vehicles that should have been registered are exempt.

PVR interprets this to mean only construction equipment used exclusively for the repair or maintenance of highways (in other words, essentially none) is taxable as business personal property in Vermont.

Condominiums/Common Interest Ownership

By definition, there is common property involved in condominium ownership, and in property subject to the Uniform Common Interest Ownership Act (UCIOA) contained in Title 27A of the Vermont Statutes Annotated. The assessment of each unit must include the value of that unit’s percentage of undivided interest in the common areas and common facilities. [27 V.S.A. § 1322](#) and [27A V.S.A. § 1-10](#).

For example, a 100-unit condominium where each unit is purchased without a divided interest in the common land, would be 100 parcels on the grand list, with each parcel having a 1% interest in the common property. The building, land and any common areas and facilities may not be separately listed.

Condominiums that involve time-sharing have different listing rules. See below.

Timesharing

For property tax purposes, a property involving time share estates is considered a single property owned by the owner’s association or whatever entity is authorized to manage the common property. Although individual owners are ultimately responsible for paying their shares of the taxes, it is the responsibility of the association to allocate the shares and to obtain individual owner payments. [32 V.S.A. § 3619](#).

Farms

Farmland and buildings, including silos and sugarhouses, are taxable. Farm buildings may be fully or partially exempted by vote under [32 V.S.A. § 3607a](#) or if they are qualified farm buildings under the Current Use program.

Apply the principle of consistent use for farm appraisals. Land appraisal must not be based on potential development value but buildings based on their value for farming. If the farm has development potential and is valued as such, the farm buildings will have little if any contributory value.

Farm machinery predominantly used in farming activities is not taxable. This includes tractor-drawn equipment, milking equipment including bulk tanks, gutter cleaners, silo unloaders, and maple syrup and sugaring equipment. [32 V.S.A. § 3802\(8\)](#) and [Rule 82-1 § \(32\)3802\(8\)-2](#).

Timber and Forest Land

The value of timber can be an important component of the purchase price of large tracts of forestland. When valuing a large tract of forestland, be sure comparable properties have similar forest potential.

Vermont law provides “The sale of conveyance of standing timber shall not affect the valuation of the underlying land. [32 V.S.A. § 3606](#) . When standing timber on a parcel has been sold and conveyed, but the trees remain standing, you must list the property as if the conveyance of standing timber has not taken place.

“Standing timber” and “timber rights” differ; a purchase of standing timber is generally the right to a one-time cut of the property’s timber during a limited time. “Timber rights” are most often the long-term rights to cut timber, often granted by lease.

Utilities

PVR provides copies of inventories filed by utilities [per 32 V.S.A. § 4452](#). As of the 2025 Grand List, valuations provided by PVR shall be used for setting utility values on the grand list.

Much utility-owned property is taxable. Easements and rights of way for poles and lines are not taxable. Electric utility poles, lines and fixtures are real estate and taxed at fair market value. Electric utilities owned by a municipal corporation are exempt within the municipality’s borders. [32 V.S.A. §§ 3620](#) and [§3659](#).

Only land and buildings of telephone companies are taxable locally. [32 V.S.A. § 3803](#). Telephone companies also pay a corporation tax. [32 V.S.A. § 8521](#).

The property of cable television companies must be analyzed to determine what is real and what is personal property. All real property owned by a cable television company (land/buildings) is included in the education grand list. It will appear in the real property category as Commercial, or the category based on the highest and best use of the property. Cable television lines (including wires, poles, insulators, anchors and guy wires), the head ends, and house drops are included in the education grand list’s **PP-Cable TV** category. Real property is appraised at fair market value; personal property is appraised at either fair market value or, in those municipalities that have so chosen, at a value established in accord with [32 V.S.A. § 3618](#). Cable companies have agreed to value all lines each year and depreciate to a maximum of 40% good (60% depreciation). Towns review this information annually and accept or deny the value.

Railroad Companies

Property of companies involved in operating railroad freight line and equipment is exempt from both municipal and education property taxes. This includes rights of way, freight yards, tracks, and any buildings still being used in railroad operations. Railroad buildings used for other purposes can be taxed locally. [32 V.S.A. § 3803](#). Railroad property pays a corporate tax pursuant to [32 V.S.A. § 8431](#).

Public Land

The general long-standing policy of the State of Vermont is that public land is not taxable. “An Act Prohibiting the Taxing of Public land” was passed by the Vermont General Assembly on June 17,

1785. Currently, [32 V.S.A. § 3802\(4\)](#), exempts real and personal estate granted, sequestered or used for public purposes from property tax.

Municipal Land—Notwithstanding the general principle, real estate owned by a municipal corporation and located outside its territorial limits is taxable by the municipality where it is situated unless specifically exempted. [32 V.S.A. § 3659](#).

Property owned by a municipality located within that municipality used for municipal purposes including the provision of utility services, is exempt from the education tax. [32 V.S.A. §5401\(10\)\(F\)](#).

A municipality includes “a city, town, town school district, incorporated school or fire district or incorporated village and all other governmental incorporated units.” [1 V.S.A. § 126](#).

A municipal corporation includes a city, a town, a village, a school district, a fire district, a union municipal district, a regional mass transportation authority, a local housing authority, or a consolidated water or sewer district. [24 V.S.A. § 1751](#).

A municipal corporation’s land located outside the municipality is taxed and listed at the value fixed before the municipal corporation’s acquisition. In subsequent years, the land is listed as other comparable property is listed. The town or city cannot tax personal property, or any improvements made after the acquisition. In compensation for lost tax revenue, the town or city can impose an additional tax that may not exceed 75% of the land’s appraisal. If there are no improvements or personal property, the additional tax cannot be imposed because the town or city has not forgone tax revenue. [City of Montpelier v. Town of Berlin, 143 Vt. 291, \(1983\)](#).

In general, municipal land will fall into this category. However, there are exceptions:

- A municipal corporation’s utility poles, lines, and fixtures located in another town are taxable at fair market value. [32 V.S.A. § 3659](#).
- Property owned by a consolidated sewer district is exempt from all taxation by any town. [24 V.S.A. § 3683](#).
- Property owned by a consolidated water district is exempt from taxation by a town within the district. [24 V.S.A. § 3352](#).
- Property owned by a municipal housing authority is exempt from all real and personal property taxes imposed by any political entity within the state. [24 V.S.A. § 4020](#).
- Property owned by a municipality for purposes of urban renewal is exempt. [24 V.S.A. § 3216](#).

State Land and Buildings

Property owned by the State of Vermont is exempt. [32 V.S.A. § 3802\(1\)](#) and there is a provision for a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) on certain state-owned property [32 V.S.A. §§ 3701- 3708](#). When state-owned land, buildings, or permanent fixtures are leased to another entity, for tax purposes they are still treated as state land. More information is available at the Vermont Department of Taxes website: PILOT.

For example, the Sherburne Corporation leased land from the state, and ski lifts and structures were attached to that land. The Court held that the land was still “owned” by the state and that improvements on the leased premises were not personal property, but real property that would revert

to the state, and thus the property of the state. The land is therefore taxable to the state, according to the provisions of section [32 V.S.A. § 3708](#) (lands held by Agency of Natural Resources) and the improvements and buildings are not taxable. [Sherburne Corporation and State of Vermont v. Town of Sherburne, 145 Vt. 581 \(1986\)](#). However, if the lease agreement stipulates fixtures or buildings are owned by the land lessee, they are listed to the lessee/owner and not to the state. [32 V.S.A. § 3608](#).

Federal Property—Federal property is not taxable. [32 V.S.A. § 3802\(1\)](#). Towns that have land in the Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF) receive a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) from the federal government. [See 1 V.S.A. § 557](#).

Quasi-Public Property—There are many authorities and commissions established by the legislature that are specifically declared to own and use their land for public purposes and exempt them from local property tax. In addition, the listers may determine other properties are used for public purposes and therefore exempt. [32 V.S.A. § 3802\(4\)](#). Please see the chapter, **Exemptions**, in this guide for more information.

Lakes and Ponds

The general rule is that the 280 natural lakes and ponds in the state which are larger than 20 acres are public waters, and not taxable¹. “Public waters” means navigable waters except those in private ponds and preserves [as set forth in Chapter 119](#) of Title 10.” [29 V.S.A. § 402\(7\)](#) and [10 V.S.A. § 1422\(6\)](#).

“Navigable waters” are all streams, ponds, flowages and other waters within the state which can be navigated by boat. [10 V.S.A. § 1422\(4\)](#).

Private ponds are generally considered to be natural ponds less than 20 acres, or artificial ponds entirely on the owners’ premises. [10 V.S.A. § 5210](#). Private preserves are bodies of water over which the owner has exclusive control and have been stocked and posted [according to the provisions of 10 V.S.A. Chapter 119](#). Public use exemption does not apply to these ponds.

Exceptions include some artificial lakes that may be larger than 20 acres but are still taxable because they are privately owned, and some smaller ponds that are public, such as Elfin Lake in Wallingford.

Personal Property

Personal estate is defined as including “all property other than real estate.” [1 V.S.A. § 129 \(legislature.vermont.gov\)](#). Personal property means items that are movable (sometimes called chattel), not permanently affixed to the real estate. The International Association of Assessing Officers’ (IAAO) text, “Property Assessment Valuation,” 2nd edition, 1996, states on page 338:

The courts tend to agree that a chattel loses its nature as personal property and becomes real property if it is affixed in such a way that it loses its original physical character and cannot practically be restored to its original condition. Two common tests are: the intention of the person who put the item in place, and whether the item can be removed from the real estate without loss of value to either. For example, if a tenant places a screen in front of a fireplace, there is no intention of permanent installation, and the screen can easily be removed when

¹ Lakes and ponds which are public waters of Vermont and the lands lying thereunder are a public trust. It is the policy of the state that these waters and lands shall be managed to serve the public good. [29 V.S.A. § 401](#). As such, they are not taxable. [32 V.S.A. § 3802\(1\)](#) and [§ 3802\(4\)](#). [See also 10 V.S.A. Chapter 49](#), and [Hazen v. Perkins, 92 Vt., 414,419 \(1918\)](#).

the tenant moves. The screen is clearly personal property. If, however, the property owner installs a light switch in the wall, the wall would be damaged by removal and therefore the switch is part of the real estate. In another example, machinery or equipment bolted to a floor or concrete base simply for ease of operation should not be considered to be affixed. Unclear cases must be resolved by reference to state statutes and court decisions.

Vermont law specifies how certain types of property are to be listed. For example, manufacturing equipment such as engines and boilers, electric motors, air compressors, traveling cranes and machinery, so fitted and attached as to be a part of a manufacturing or other plant and kept and used as such, shall be set in the grand list as real estate. [32 V.S.A. § 3602](#). Similarly, [§ 3602a](#) provides that all structures, machinery, poles, wires and fixtures of all kinds and descriptions used in the generation, transmission or distribution of electric power that are so fitted and attached as to be part of the works or facilities used to generate, transmit or distribute electric power shall be set in the grand list as real estate.

[32 V.S.A. § 5401\(10\)](#) makes clear the education grand list is to include the following property:

- Utility cables, lines, poles and fixtures (unless owned by telephone companies);
- Gas distribution lines (but not aboveground meters, regulators and gauges).

Very little personal property is included in the education grand list. Incorrect classification results in a loss of tax dollars. Property that is to be taxed for education purposes shall be listed in the appropriate category so it can be included in the education grand list. Cable television lines, for example, are coded as PP-Cable TV, while cable television real property (e.g. buildings) are listed as Commercial, or the category based on the highest and best use. Ski lifts and affixed snowmaking equipment are included as part of the Commercial listing only on the municipal grand list (MGL). Electric utility poles, lines and fixtures go into UE (Utility-Electric). Gas distribution lines (e.g. Vermont Gas Systems and Portland Pipeline) are coded UO (Utility-Other) but may not be classified personal property. See the following examples.

Figure 2. Table: Listing Examples Based on Vermont Property Statutes and Case Law

Description	Category	In Education Grand List	In Municipal Grand List
Electric utility lines/ poles/fixtures	Real-UE	Yes	Yes
Cable TV lines and fixtures	PP-PP-CABLE	Yes	Yes, unless M&E voted exempt
Ski Lifts	Real-Comm	No	Yes
Movable shelving in a store	PP-M&E	No	Yes, unless M&E voted exempt
Gas distribution lines	Real-UO	Yes	Yes
Snowmaking equipment: waterlines and pumps	Real-Comm	No	Yes
Snowmaking equipment: Movable snow guns	PP-M&E	No	Yes, unless M&E voted exempt

Real property is appraised at fair market value. Business personal property is appraised at either fair market value or, in those municipalities which have so chosen, at a value as provided in [32 V.S.A. § 3618](#).

Towns and cities that have not chosen to exempt business inventory and/or machinery and equipment will continue to include this property **in the municipal grand list**. All business personal property, including cable television lines and fixtures that are personal property, are assessed and taxed locally unless voted exempt by the town or city.

Voted Exemptions on Business Personal Property

A town may tax both machinery and inventory or, by majority vote, a town may opt to exempt business inventory, and/or all or a portion of the business personal property from local taxation. [32 V.S.A. § 3618](#), [§ 3848](#) and [§ 3849](#). If machinery and equipment are to be taxed, the town can appraise them under one of two depreciation methods.

If a town elects to tax business personal property according to the [procedures specified in 32 V.S.A. § 3618](#), the taxpayer can choose to have an item appraised by either of the following methods which are both based on the depreciation value used for federal income tax:

1. At 50% of its cost during the IRS depreciation period, and at 10% thereafter, or
2. At net book value until the item has been depreciated to 10% of its cost or less, and 10% thereafter.

If a town has not made this election, the [provisions of 32 V.S.A. § 3618](#) do not apply and business personal property must be listed at its fair market value in the municipal grand list.

Taxed property must be listed in the correct category. Questions on specific items can be addressed to the District Advisor.

Q: Are inventory forms public records?

A: No. Inventory forms, for both utility and personal property, are not for public viewing.

Subsidized Housing (aka Qualified Housing)

Residential rental property whose rent is subject to a housing subsidy covenant or other legal restriction imposed by a governmental, quasi-governmental, or public purpose entity shall be determined by using the income approach to determine fair market value as outlined in [32 V.S.A. § 3481 \(1\)\(B\)\(i-iv\)](#).

The following elements must be used in that approach:

- A. Market rents with utility allowance adjustments for the geographic area in which the property is located, as determined by the federal office of Housing and Urban Development
- B. Actual expenses incurred with respect to the property as provided by the property owner and certified by an independent third party
- C. A vacancy rate that is 50% of the market vacancy rate as determined by the United States Census Bureau with local review by the [Vermont Housing Finance Agency \(VHFA\)](#)
- D. A capitalization rate that is typical for the geographic area - determined and published annually

prior to April 1 by the division of Property Valuation & Review after consultation with the Vermont Housing Finance Agency

- E. Qualified rental unit parcels are entitled to an exemption of up to 10%, based upon the number of qualifying units. This must be certified by VHFA in the form of a certificate that states the percentage they are entitled to. Refer to the statute [32 V.S.A. § 5404a \(6\)](#).

The [Valuation of Subsidized Housing Worksheet](#) is updated annually and can be used to facilitate appraisals of subsidized housing, which are revalued during a reappraisal.

See our [Guide to Valuation of Subsidized Housing Worksheet](#) for instructions. You may [contact VHFA](#) with questions about a property's qualification status or <https://www.housingdata.org> for data specific to the town's units.

The up to 10% exemption for qualified housing is entered in the grand list as a Special Exemption. Refer to [32 V.S.A. § 5404a \(6\)](#) for calculation details. This exemption applies only to the education grand list, not the municipal. If you have questions or need assistance, contact your PVR District Advisor.

Please see the chapter, **Subjects**, in this guide for more on subsidized housing.

Covenant Restricted Housing

Owner-occupied housing subject to a housing subsidy covenant that limits the property's selling price, as [defined in 27 V.S.A. § 610](#), imposed by a governmental, quasi-governmental, or public purpose entity, shall be deemed to cause a material decrease in the value of the owner-occupied housing. [Refer to 32 V.S.A. § 3481\(1\)\(C\)](#) for more information. This property type is to be entered in the grand list at a value that represents 60%-70% of the fair market value of the property that is subject to the restriction. This should be entered as a reduction in your CAMA software and the percentage itself that was applied should be noted in your grand list.

NEMRC has a document, [Covenant Housing Statute Requirement](#), for more information. You may [contact the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board](#) with questions about a property's qualification status.

Exemptions

Several properties are exempt from property tax by state or federal law. In addition, locally voted exemptions or stabilization agreements (local agreements) can also exempt a property. The fair market value of property automatically exempted by federal or state statute is not included in the education or municipal grand list.

All properties, including those exempt from taxation, must be included in the grand list. The listing must include the statutory authority for the exemption, [32 V.S.A. § 4152\(a\)\(4\), \(6\)](#), and the method of appraisal used (insurance or assessment). It must also be coded to provide a report of exemptions. This becomes part of the summary of the grand list (411) and is reported to the Division of Property Valuation and Review (PVR). See the guide, [Valuation of Tax Exempt Properties: Helping Property Owners and Municipal Assessors Comply with Vermont Law](#).

Ensure that exempted values are not included in the taxable listed values reported. For example, if the total value of a property is \$200,000 with a \$20,000 veterans' exemption, only \$180,000 is included in the taxable value section under R1 or R2. Failure to accurately apply exemptions misrepresents the town's equalized education property value. Questions on exemptions should be addressed to PVR or the District Advisor.

Appeals from Decisions of the Board of Listers Regarding Exemptions

The Vermont Supreme Court has held that (1) the Board of Civil Authority (BCA) has authority to rule on questions of tax-exempt status, and (2) the taxpayer must exhaust its administrative remedies by grieving to listers and BCA prior to bringing an appeal or a motion for declaratory judgment in superior court. [Vermont College of Fine Arts v. City of Montpelier, 2017 VT 12, 204 Vt. 215](#).

Public Property Exemptions

Charitable, Religious, or Public Organizations

Listers make the initial determination of parcels eligible for this exemption, and their decisions may ultimately be appealed to the Supreme Court. The Secretary of State's Office reports that most listers take a hard line on marginal properties and the court has held, "Any exemption from property taxation provided by statute is to be strictly construed in favor of the taxing authority as against those who seek its benefits. Any doubts that may arise as to the application of a particular tax statute should be interpreted against the exemption." [Stowe Preparatory School, Inc. v. Town of Stowe, 124 Vt. 393 \(1964\) \(law.justia.com\)](#).

Q: Do properties leased by a nonprofit corporation or town qualify for a tax exemption?

A: No. Privately held property must be owned by a nonprofit entity to pass qualification for exemption, even if a lease limits the property to public use.

Veterans' Exemptions

[The Vermont Office of Veterans Affairs](#) provides towns with preliminary (January) and final (after May

1) spreadsheet(s) for the Grand List year with the names of exemption-eligible veterans. They ask towns to review the preliminary spreadsheet in a timely manner and report back to them any veterans that have sold their property, moved or passed away. If you have any questions reach out to mil.ovainfo@vermont.gov.

If a taxpayer brings their application to the listers, the listers should have the taxpayer forward it to the Vermont Office of Veterans Affairs.

Office of Veterans Affairs, 118 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620-4401

Email : mil.ovainfo@vermont.gov

Phone: 802-828-3379

Fax: 802-828-5932

The Department has a fact sheet, [Veterans and Property Taxes: What You Should Know \(tax.vermont.gov\)](#).

Q: A property is owned by a veteran on April 1 sells on April 12. Can the veteran's exemption be removed since it is prior to the May 1 deadline?

A: If a veteran owns property and resided there on April 1, the exemption stays and can be dealt with at closing if the parties choose. If a veteran sells after April 1, they cannot get the exemption on a different property that year—the exemption is for the property they owned and resided in on April 1.

Q: A veteran just had a rental house built on their property. How does this affect their exemption amount?

A: It should not affect the exemption amount. Example: If your town does a \$40,000 exemption and a veteran's land and mobile home was worth \$38,000—the new house value will not be taken into account to go beyond the \$38,000 exemption. The exemption would remain at the cap of \$38,000.

Railroads, Telephone Transportation Companies

Property used in operating a railroad or transportation company is taxed by the state. [32 V.S.A. § 3803](#).

Native American Tribes

[32 V.S.A. § 3802\(21\)](#) exempts real and personal property owned and used by a Native American tribe that has been recognized [pursuant to 1 V.S.A. chapter 23](#) or nonprofit organized for tribe's benefit and controlled by the tribe, provided the property is used for the purposes of the tribe and is not leased or rented for profit.

Local Agreements/Town-Voted Exemptions

Vermont law provides numerous opportunities for voters to reduce or eliminate property taxes on certain properties. The other taxpayers in the town bear the cost of tax agreements entered into or proposed and voted locally. A local agreement rate is levied to collect the foregone education tax revenue. Listers determine the property value, assuming no agreement or exemption, and list the property in the grand list appropriately, so the correct tax bills can be issued and data collected. [32 V.S.A. § 5404a](#).

Volunteer Fire, Rescue and Ambulance Organizations

Towns and cities may vote to exempt property owned by and used for the purposes of nonprofit volunteer fire, rescue and ambulance services. Unlike other voted exemptions, if so voted, such property is also exempt from the education grand list and the equalized education grand list. This results in the cost of funding these exemptions from the education tax is being borne by all Vermont taxpayers.

Local Funding of Tax Agreements

The cost of some stabilization agreements and voted exemptions are borne entirely by the taxpayers in the town or city wherein the property is located. Town-voted agreements reduce the education property tax bill of the taxpayer subject to the agreement but do not reduce the education property tax liability of the town.

Example: An example of a **locally funded agreement** is the grange hall or Elks Club in town. The voters decide [to exempt it under 32 V.S.A § 3840](#). The exempted value is included in the equalized education grand list established by PVR and in the education grand list reported to the Agency of Education, and the remaining property owners in town fund the loss in revenue.

The chart on the following pages lists common exemptions and whether they must be locally funded. Listers should check local tax agreements against the chart to assist in listing such properties and confirm that the grand list book contains all pertinent data on these properties. Listers must include the beginning and ending dates, title and section of the statute enabling the agreement, and whether approval has been granted.

If you have questions on how to list exempt properties, please contact your District Advisor.

Special Exemptions

Special exemptions are specific to the following items. This type of exemption is not added back to the education grand list but may remain taxable on the municipal grand list. Check value and expiration date each year to make sure they are correct.

Court Ordered: This category of special exemption is on a special case basis. Consult your District Advisor for questions about court ordered special exemptions.

Qualified Housing: Fully Taxed on the municipal grand list. Must be approved by VHFA by April 1. Please also see Subsidized Housing section in this manual. [32 V.S.A. § 5404a\(a\)\(6\)](#); [32 V.S.A. § 5400\(c\)](#).

Ski Lifts/Snow Making Equipment: Fully taxed on the municipal grand list. [32 V.S.A. § 5400\(i\)](#); [32 V.S.A. § 5401\(10\)\(D\)](#).

Solar: Solar photovoltaic plants in Vermont are potentially subject to a uniform capacity tax and municipal property tax. Depending on several factors, they array can be subject to both taxes, one of the taxes, or be exempt from both taxes. [Solar arrays do not pay education taxes](#); [32 V.S.A. § 3481](#).

Whey Tanks: Fully Taxed on the municipal grand list. [32 V.S.A. § 5401\(10\)\(G\)](#); [32 V.S.A. § 5400\(a\)](#).

Wind: Wind projects are taxed directly by the Tax Department and are therefore not taxed via the Education Grand List. [32 V.S.A. § 5401\(10\)\(J\)\(i\)](#); [32 V.S.A. § 5400\(g\)](#).

Figure 3. Table: Municipal and Education Grand List - Statutory Exemptions

Exemption Type	Entity Type	Statute(s) (legislature.vermont.gov)
Educational	College or university acquired prior to April 1, 1941	32 V.S.A. § 3802(4)
Educational	Municipally-owned property in town used for public use, including schools	32 V.S.A. § 3802(4) ; § 5401(10)(F)
Educational	School Union/Districts (not town owned)	32 V.S.A. § 3802(4)
Educational	Vermont State Colleges, UVM, and State Agricultural Colleges	16 V.S.A § 2178 ; 16 App. V.S.A. ch. 1 & 15
Educational	Vermont Student Assistance Corp (VSAC)	16 V.S.A. § 2825
Government	County Owned	32 V.S.A. § 3802(22)
Government	Federally Owned	32 V.S.A. § 3802(1)
Government	State Owned	32 V.S.A. § 3802(1)
Government	Veterans (up to \$10,000)	32 V.S.A. § 3802(11)
Government	Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)	32 V.S.A. § 3802(16)

Exemption Type	Entity Type	Statute(s) (legislature.vermont.gov)
Health/Medical	Health, Rec & Fitness Org (Qualified)	32 V.S.A. § 3832(7)(A)
Health/Medical	Hospitals (Charitable Uses)	32 V.S.A. § 3802(4)
Health/Medical	Nonprofit Medical Service Corp or Hospital Service Corp (Federally Qualified)	8 V.S.A. § 4518 ; § 4590
Health/Medical	Skating Rinks (Qualified)	32 V.S.A. § 3832(7)(B)
Health/Medical	Vermont Educational and Health Buildings Finance Agency	16 V.S.A. § 3859
Local Municipal/ Districts	Consolidated Sewer District within district—Sewer District	24 V.S.A. § 3683
Local Municipal/ Districts	Consolidated Water District within district—Water District	24 V.S.A. § 3352
Local Municipal/ Districts	Local Development Corp (unoccupied, not leased or rented)	10 V.S.A. § 236
Local Municipal/ Districts	Municipal property outside territorial limits—Improvements made after acquisition of land	32 V.S.A. § 3659
Local Municipal/ Districts	Municipally Owned Property	32 V.S.A. § 3802(4) ; 32 V.S.A. § 5401(10)(F)
Local Municipal/ Districts	Municipally Owned Property held for urban renewal	24 V.S.A. § 3216
Miscellaneous	Approved Air Pollution Treatment Facilities	10 V.S.A. § 570
Miscellaneous	Municipal Owned Corp Used for Urban Renewal	24 V.S.A. § 3216(b)
Miscellaneous	Pollution Abatement ONLY	32 V.S.A. § 3802(12)
Miscellaneous	Railroad and Transportation Co. (except lands and buildings)	32 V.S.A. § 3803(1)(2)
Miscellaneous	Session Law/Court Order (ONLY)	not applicable
Miscellaneous	Vermont Housing Finance Authority (VHFA)	10 V.S.A. § 641
Nonprofit Organization chartered by U.S. Congress	Little League, Boy/Girl Scouts, Red Cross, DAR/Boys or Girls Club	32 V.S.A. § 3802(2)
Nonprofit Organization chartered by U.S. Congress	Veterans Org. not leased or rented, VFW/American Legion	32 V.S.A. § 3802(2)
Nonprofit Organization chartered by U.S. Congress	YMCA/YWCA	32 V.S.A. § 3802(6)
Public Pious Charitable Uses	Agricultural Societies (annual fairgrounds)	32 V.S.A. § 3802(9)

Exemption Type	Entity Type	Statute(s) (legislature.vermont.gov)
Public, Pious Charitable Uses	Cemetery Associations, Private or Town-Owned Cemeteries	32 V.S.A. § 3802(7) ; 18 V.S.A. §5317
Public, Pious Charitable Uses	Churches/Parsonages	32 V.S.A. § 3802(4) ; § 3832(2)
Public, Pious Charitable Uses	Historical/Museum	32 V.S.A. § 3800(a) ; 27 V.S.A. § 1151(3)
Public, Pious Charitable Uses	Humane Societies	32 V.S.A. § 3802(15)
Public, Pious Charitable Uses	Libraries	32 V.S.A. § 3802(4) ; 22 V.S.A. § 109
Public, Pious Charitable Uses	Native American Tribes	32 V.S.A. § 3802(21)
Public Pious Charitable Uses	Public/Pious/Charitable Uses	32 V.S.A. § 3802(4) ; § 3832(2)

Figure 4. Table: Education Grand List - Special Exemptions

Exemption Type	Entity Type	Statute(s) (legislature.vermont.gov)
Special Exemptions	Court Ordered	not applicable
Special Exemptions	Lifts and Snow Making	32 V.S.A § 5401(10)(D)
Special Exemptions	Qualified Housing	32 V.S.A § 5400(c)
Special Exemptions	Solar	30 V.S.A § 8002
Special Exemptions	Vermont Yankee	32 V.S.A § 5400(a)
Special Exemptions	Whey Tanks	32 V.S.A § 5400(b)
Special Exemptions	Wind	32 V.S.A § 5400(g)

Figure 5. Table: Education Grand List - Voted Exemptions

Exemption Type (Local Agreement)	Entity Type	Statute(s) (legislature.vermont.gov)
Voted Exemption Coding	Approved Skating Rinks	not applicable
Voted Exemption Coding	Charitable/Fraternal Organizations	32 V.S.A § 3832(7)(B)
Voted Exemption Coding	College/University/Fraternities acquired after April 1, 1941	32 V.S.A § 3840
Voted Exemption Coding	Greensboro/Fairlee/West Fairlee Lake Access	32 V.S.A § 3831
Voted Exemption Coding	Health, Recreation, and Fitness Organizations	32 V.S.A § 3832(7)(A)
Voted Exemption Coding	Municipally Owned Land in Another Town Voted Prior to January 1, 1998	32 V.S.A § 5404a(A)(5)
Voted Exemption Coding	Municipal Trust	32 V.S.A § 3832(1)
Voted Exemption Coding	Orphanage—Home or Hospital Treatment Center	32 V.S.A § 3832(6)
Voted Exemption Coding	Stablization Agreements	24 V.S.A. § 2741
Voted Exemption Coding	Veterans (above \$10,000 up to \$30,000 additional exemption)	32 V.S.A § 3802(11)(C)
Voted Exemption Coding	Inventory/ Business Personal Property	32 V.S.A. § 3848 ; § 3849
Voted Exemption Coding	Machinery & Equipment/Business Personal Property	32 V.S.A. § 3848 ; § 3849
Voted Exemption Coding	VEPC Approved	32 V.S.A. § 5400(e)
Voted Exemption Coding	Volunteer Fire/Rescue/Ambulance	32 V.S.A. § 3840 ; § 5404(a)(4)

Figure 6. Table: Municipal Grand List - Voted Exemptions

Exemption Type (Grand List)	Entity Type	Statute(s) (legislature.vermont.gov)
Voted Exemption Coding	Public Utility Cables, Poles, Fixtures; Gas Distribution Lines	32 V.S.A. § 3848 ; § 5401(10)(D)(i)

Homestead Declarations: Classification

Useful Fact Sheets

[The Vermont Homestead Declaration](#)

[The Vermont Property Tax Credit](#)

The education tax rate levied on a property will depend on whether it is classified as homestead or as nonhomestead property. Property is classified as a homestead when a Vermont resident files a Homestead Declaration Claim (Form HS-122) with the Department of Taxes. All property is considered nonhomestead until a timely homestead declaration has been filed. Each town and city will levy separate homestead and nonhomestead education tax rates, applying them to all properties based on this classification system.

Property owners whose dwellings meet the definition of a Vermont homestead must file a Homestead Declaration annually.

Homestead

A homestead is the principal dwelling owned and occupied by a Vermont resident as the individual's [domicile \(tax.vermont.gov\)](http://tax.vermont.gov). It includes the entire parcel of land surrounding the dwelling, determined without regard to any road that intersects the land. It does not include buildings or improvements detached from the home and used for business purposes. It does not include that portion of a principal dwelling used for business purposes if the portion used for business purposes is 25 percent or more. However, all rental space of a dwelling is considered nonhomestead. If any percentage of an outbuilding is used for business or rental, the outbuilding is considered nonhomestead in its entirety.

The value of outbuildings and other improvements not used for business or rental purposes are included in the value of the homestead, e.g. swimming pools, tennis courts, landscaping. [See 32 V.S.A. § 5401\(7\)](#) and [Reg. § 1.5401\(7\)](#) for details and examples.

Homesteads are considered timely if filed with the Department of Taxes by the April tax due date. Those filed between the April date thru mid-October (typically October 15) are considered late and subject to a possible municipal penalty. Those filed after the October late filing deadline are considered untimely.

In order for a property to be classified as homestead property for any tax year, the Department of Taxes [must receive a Homestead Declaration](#) on or before the April due date for filing income tax returns (usually April 15). On this form, a resident is required to [declare their homestead as of April 1](#). In the absence of a declaration, the property is by default considered nonhomestead. If a Homestead Declaration is filed late, but by October 15, the grand list will indicate the property is a homestead and the property tax bill is adjusted to reflect the homestead rate, however, the filer may be subject to a penalty by the town.

Housesite and Housesite Value

Housesite value is not used in the tax classification system. It is used in the state's income sensitivity programs. A housesite is that portion of a homestead that includes the principal dwelling (only one dwelling per housesite) and as much of the land surrounding the dwelling as is reasonably necessary

for use of the dwelling as a home. However, a housesite cannot be more than two acres per dwelling unit. In the case of multiple dwelling units, no more than two acres is allowed per dwelling unit up to a maximum of 10 acres per parcel. [See 32 VSA § 5401\(11\)](#).

It includes all improvements not used for business or rental purposes, e.g. sheds, garages, site improvements, tennis courts, swimming pools, etc. that are located on the first two acres.

Include in Housesite, if in the homestead and two-acre house area:

- Water and sewer/septic
- Tennis courts
- Landscaping
- Swimming pools
- Attached and detached garages/sheds not used for commercial purposes. (Current Use enrolled farm buildings are considered business use.)

Do not include in housesite and homestead:

- Detached buildings – if any portion is used for business/commercial purposes. (Farm=business use.)
- Principal dwelling – that portion used for business/commercial purposes (any business use over 25% is excluded from homestead/housesite). All Rental portion is excluded from homestead/housesite.
- If a housesite is a portion of a parcel larger than two acres, value only the two-acre housesite. It should be valued as a separate parcel. Housesite includes two acres; homestead includes the entire parcel.
- Second (or more) dwellings and individual site improvements (sewer and water) for additional dwellings are included in homestead if NOT rented and are not included in the housesite value.

Income Sensitivity—Housesites

Vermont has a program to potentially lower the tax bills of homesteads. Eligible residents may file the Property Tax Credit claim annually. The amount of the benefit, if given, will be related to the property owner's income and the value of their "housesite." The taxpayer's property tax bill will reflect a credit for the reduction, and a State payment will be made to the town for that amount.

Property owners need to file the following two forms to apply for a property tax credit claim:

1. Form HS-122, Homestead Declaration and Property Tax Credit Claim
Section A: Homestead Declaration
Section B: Property Tax Credit Claim
2. Schedule HI-144, Household Income (attached to Form HS-122)

The Homestead Declaration and Property Tax Credit Claim can be filed at separate times but must be received by the personal income tax April filing due date (not extended), to be considered timely filed. Those filed between the April filing due date and October 15 are considered late and possibly subject to a municipal penalty. [Act 72 of 2023](#) provides an extension of the deadline for claiming a Property

Tax Credit. For any claim filed after October 15 but on or before March 15 of the following year, the property tax credit is reduced by \$150 and will be sent directly to the claimant by the Department of Taxes. The municipality shall not be required to reissue an adjusted homestead property tax bill.

Homestead Declarations

What's the Homestead Declaration?

The Homestead Declaration (Form HS-122) is the document a property owner uses to declare their homestead to the Department of Taxes. It asks the taxpayer to provide information found on their property tax bill, including the property location and the school property account number (SPAN). The taxpayer will also be asked to provide the following:

- Percentage of business use of dwelling (if more than 25% of floor space)
- Percentage of rental use of dwelling (the actual percentage should be declared without regard to 25% de minimis)
- Whether any detached buildings or improvements on the parcel are used for business or rental purposes
- Whether the following special circumstances apply:
 - ◊ Taxpayer is grantor and sole beneficiary of a revocable trust that owns the property.
 - ◊ Taxpayer is owner of a life estate.
 - ◊ Declarant resides in a dwelling owned by a related farmer.
 - ◊ Taxpayer is owner of a homestead property that crosses town boundaries.

When does the board of listers receive information on the homestead declarations?

Annually, beginning in February, the Department of Taxes will provide weekly electronic files of homestead declaration information via VTPIE. The listers will use this information to classify properties in their grand list.

Homestead Download Directions:

[Department of Taxes](#)
[Vermont Property Information Exchange](#) (VTPIE)

What is required of the board of listers with regard to this homestead declaration file?

Beginning in February (and no later than June 1), listers notify the Department of parcels on the list they have reason to believe do not qualify as homesteads. The Department asks listers to report the following:

1. Incorrect SPAN – property is in this town and should be SPAN ###-###-####.
2. Nonresident – not a town resident
3. No SPAN

The Commissioner of Taxes makes the final determination on whether a property qualifies as a homestead. The listers should notify the Department if they have good reason to believe a property does not qualify as a homestead. The Department will conduct post-filing examinations.

If a property owner files a homestead declaration, listers should assume the property is a homestead and should code their grand list accordingly.

Multi-use Properties

There will be parcels that contain both homestead and nonhomestead property. Some examples are a “Mom and Pop” store where the owners live upstairs; a dairy farm; and a parcel where one or more of the outbuildings are used for commercial purposes.

If the taxpayer declares a percentage of the dwelling is rented or used for commercial purposes, allocate the value of that dwelling based on the percentage declared unless there is evidence of a more appropriate methodology. If there are improvements used for commercial purposes, those improvements are classified as nonhomestead. All the land on the parcel is classified as homestead. Here are some example scenarios to inform listing of multi-use properties:

What portion of a house is declared business use when there is a childcare business?

If more than 25% of the floor space is used for this business, that percentage must be declared. Taxpayers report the same percentage on the homestead declaration as the federal schedule used to report business use of home (unless it's 25% or less). The [IRS Publication 587 on business use of homes is helpful](#).

How is a parcel that used to be a dairy farm classified?

There's a house and land and several outbuildings. They grow and sell baled hay to the horse owners in the area. They use a tiny corner of one room for an office—only about 5% of the total area of the house. The tractor and related equipment, as well as the hay that's for sale, is kept in one of the barns. They also grow vegetables that are sold at a farm stand, along with pies and assorted baked goods. What portion of this property should be classified as nonhomestead?

Since the owners use less than 25% of the house for business purposes, they don't need to declare any business use for the dwelling. The owner should declare business use of outbuildings for one of the barns as well as the farmstand. The other barn should be part of the homestead as long as it is for the owner's use only.

I have a house and about 35 acres. Along with the residence, there's a small hunting camp and a sugarhouse on the property. Do we classify any of my property as being used for business purposes?

If the deer camp and sugarhouse are for the owners' use only, no. If they rent the deer camp and/or if they sell the maple syrup (or other maple products) they produce, yes.

What about a hobby farm? For example, we have some old dairy farms in our town that have been purchased by people who use the property for a residence but also have some horses or maybe a llama or some sheep. I understand that a dairy farmer that makes their living from milk production is running a business and therefore the farm buildings can't be included in the homestead value (but can be enrolled in the Use Value Appraisal Program). Can the horse barns and related outbuildings of a hobby farmer be classified as homestead?

Yes. If the barns and other improvements are not used for the business of farming or other business, they can be classified as homestead property. Cultivating crops or operating a farm for recreation or pleasure rather than a profit is not the business of farming. [Reg. § 1.5401\(7\)\(e\)\(5\)](#). (These buildings cannot be enrolled in the Use Value Appraisal Program.)

What about improvements like ponds and fencing on a farm? Are these nonhomestead?

If these improvements are used for business purposes, they cannot be included in the homestead value. A picket fence around the main dwelling or a decorative pond close to the dwelling is homestead property.

The homestead declaration indicates some buildings are being used for business purposes on a property. What if there are a lot of buildings on the property—how do I know which ones they are?

This is a judgment call and in most instances, buildings being used for business purposes are obvious. You may need to request information from the property owner.

What if I suspect there are buildings being used for business purposes and the taxpayer has made no such declaration?

Submit a 'Lister Response' via VTPIE to the homestead unit. You may also adjust the homestead and housesite value(s) accordingly and allow the taxpayer to grieve.

How do the listers classify the land on a property that is a homestead but also has nonhomestead use?

If there is a homestead, **all the land** on the parcel is classified as homestead, though buildings and other improvements may be nonhomestead. Consider a duplex on five acres; the property appears on the list of declared homesteads and the report indicates the owner has declared 50% of the dwelling is rented. Half the value of the dwelling would be classified homestead, all the land is included in the homestead value.

Jointly owned parcels with two houses:

- A. A jointly owned parcel with two houses, each house being one owners' domicile, assuming none of the property is used for business purposes, **is classified as homestead**. One homeowner will file a homestead declaration, but because only one house is included in the housesite value, the homeowners may request a Housesite Certificate for the second housesite.

- B. A jointly owned parcel with two owners and two houses, where one owner lives out of state and rents their home to a third party, and the other owner uses their home as their domicile, **has both homestead and nonhomestead classifications**. The Vermont domiciled owner files the homestead declaration to classify their house and land as homestead, and the rental house as nonhomestead; it is a detached building used for business purposes. Site improvements related to the rented house, such as water and sewer, are classified as nonhomestead property.
- C. A farm parcel with two houses, where the farmers live in one house and family lives in the other. The farmers have checked the pertinent special situation box (Residing in a dwelling owned by a related farmer) of the HS-122. Both houses are classified as homestead property. The definition of homestead provides that if the property is owned by a farmer and occupied by the owner's parent, sibling, child or grandchild, it is a homestead. **The farmer's house and two acres are included in the housesite.**
- D. A parcel with a house used as a domicile, where land and buildings are rented out, **will have homestead and nonhomestead classifications**. The dwelling and all contiguous land is homestead, rented buildings and related improvements to the rented buildings are valued and classified as nonhomestead.

Ownership Issues

Can a property that's held in trust be a homestead?

A dwelling held in trust and occupied by the beneficiary of the trust as her/his principal dwelling should be declared as a homestead only if:

- the declarant or the declarant's spouse or civil union partner was the grantor of the trust
- the trust is revocable or became irrevocable solely by reason of the grantor's death
- the declarant is the sole beneficiary of the trust. If husband and wife or civil union partners together are the only beneficiaries, the sole beneficiary requirement is met.

The declarant that qualifies thus should have marked the A7-A10 Special Situations code on the HS-122 form. Contact Taxpayer Services at 802-828-2865 if there are questions on a specific property.

Examples

There's a property in town that is in an estate. The owner passed away a number of years ago, and the estate has not been settled. There's a dwelling on the property that is occupied by the daughter of the deceased. Should she file a homestead declaration?

No. To be a homestead, the property must be owned by the occupant. The daughter is not the owner of the property.

My uncle died in February. The estate hasn't been settled and the house was empty on April 1. Should this property be subject to a homestead declaration?

Yes. The administrator of the estate should file the homestead declaration. There is an exception in the case of an individual that passed away recently leaving their property in an estate. For the

purposes of homestead declaration and classification, “homestead” also means a residence which was the homestead of the decedent at the date of death, and from that date of death through the next April 1 is held by the estate and not rented. A property tax credit is not allowed.

What about a life estate? We have cases where a parent has conveyed the property to a child but retained a life estate interest. If the parent lives there, is it a homestead?

Yes. The owner of the life estate interest should file a homestead declaration.

What if a parent owns the property but the child lives there alone? Is this a homestead?

In most instances, no, because the property is not owned by the child.

There are exceptions on farm properties. If the property is owned by a qualified farmer (a qualified farmer is someone who makes at least 50% of their gross income from the business of farming) and occupied by the owner’s parent, sibling, child or grandchild, it is a homestead. The declarant should mark the appropriate special situation code (Residing in a dwelling owned by a related farmer) on the homestead declaration.

There are some houses in our city on land leased from the community land trust. The land is listed separately in the grand list under the community land trust name. Can the land be classified as homestead?

Yes, if the land is owned by a community land trust with 501(c)(3) status, the homestead value is a pro rata share of the land upon which the dwelling sits. The community land trust determines the pro rata portion allocable to each homeowner. If the bill is in the land trust’s name, the land trust will file a list of its properties with the Tax Department. The Tax Department will notify the towns of parcels that qualify as homesteads.

Can a condominium and its related common land be a homestead?

Yes. If the owner occupies the unit as their principal dwelling, it is a homestead. The owner’s interest in the common elements, such as contiguous land, utility buildings, swimming pool, etc., is also homestead property.

We have a development that was organized under the Uniform Common Interest Ownership Act (UCIOA) at 27A V.S.A. The land, tennis courts, and some other improvements are listed separately in the grand list under the association. Is this homestead property?

No. Any unit and the common elements associated with that unit that are listed to the association, and any portion of the common property for which the association has reserved any development right is a separate parcel taxed to the association. Property listed to the association is to be assessed at the nonhomestead tax rate.

We have a condo unit in the city that is owned jointly by a woman and her parents. The daughter is a full-time student at the University of Vermont and lives in the condo. Is this a homestead?

It depends. It is a homestead only if the daughter is a Vermont resident and the condo is her domicile—that is, she moved to the state intending to make it her home indefinitely, not merely her residence while she attends school in the state. They would also declare the percentage owned.

[Rule §1. 5811\(11\)\(A\)\(i\) \(tax.vermont.gov\)](#) sets out criteria for determining domicile. The most important determinants are where the person's home is, where her family is, where items important to her are kept, where her business involvements are, where she spends time. There are a number of other factors that may be significant in the case of a student (location of domicile in previous years, voter registration, income tax return address and filing, etc.). In most cases, it is a move only for the duration of the student's time in school and does not constitute a change in domicile. If you have questions about the application, reach out to the Homestead Division by submitting a 'Lister Response' via VTPIE.

A person built a house on a lot that was subdivided from a larger parcel. It doesn't have a SPAN number yet. He wants to file a homestead declaration. Can the listers give him one?

Yes. On request, the listers should provide the SPAN number for the parcel using [Form HSD-316, Request for Lister's Certificate of Housesite Certificate for Subdivided Parcel \(tax.vermont.gov\)](#). This form is updated annually. Check the Department of Taxes website for the correct year.

In any of the above situations, if the lister is not sure of the circumstances or believes a declaration is incorrect, they should submit a "Lister Response" via VTPIE to the Department with the question and let the Department investigate the issue.

Define Parcel—Contiguous

A homestead includes the entire parcel of land surrounding the dwelling, determined without regard to any road that intersects the land. [32 V.S.A. §5401\(7\) \(legislature.vermont.gov\)](#). Parcel means "all contiguous land in the same ownership together with all improvements thereon." [32 V.S.A. §4152\(3\) \(legislature.vermont.gov\)](#).

There's a town resident who owns an antique shop and a house. The antique shop is on 1.5 acres on one side of the road. The house is on 5 acres directly across the road. Although technically this is one parcel, we've been treating it like two parcels in our grand list. Can we leave it as two parcels?

No. Assuming both parcels are in the same ownership, it must be assigned one SPAN. The definition of parcel must be strictly adhered to. This is one parcel in your grand list. The house and all the land are classified as homestead and the value of the antique shop is classified as nonhomestead.

The listers may determine that the highest and best use in the above example is as two separate properties. That is, the highest monetary return would most likely be realized by selling these properties separately as a residential property with 5 acres and as a commercial property with 1.5 acres. If that is the case, appraise this as two separate parcels and then combine the value in the grand list book.

The parcel definition is for tax purposes only. It only determines how the property is to be listed for property tax purposes—not for how it is to be appraised.

We have some houses that are right on the town line. They own contiguous land in the next town. How does the land in the next town get classified as homestead?

A town line does not change the classification of contiguous property. The entire holding is to be considered the homestead property. The property owner must file two homestead declarations, however—one for each town, since the towns will have assigned separate SPANs. There’s a Special Situations box (homestead property crosses town boundaries) on the HS-122 Homestead Declaration Claim that the declarant should mark to indicate the property crosses town lines. That’s to help the listers in the town with no house on their listing to understand why a declaration is being made.

What if there are two deeds and the owners are the same people, but the names are written a little differently? I know of a couple of contiguous lots owned by the same man. One of the deeds says John L. Little. The deed for the other lot says John Little. I know it’s the same person. Should this be treated as one parcel?

Yes. If it’s the same person, it’s one parcel.

What if the property is separated by an interstate highway or other road? Is it still considered one parcel?

Yes. The homestead definition specifically says “without regard to any road that intersects the land.”

While it is one parcel for grand list and tax classification purposes, the listers should be careful when appraising these parcels, however. Even though this meets the administrative definition of “parcel” you will need to consider the highest and best use of property and its access. You might have a farm parcel with 200 acres on one side of I-91 and 35 acres on the other side. If the farmer can’t easily access that 35 acres, you would probably want to grade it very differently than the 200 acres. The grade might be lower because it can’t be practically farmed. On the other hand, the grade may be higher if its highest and best use is for residential development rather than farming.

Domicile Issues

The town or city will receive a listing of all properties for which a homestead declaration has been filed (annually beginning in February from the Department). It is expected that some people will try to take advantage of a town’s lower education tax rate for homesteads by filing a homestead declaration even though they don’t live in that town, or by failing to file a homestead declaration altogether when the homestead education tax rate is higher.

If listers believe the property is not correctly classified, they should notify the Department of Taxes. The Department will initially allow the declaration as filed then follow up by contacting the person who declared the homestead (or failed to do so) and request information pertinent to the person’s domicile status. The listers’ input is key to ensuring equitable taxation statewide.

Listers aren’t expected to make decisions regarding domicile issues; their input is only one tool the Department uses to determine domicile in Vermont.

Penalties—Late Filers and Non-filers

There are penalties imposed when homestead declarations are filed late, and when a person fails to make the proper declaration. If the declaration is filed ‘late’ with the Department (between April 16 and October 15— check dates each year for variances), the declaration will be accepted and the

town notified. The grand list book must contain a field indicating the homestead declaration has been received and note if it was filed late. The education tax bill generated from this grand list entry will be adjusted by the Town to reflect the homestead classification. The bill will include a penalty equal to 1% of the education tax if it was filed late.

Whether to impose a penalty and the penalty amount are determined by the municipal legislative body. [32 V.S.A. § 5410\(g\)](#) provides penalty guidance for late-filed notices of declaration.

Listers go through the errors and omissions process to make a changes to the grand list book after it is filed, but laste homestead declaration changes do not require selectboard approval.

When real or personal estate is omitted from the grand list by mistake, or an obvious error is found, the listers, with the approval of the selectboard, before December 31, may supply such omissions or correct such errors and make a certificate thereon of the fact; provided, however, the listers may make a correction resulting from the filing or rescission of a homestead declaration without approval of the selectboard. [32 V.S.A. § 4261](#).

[Form PVR-4261-H Errors and Omissions Certificate Homestead Classification Change Only](#) should be attached to the grand list book, it needs no approval by the selectboard.

HS-122/Homesteads

The 183 days of minimum occupation to meet the homestead definition, do not need to be consecutive and occupants do not need to be living in the home on April 1 each year.

Definitions per [32 V.S.A. § 5401](#)):

(A) "Homestead" means the principal dwelling and parcel of land surrounding the dwelling, owned and occupied by a resident individual as the individual's domicile or owned and fully leased on April 1, provided the property is not leased for more than 182 days out of the calendar year, or for purposes of the renter credit under subsection 6066(b) of this title, rented and occupied by a resident individual as the individual's domicile.

If the declaration is filed with the Department after the October deadline, the declaration will be accepted and the town notified. The town cannot amend the grand list book, however. The grand list book will change only if the homestead declaration was received at the Department on or before the October deadline.

The Department will provide listers with updated information on declarations received on a weekly basis. Corrected tax bills can then be issued on those properties. No reduction in taxes can be made because of a homestead declaration filed after the October deadline. If, however, the homestead tax rate in your town is higher than the nonhomestead tax rate, the owner will be billed for the additional amount plus interest at the rate the town charges for delinquent taxes. Such bills will also include a penalty (1% of the education tax) for late filing (penalty is 100% if the Department has determined fraud).

Taxpayer Appeals [per 32 VSA § 5410\(j\)](#):

A taxpayer may appeal a determination of domicile for purposes of a homestead declaration or

an assessment of fraud penalty under this section to the Commissioner in the same manner as an appeal under chapter 151 of this title. A taxpayer may appeal an assessment of any other penalty under this section to the listers within 14 days after the date of mailing of notice of the penalty, and from the listers to the Board of Civil Authority and thereafter to the courts, in the same manner as an appraisal appeal under chapter 131 of this title. The legislative body of a municipality shall have authority in cases of hardship to abate all or any portion of a penalty appealable to the listers under this section and any tax, penalty, and interest arising out of a corrected property classification under this section; and shall state in detail in writing the reasons for its grant or denial of the requested abatement. The legislative body may delegate this abatement authority to the Board of Civil Authority or the Board of Abatement for the municipality. Requests for abatement shall be made to the municipal treasurer or other person designated to collect current taxes, and that person shall forward all requests, with that person's recommendation, to the body authorized to grant or deny abatement.

Current Use Program (Use Value Appraisal)

Introduction

Vermont's Current Use Program, which is also known as the Use Value Appraisal Program, is designed to “encourage and assist the maintenance of Vermont’s productive agricultural and forest land; to encourage and assist in the conservation and preservation for future productive use and for the protection of natural ecological systems; to prevent the accelerated conversion of these lands to more intensive use by the pressure of property taxation at values incompatible with the productive capacity of the land; to achieve more equitable taxation for undeveloped lands; to encourage and assist in the preservation and enhancement of Vermont’s scenic natural resources; and to enable the citizens of Vermont to plan its orderly growth in the face of increasing development pressures in the interests of the public health, safety and welfare.” [32 V.S.A. §3751](#).

Simply put, owners of eligible property may enroll it in the program. In return for keeping the property in agricultural, forest and/or conservation use, the owner is taxed on the value of that property for those uses, rather than the value of the property at its fair market value (highest and best use). If enrolled property ceases to be eligible, it is ‘removed or discontinued from the program’ and reverts to fair market value assessment.

Allocating Value for Enrolled Parcels

The Department’s website [provides information on Current Use](#), and there is a fact sheet, [Current Use and Property Valuation](#)

Current Use — Changes in Ownership

The owner of enrolled property [is required by 32 V.S.A. § 3757](#) to notify both the Director of PVR and the local assessing officials of the following:

1. the development of the land, as defined in [32 V.S.A. § 3752](#);
2. any change or discontinuance of use of the classified land so that it is no longer eligible for use value appraisal or is eligible for a different use value appraisal under this subchapter; and any transfer of ownership.

The responsibility in most instances is that of the property owner. Listers and assessors can help direct property owners with actions to take, and inform PVR of any unreported conveyances, development, or changes in use.

Conveyance of Entire Parcel

If the parcel is to stay in current use, the new owner must submit an application and, if requested, new maps and documentation relative to eligibility. New maps are needed when previously filed maps do not meet current mapping standards. The owner must contact the county forester when forestland subject to a forest management plan is involved. An updated management plan may be required. The new application is to ensure the parcel still meets eligibility requirements and to provide a clear and visible lien.

Failure by the new owner to file a new application and related documentation will result in the parcel being discontinued. The lien remains on the property until such time as the land use change tax is paid. No Land Use Change Tax is due, however, unless the property is “developed.”

Conveyance of Part of a Parcel

If the buyer wishes to continue enrollment in current use, they must submit an application, updated maps, and if requested, documentation relative to eligibility. The owner must contact the county forester when forestland subject to a forest management plan is involved. An updated management plan may be required. The seller must do the same as well if they wish to keep the portion retained in current use.

Current Use Discontinuances

If enrolled property is “developed,” it will be discontinued from current use, and Land Use Change Tax will be due to the State of Vermont. “Development” [is defined in 32 V.S.A. § 3752\(5\) \(legislature.vermont.gov\)](#). It most often occurs when 1) dwellings are built or, in the case of mobile homes, placed on enrolled land, or 2) when a part of an enrolled parcel is conveyed and one or more of the resulting parcels contains fewer than 25 acres of land. Cutting timber contrary to the approved forest management plan also constitutes development.

When the owner develops current use land, the owner must notify both the Director of PVR and the local assessing officials when development takes place. After the land is removed from current use, it is appraised and listed at its full fair market value.

Current Use may remove parcels or portions of a parcel for failure to comply with program requirements or upon owner request. They are processed through myVTax [as Form LV-314, Notice of Withdrawal](#). Listers are alerted via email when there are LUCT (Land Use Change Tax/ Penalty) value requests. Listers then determine a value for the land being removed from the program and enter this in myVTax. By statute, listers/assessors have thirty (30) days to submit the completed form to the PVR Director. [32 VSA 3757\(b\)](#).

Send a copy of form LV-314 to the taxpayer [along with the Letter of Explanation \(tax.vermont.gov\)](#) that prints along with the LV-314. If the value is then appealed, let Current Use staff know so a hold is put on billing. The appeals process for land use change tax/penalty is the same as all other grand list value appeals.

Listers who need more information about how to get into myVTax, how to value the land, or how to notify the taxpayer should call their district advisor directly or 802-828-5860.

Resources

- [Tax Department Website on Land Use Change Tax](#)
- [myVTax Guides](#)
- [Land Developed or Withdrawn from the Current Use Program: Guide for Assessing Officials on How to Determine Fair Market Value](#)

- [How to Value Land Excluded or Withdrawn from Current Use](#)
- [Template: Letter Explaining Fair Market Value](#)

Data Transfer

An electronic file containing data on current use parcels is made available in VTPIE to listers annually around March 15. Listers provide an allocation or breakdown of values and make necessary corrections to the data. Once the file has been received and each parcel verified, the data can then be uploaded to the grand list database. The exchange of data between listers and the Current Use Program is ongoing.

Appeals

Appeals relating to the Current Use Program allocation are governed by [32 V.S.A. § 4111](#) and [§ 4404](#). Appeals to discontinuance are two-fold: fair market value is to the listers, and eligibility is to the Director of PVR. [32 V.S.A. §3758](#). If an owner is aggrieved by the PVR Director's determination that their property is to be **discontinued or that development** has occurred, the owner may appeal the PVR Director's decision to the Tax Commissioner. The appeal must be in writing and be received in the Office of the Commissioner within 30 days of the date the determination being appealed was issued.

The **fair market value** of parcels enrolled in the Current Use Program may be grieved to the listers the same as other parcels in town.

Owners whose land has been removed from current use due to cutting contrary to a management plan [must appeal to the Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation](#).

How to Sign in to Tools Required by PVR

Sign up for VTPIE

If you require an account for the VTPIE portal or the VTPIE GIS portal, please email support@axiomnh.com or [submit a new support ticket \(support.axiomnh.com\)](https://support.axiomnh.com/support/solutions/articles/25000026875-creating-your-account).

A Note About VTPIE Portal Accounts

Each VTPIE account is associated with a unique email address; no two accounts can share an email. In addition, Vermont state IT security policy dictates that an account cannot be used from two locations (e.g., computers) simultaneously. Because of this, we do not recommend sharing a portal account with other individuals. Therefore, if your office requires multiple accounts for multiple staff, each account must have its own unique email address.

Step by step guidance can be found at <https://support.axiomnh.com/support/solutions/articles/25000026875-creating-your-account>.

Always use your municipal email address when carrying out official business for both security and public record compliance.

Sign Up for the Listserv

The Comp 60 Listserv is an email distribution list provided by the Division of Property Valuation and Review (PVR) at no cost to towns. Sign up requires internet access and a unique account for each community, based upon the town's email address on file with PVR. The Listserv is not monitored, censored or controlled by PVR, but is used by PVR as a communication channel to distribute important information such as announcements for upcoming educational conferences and classes, changes to processes, procedures or statutes, improvements to the Department's website, and other information for the assessment community.

How to Be Added to the Listserv

To be added to the Comp 60 Listserv, submit a request to tax.pvr@vermont.gov. To let us know if you are using a new email, please provide your old and new email to tax.pvr@vermont.gov

Sign Up for myVTax

What is myVTax? MyVTax is the Department's online tax software program used by municipal officials, buyers, sellers, and their attorneys. Listers have their own myVTax account which provides timely access to Property Transfer Tax Return information. MyVTax can be useful for gathering information for reviewing sales. Listers are required to use myVTax to enter Land Use Change Tax valuation (the valuation of land being removed from the program for penalty purposes). If you inadvertently forgot your password and cannot login after three attempts, reach out to your district advisor for assistance. Find reference guides, video links, and a complete set of instructions on the Department's website.

Town Clerks: How to Get Started with eCuse

What is eCuse? Online Current Use, also known as eCuse, allows property owners to submit online applications to the Current Use Program. Town clerks use eCuse to electronically process

submissions and record applications in the town's land records. Processing includes submitting the application back to the state with the recording information. This in turn allows for the recording fees to be transferred to town on a quarterly basis through VISION.

Listers use Current Use applications for application status and to assist with property owner inquiries. Listers can see application details; Town clerks use the system to process applications and insert recording information.

[Log into your eCuse account \(secure.vermont.gov\)](https://secure.vermont.gov). If you need to request an account, please email tax.currentuse@vermont.gov or call 802-828-5860.

Learn how navigate and use eCuse [by reading the Municipal Service User Guide \(tax.vermont.gov\)](https://tax.vermont.gov).

Subjects

This section goes into more depth about certain topics than the main section of the Lister Manual and/or contains Questions & Answers. Topics are in alphabetical order by title and topic.

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Abatement

Abatement of past (or current) year taxes is a voluntary process and is largely governed by state statute. Abatement deals with billed taxes, and does not change assessed value. The Office of the Vermont Secretary of State [offers a booklet called “About Abatement”](#). Abatement essentially means forgiving all or part of a tax liability, penalties and/or interest as defined by statute. It describes what abatement is, how the process works, and includes case studies and abatement law. Listers read and share this booklet with those who have questions about the abatement process. Address abatement questions to the District Advisor or town attorney.

The Board of Abatement is required to consider requests but is not mandated to act upon a request. Each town views abatement requests differently regarding the shared responsibility of the taxpayer in the process. The town has a responsibility to list property for taxation, in accordance with statute; the taxpayer is expected to be aware of what they have for property and to notify the town of any changes or discrepancies. It is up to the board to weigh the shared responsibilities to make their determination. Some other states use the term “abatement” to mean “grievance,” which can cause confusion.

Acreage/Parcel Size

Q: What is the most accurate choice for determining parcel size?

A: When you have discrepancies in various documents relating to parcel size, it is best to rely on the following documents:

- a recorded survey by a qualified surveyor,
- up-to-date property tax maps, and
- the deed

Appeals

The Vermont Secretary of State’s guide for property owners: [A Handbook on Property Tax Assessment Appeals](#).

VLCT guidance for towns: [Board of Civil Authority Toolkit](#).

PVR’s guidance for higher level appeals: [Appeals to The Director of PVR](#).

Q: Can a new owner appeal the value of a property purchased after April 1?

A: Because values are established as of April 1 and tax bills are issued to the owner of record as of April 1, only the seller can appeal. However, the seller can designate the new owner as agent to the seller. As an agent, the buyer can participate in the grievance by acting on behalf of the owner of record. The seller can submit a signed letter to the Board of Listers stating they wish to designate the buyer as their agent in the grievance process.

Q: How do we process a value change resulting from a Court or PVR Director appeal decision?

A: A copy of the decision goes into the listers' file. Attach a copy to the back of the appeal year's vault grand list. Change your grand list value for the appeal year and going forward. The decision will stand for the appeal year and the next two years unless it is reappraised. If the owners make improvements, listers can add the improvements, but it is advised to let the court or hearing officer's valuation decision remain. Accounting tip: calculate the amount of overpayment (plus interest if applicable) and then issue that as a credit against the next tax bill. [32 V.S.A. § 4469](#)

Q: Is the entire property considered upon Court or Director of PVR appeals?

A: Yes: The Hearing Officer shall review the listed valuation of an entire contiguous parcel of land together with all buildings and fixtures thereon. The erroneous valuation of a portion of the property by the board of civil authority or listers shall not be disturbed where the listed value of the property as a whole is correct. [32 V.S.A. § 4467](#)

Bank Appraisals

Q: What is the best way to handle bank appraisals when they are presented as evidence of value?

A: Check the appraisal to gauge its validity for use in the grievance process.

- Check the effective date and if there are any assumptions being made.
- Check calculations to ensure adjustments are legitimate and correctly applied.
- Review the comparable sales used.
- Look for new items about the property.

Bank appraisals (also called fee appraisals) are not written or intended for tax valuation purposes; there may be wording that would invalidate its appropriateness for grievance purposes (such as extenuating circumstances, conditions, assumptions, and past or future valuation dates).

The property owner may not have obtained permission from the appraiser to use the appraisal in a grievance situation. Fee appraisals can be good tools as a piece of the valuation puzzle, but you will need to confirm the data and methods are correct. They should neither be automatically discounted nor automatically accepted. Also, remember that any appraisal is an opinion of value, as is your appraisal/assessment.

Barns and Other Farm Structures

[32 V.S.A. § 3607a. Barns, silos, and other farm structures \(legislature.vermont.gov\):](#)

Barns, silos, sugarhouses, and bunkers used for silage storage shall be entered in the grand list at fair market value as defined in subdivision 3481(1) of this title, except that by a majority vote of those present and voting at an annual or special meeting warned for the purpose, a municipality may elect to exempt, or to appraise at less than fair market value, barns, silos,

sugarhouses, and bunkers used for silage storage located within the municipality that are owned or leased by a farmer as defined in subdivision 3752(7) of this title and used by the farmer as part of a farming operation. An election to exempt or to reduce appraisals made under this section shall remain in effect for future tax years until amended or repealed by a similar vote of the municipality. (Added 1983, No. 215 (Adj. Sess.), § 3, eff. May 10, 1984; amended 1987, No. 249 (Adj. Sess.).)

Board of Civil Authority (BCA)

Q: How can listers help to educate the BCA?

A: While it is not the listers' duty to educate the BCA about valuation, it is sometimes advisable and/or necessary for towns to provide resources for the BCA. The Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) is a good place to start. VLCT provides direct training to reappraisal towns.

Q: Can property owners submit new evidence at BCA hearings?

A: Yes, they don't have to use any of the evidence submitted during lister level grievance if they don't want to. Each level of appeal is considered to be de novo (new). The same applies for town evidence.

Q: Is the BCA required to drive by and inspect comparable properties?

A: The BCA is required to visit the subject property only. A drive-by of the comparable properties is recommended but not required.

Q: A taxpayer has demanded that we hold a hearing on a Saturday. Do we have to adhere to this request?

A: As a quasi-judicial hearing board, you control your schedule and are under no obligation to hold a hearing on a Saturday. However, it would be good to accommodate the appellant's request if the board members can do so without creating a burden.

Building Permits

Q: Without building permits, how do I find out about who is working on their home?

A: Knowing when to inspect a property for improvements can be a challenge when the town doesn't require building permits. Interior changes are the most challenging, as most towns don't require permits for interior improvements that don't affect the square footage or footprint of the building. Here are a few suggestions on finding out about work being done:

- Be observant as you drive around town. Look for clues such as construction dumpsters and construction vehicles.
- Listen for discussions about construction projects around town.
- Real estate ads will often list recent improvements.
- At least annually, drive all of your roads to observe new projects: decks, outbuildings, additions, pools, etc.

Cable

Q: What is the lowest amount cable can be depreciated?

A: Cable companies are only allowed to depreciate their inventory down to 40%.

Q: Why do we update cable company property every year?

A: Cable property valuations change annually because of line extensions, improvements, etc. Towns will find the current year valuations in VTPIE annually in May. Contact the District Advisor for help.

Cell Towers

Cell Towers are taxable under most circumstances, depending on ownership and use. [Implementation of Act 145 of 2024](#) has been delayed until 2026. At that time, cell towers are to be listed on the grand list and taxed as real property. Values for all telecommunication properties will be provided annually by PVR to the assessor [under 32 V.S.A. § 3602\(b\)](#).

Certificate of Mailing

Whenever a Notice of Change of Value or Allocation is sent to the taxpayer, listers should send it with a Certificate of Mailing. This provides proof that the documentation was sent to the taxpayer and when it was sent. Listers should be prepared to provide payment for this additional service when they visit the Post Office to send mail this way. For more information on Certificate of Mailing, see the United States Postal Service website: <https://faq.usps.com/s/article/Certificate-of-Mailing-The-Basics>.

Commercial Appraisal and Litigation Assistance Program

The Commercial Appraisal and Litigation Assistance Program's (CALAP) purpose, [per 32 V.S.A. § 5413](#), is to ensure the accurate and equitable assessment of complex commercial and unique properties by providing to municipalities, at their request, appraisals and legal support at no cost to the municipality. The CALAP will hire a qualified appraiser for the subject property and, in the event there is an appeal, will provide an experienced attorney to defend the value in court and other appeal levels.

Appraising and defending high valued commercial property is a specific assignment that might require a broader base of comparables and appraisal knowledge. The cost of appraisals, expert witnesses, and legal support can be expensive, and many times cost prohibitive.

Towns interested in applying for legal or appraisal assistance of complex commercial or other unique properties should [fill out the online application PVR-5413](#) and send supporting documentation to Cy.Bailey@vermont.gov.

Comparable Sales

The following definition of Comparable Sales is from [IAAO's \(International Association of Assessing Officers\) website](#) (2013 approved Standard on Mass Appraisal of Real Property).

“Comparable Sales; Comparables—(1) Recently sold properties that are similar in important respects to a property being appraised. The sale price and the physical, functional, and locational characteristics of each of the properties are compared to those of the property being appraised in order to arrive at an estimate of value. (2) By extension, the term ‘comparables’ is sometimes used to refer to properties with rent or income patterns comparable to those of a property being appraised. “

Listers make use of comparable sales in the grievance process, for reappraisals, and as a way to keep an eye on the real estate market for all categories of property. PVR suggests keeping market information on file and reviewing all sales in your market area, including real estate listings and descriptions, along with discussions with realtors and appraisers, to stay current regarding market trends. It is ideal to drive by unfamiliar comparable sales to learn about the neighborhood, condition, and other features.

Listers may be asked to provide property record cards and cost sheets for comparable properties by grieving taxpayers. These are public records and should be provided as any other public record request. As a lister, when looking for potential comparable sales for grievance and reappraisal purposes, you may not find suitable recent sales within your town. It is acceptable to use nearby towns' sales so long as that town's real estate market is similar. Look for sales from nearby neighborhoods that are similar in appeal and value to your subject property. The more unique the property, the farther you may have to search for suitable comparable sales.

Suggestions for locating comparable sales:

- Access sales statewide [using the Vermont Department of Taxes VTax system](#). For additional information, please contact the District Advisor.
- Reach out to local real estate agents and survey real estate websites, some have sold properties lists. Establish relationships with local agents to learn what is going on in real estate markets (and others).
- Reach out to other listers, especially when looking for unique properties such as gravel pits. The COMP60 ListServe is a great resource for this type of question.
- View sold properties on the [Northern New England Real Estate Network](#) (MLS)
- Talk to appraisers as they usually have a good amount of comparable sales data.
- Review vetted sales from any town's equalization study - found on the Department's website [with the Equalization Study Results](#). Each town's certified sales report provides sales data from the various categories (R1, Misc. Land, etc.). Certain types of sales may not be included, such as recently subdivided parcels (unless the town had done a reappraisal that year) and abutter sales (which are typically removed from the study).

Many towns and their websites have assessment information and property record cards online.

Contact Information

Property Valuation and Review

Website: <https://tax.vermont.gov/municipal-officials>

Phone: 802-828-5860

Email: tax.pvr@vermont.gov

Mailing Address

Vermont Department of Taxes

Property Valuation and Review

133 State Street. Montpelier, VT 05633-1401

VTPIE (VT Property Information Exchange)

Website: vtpie.org

Phone: 802-828-5860

VTPIE offers training and seminars to support the State's Grand List. [View Help topics and Solutions](#)

District Advisors

[District Advisors](#) (DAs) strive to answer questions. In most cases, contact the DA for your municipality first with questions and concerns. If they are unavailable, call the PVR Help Desk with immediate questions: 802-828-5860, ext. 2, from 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday or email anytime tax.pvr@vermont.gov.

Figure 7. Table: District Advisor Contact Information

(January 2025)

District Advisor Name	Email	Phone Number
Barb Schlesinger	barbara.schlesinger@vermont.gov	802-369-9081
Benton Mitchell	benton.mitchell@vermont.gov	802-233-4255
Beth Miller	beth.miller@vermont.gov	802-522-5320
Christie Wright	christie.wright@vermont.gov	802-855-3897
Deanna Robitaille	deanna.robitaille@vermont.gov	802-323-3411
Jen Myers	jennifer.myers@vermont.gov	802-522-0199
Teri Gildersleeve	teri.gildersleeve@vermont.gov	802-855-3917
Theresa Gile	theresa.gile@vermont.gov	802-522-7425
Nancy Anderson / Edu Coord (PT)	nancy.anderson@vermont.gov	802-828-5860 ext. 6680
Nahoami Shannon / PVR Support	nahoami.shannon@vermont.gov	802-828-586, ext. 6867
Cy Bailey / CALAP Administrator	cy.bailey@vermont.gov	802-223-3841

Current Use Program

Website: tax.vermont.gov/property-owners/current-use

Figure 8. Table: Current Use Specialists

(March 2024)

Service Area / Role	Specialist Name	Email	Phone Number
Addison - Derby	Carrie Potter	carrie.potter@vermont.gov	802-828-5860 ext. 6633
Dorset - Middlebury	Katie Emerson	katie.emerson@vermont.gov	802-828-5860 ext. 6637
Middlesex - Shoreham	Ken Brown	kenneth.brown@vermont.gov	802-828-5860 ext. 6636
Shrewsbury - Worcester	Nick Zimny-Shea	nicholas.zimny-shea@vermont.gov	802-828-5860 ext. 6608
Current Use Supervisor	Michael Ramsey	michael.ramsey@vermont.gov	802-828-5860 ext. 6634
Current Use Support	Kiree LaPointe	kiree.lapointe@vermont.gov	802-828-5860 ext. 6635

NEMRC (New England Municipal Resource Center)

Website: www.nemrc.com

NEMRC offers training, seminars, tutorials, and instructions to support their software (NEMRC & MicroSolve CAMA). On their website, click “Support (FAQ).”

VLCT (Vermont League of Cities & Towns)

Website: www.vlct.org

Phone: 802-229-9111

- Public records law
- Weekly legislative reports
- Resources: municipal law; index to municipal law; municipal handbooks

Vermont Secretary of State’s Office

Website: sos.vermont.gov

[The Secretary of State’s Municipal Division](#) includes guides, records, directories, and municipal law.

[Vermont State Archives and Records Division \(VSARA\)](#) provides guidance on records retention and disposal.

Phone: 802-828-3700

VALA (Vermont Assessors and Listers Association)

Website: valavt.org

VALA is an assemblage of property assessing personnel dedicated to the fair and equitable treatment of property owners. VALA works in conjunction with PVR by hosting IAAO trainings annually.

Deeds

The [Property Ownership Guide for Assessing Officials](#) provides information regarding common deeds recorded in Vermont and also discusses different ownership structures and how they relate to the listing of properties in the grand list.

Life Estates

Q: How should life estates be listed in the Grand List?

A: PVR recommends listing to the owner of the life estate first and the remainderman second. Listing the life estate holder as Owner makes filing a homestead declaration easier when the life estate owner lives on the property. Listing otherwise can create mismatches between CAMA and Grand List because of identified owner discrepancies, but listing order is ultimately the lister's decision.

Trusts/Trustee

There are two types of trusts. Trust can be Revocable or Irrevocable. A trust deed is used in place of a will to eliminate the need for probate upon death. In Vermont, real estate held by a trust is vested in the trustee of the trust. Property held in trust can only be conveyed by the current trustee or designated successor.

Q: When there is a new trustee of a trust, what paperwork is required?

A: The trustee, and not the trust, is technically the owner of the property. For current use purposes, we require a new application to the Current Use Program when a new trustee is added. [See the guide, Applying for the Current Use Program: FAQs for Trusts and Trustees](#). The new trustee should file a notice of change in trustee in the land records to document the new trustee. If or when the property is ever conveyed, a Notice of Change in Trustee or Certificate of Trust is usually filed in the land records to document the new trustee's authority to convey the property.

District Advisors

The Vermont Department of Taxes employs eight District Advisors who offer direct support to local assessment officials/listers at no charge. These advisors are located by region, assigned to specific towns with the purposes of recommending administrative and technical advice to listers throughout the state. The availability of support enhances the reliability of property assessments and results in greater standardization of assessment practices. For the current DA list along with their assigned towns, [see the Department's District Advisors webpage](#) or refer to the table, **"Figure 7" on page 78**.

You can schedule an in-person or virtual visit with your District Advisor anytime you need help that can't be easily accomplished by phone or by Teams. Some occasions when in-person guidance is helpful include:

- Reappraisals
 - ◇ Before: to discuss questions and concerns, along with getting specific information and advice
 - ◇ At completion: for current use and the equalization study, both of which are processed differently for reappraisal towns. Listers may also want to review what worked, what went

wrong, and to discuss suggestions regarding the reappraisal process.

- March/April: to meet with new listers to discuss training needs
- May: to review utility valuation as needed
- June-September: for Equalization Study meetings to go over a number of items
- January/February: to review your Equalization Study results
- Ongoing: for Current Use/Homesteads and other grand list issues

Newsletter

Monthly, the District Advisors publish a newsletter for municipal officials. This is distributed via Comp6-/LISTSERV. Please reach out to your district advisor if you are not receiving this newsletter,

Easements/Partial Rights/Private Restrictions

In general, when appraising a parcel, all rights of ownership are assigned to the fee owner, except those rights precluded by governmental restrictions or those specifically mentioned in statute. Partial interests have two listing issues: whether to divide the tax responsibility among various owners of partial interests; and whether the existence of various lesser interests affects the fair market value of the property.

The legislature did not intend for the listers to research, identify and tax all the holders of various interests, and to adjust and assign appraisal values accordingly. [Refer to Village of Lyndonville v. Town of Burke, 146 Vt. 435 \(1985\)](#). The whole parcel is listed to the fee owner, with only the few exceptions that are specifically listed in the statutes:

Water rights, owned separately from real estate interests, are appraised and set in the grand list as real estate in the name of the owner of the rights. [32 V.S.A. § 3605](#).

An interest in a mine or quarry (without the land) is listed to the owner of the interest, as long as it is not a perpetual or redeemable lease. [32 V.S.A. § 3604](#).

An owner of land on which the development rights are owned by the town, a state agency, or a qualified organization (such rights held by a qualified organization are subject to certification by the commissioner of taxes), under the provisions of 10 V.S.A. Chapter 155 is taxed “only on the value of those remaining rights or interests to which he retains title.” [10 V.S.A. § 6306\(b\)](#).

Lands over which the state acquires an easement for flood control projects are to be appraised and set in the grand list to the landowner with consideration of the restriction. [32 V.S.A. § 3611](#) and [§ 3612](#).

The second issue is whether the existence of lesser interests is considered to determine the fair market value. The court has defined fair market value as “the price which a property will bring in the market taking into consideration its availability, use and limitations.” [Refer to Villeneuve v. Town of Waterville, 141 Vt. 154 \(1982\)](#).

Restrictions on the property due to governmental laws, rules or programs must be considered to determine fair market value:

The appraisal shall include a “consideration of the effect of any state or local law or regulation affecting the use of land, including but [not limited to 10 V.S.A. Chapter 151](#) or any land capability plan established in furtherance or implementation thereof, rules adopted by the state board of health and any local or regional zoning ordinances or development plans.” [32 V.S.A. § 3481](#).

There are many parcels in Vermont from which certain **rights have been conveyed to a qualifying organization** and which have been certified [under the provisions of 10 V.S.A. Chapter 155](#) of the Vermont Statutes Annotated. Such rights [are exempt under 10 V.S.A. § 6306](#), and the remaining rights are taxable at fair market value. Consider the fair market value of the remaining rights.

Each parcel must be looked at individually. There is no magic formula for an appraisal of this type. All factors that combine to give a property value must be examined. The effect will be great in some instances, in others very small. Consider a five-acre parcel on Shelburne Road in South Burlington. If all but the right to use the property for agricultural purposes is removed, the fair market value will likely be very low in comparison to other similar parcels with all rights intact.

On the other hand, if all development rights are removed from a remote 200-acre forest tract in the Northeast Kingdom, most often little or no change in value will occur. The highest and best use of that property will probably remain woodland. The highest and best use of the South Burlington parcel will have changed dramatically, however. What was probably a prime commercial parcel is now limited to agricultural use and must be valued accordingly.

If the highest and best use of the property is for farming, and that use can continue, little or no change in value may have occurred.

If the property is in transition, however, a larger adjustment may be necessary. That is, if there is development pressure in the market area of the parcel being appraised, an adjustment must be made to account for the loss of that use. It's similar to making adjustments because of zoning or similar restrictions. If a property's highest and best use is for commercial development, but zoning restricts the use of the property to residential/ agricultural, the property is less valuable than a similar piece zoned for commercial use.

Listers will want to read the deed and look at exactly what was conveyed in each instance. In many cases, not all development rights are conveyed. Often some development, such as another residence, is allowed.

You may also want to examine the effect these conveyances have on other properties in the area. Have neighboring property values risen because it borders a property that cannot be developed? This may occur in some instances, such as in our South Burlington example above.

Listers and assessors may contact Property Valuation and Review on specific properties.

Research to determine whether privately arranged restrictions affect valuation. An owner of a gas station that was subject to a renewable lease and pre-emptive purchase option in favor of Getty Oil Company appealed the town's appraisal, arguing that the lease/option must be taken into account. The court agreed, finding:

Although we are concerned here with a privately imposed restraint on land, it is clear that the Legislature intended that bona fide restraints affecting property, at least those governmental

in origin, should be a factor in determining fair market value. The extension of this practice to situations such as that posed here is not contrary to the logic of the statute and is consistent with prior Vermont case law. [Winthrop Townsend and Marie Boisvert v. Town of Middlebury, 134 Vt. 438, \(1976\) \(casetext.com\)](#).

When land is subject to a perpetual lease, the statutes specify that its appraisal value must be determined taking into consideration all limitations upon the use of the land by the lessee. [32 V.S.A. § 3610 \(legislature.vermont.gov\)](#). However, there are few guidelines for determining when other types of privately imposed restraints on land are sufficiently bona fide to decrease the value of the property. **PVR holds that the existence of short-term leases and restriction agreements that may be freely renegotiated do not reduce the appraisal value of the property.** Therefore, privately imposed restraints that you might consider to determine a value would include those that are perpetual and not renegotiable.

eCUSE

Online Current Use, also known as eCuse, allows property owners to submit online applications to the Current Use Program. Listers can look up the status of Current Use applications in their town. This important feature helps listers understand where specific applications are in the overall process and assists with property owner inquiries. Listers are able to print applications and learn what properties will be enrolled in the program. Knowing the status of applications helps listers anticipate changes to facilitate quicker Current Use files exchanges for timely processing of applications.

Town clerks use the system to process applications and insert recording information. If you need help with your eCuse password, please contact the helpdesk 802-828-5860.

Learn how to navigate and use eCuse by [reading GB-1188, Municipal Service User Guide for Town Clerks and Listers](#) in the table below. This will also explain how to log-in to the system.

Figure 9. Table: eCuse Guides

Publication Number	Title
GB-1219	Current Use Program eCuse Submission: eCuse Program Guide How to Submit the Annual Agricultural Certification for Land and Buildings
GB-1106	Current Use Program eCuse Application: Program Guide for Landowners with Additional Guidance for Consultants
GB-1188	Municipal Service User Guide for Town Clerks and Listers
GB-1218	Quickstart eCuse Guide: Submit an Annual Agricultural Certification
GB-1108	Quickstart eCuse Guide: Landowner Registration
GB-1109	Quickstart eCuse Guide: Consultant Registration
GB-1110	Quickstart eCuse Guide: Starting an Application
GB-1111	Quickstart eCuse Guide: Submitting an Application

Education (PVR-Sponsored) and Career Development

PVR offers a Vermont Property Appraiser Certification Program. The Program Handbook details the process. Listers may also check out the following resources:

- [Division of Property Valuation and Review \(PVR\)](#)
PVR holds classes each year at various venues around the state, specifically for Vermont officials, based on Vermont statutes and circumstances.
- [Vermont Assessors and Listers Association \(VALA\)](#)
VALA provides education and information for listers and assessors.
- [International Association of Assessing Officers \(IAAO\)](#)
IAAO serves professionals working in property valuation, property tax policy and related fields. They set the standards for mass appraisal and provide education and designations for assessors, appraisers and others in the industry.
- [New England Municipal Resource Center \(NEMRC\)](#)
NEMRC offers classes and information regarding grand list and Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal.

Course Funding

Courses presented by Property Valuation and Review are offered at no charge to assessing officials (including contract assessors).

Please be sure to sign up only once for any course offered and note that a few are offered in two regions. Our classes are reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. If you find you are unable to attend, please let us know as we often have a waiting list when the course is full. We reserve the right to charge your city or town a fee if you sign up and fail to notify us of your inability to attend.

[Grants are available](#) for municipal listers and assessors for assessor trainings not sponsored by PVR. In addition, certain training-related expenses may be reimbursed through the grant application process. Applications for grants must be preapproved prior to attending the training. If you need assistance with this process, please contact PVR at 802-828-6887.

VT Property Information Exchange (VTPIE)

vtpie.org

888-508-8179

New England Municipal Resource Center (NEMRC)

www.nemrc.com

800-387-1110

NEMRC has tutorials on their website for grand list, CAMA, and software-related topics. They also offer annual trainings and webinars.

Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT)

www.vlct.org/mac

802-229-9111

VLCT offers an annual town convention that includes lister seminars. Their website includes a range of municipal information pertinent to assessing departments, they also offer BCA Appeals training.

Vermont Assessor and Lister Association (VALA)

valavt.org/

VALA hosts several PVR sponsored IAAO classes each year. They also hold an annual conference in September, with guest speakers on appraisal and timely topics related to assessing and listing.

Here are some additional organizations that provide appraisal education:

Appraisal Institute

www.appraisalinstitute.org/

888-756-4624

American Society of Farm Managers & Rural Appraisers

www.asfmra.org/education/education-offerings

303-758-3513

Calypso

www.calypsoedu.com

877-640-5140

IAAO (International Association of Assessing Officers)

connect.iaao.org/contactus

816-701-8100

Lemay School of Real Estate

www.lemayschoolofrealestate.com

McKissock

www.mckissock.com

877-277-5376

Vermont Secretary of State, Office of Professional Regulation

The Secretary of State [has a tool for finding appraisal classes](#).

For a course list, enter Real Estate Appraisers in the tool's search window

Vermont Association of Realtors

www.vermontrealtors.com

802-229-0513

Fiber Optics

Q: Are fiber optics taxable?

A: Yes, fiber optics are taxable and should be listed on the utility's inventory form.

Fuel Storage Tanks

Q: Are fuel storage tanks real or personal/trade fixture property?

A: It depends. Trade fixtures are classified as the personal property of the owner installing them; they

retain their chattel (an object of movable quality) character regardless of annexation. Elements for a trade fixture are:

- Annexed to realty by the tenant
- Enables the tenant to carry on the trade or enterprise addressed by the tenancy contract
- Can be removed without material or permanent injury to the freehold (see Powell's Treatise on Property, Section 57.06).
- There exists an intention that the annexation was not meant to be permanent.
- [32 V.S.A. § 3618\(c\)\(1\). Business personal property:](#)

“Business personal property” means tangible personal property of a depreciable nature used or held for use in any trade, business, professional practice, transaction, activity, or occupation conducted for profit including all furniture and fixtures, apparatus, tools, implements, books, machines, boats, construction devices, and all personal property used or intended to be used for the production, processing, fabrication, assembling, handling, or transportation of anything of value, or for the production, transmission, control, or disposition of power, energy, heat, light, water, or waste. “Business personal property” does not include inventory, or goods and chattels so affixed to real property as to have become part thereof, and which are therefore not severable or removable without material injury to the real property, nor does it include poles, lines, and fixtures which are taxable under sections 3620 and 3659 of this title.”

So, if a fuel storage tank is owned by the owner of the real estate and is affixed in a permanent manner to the real estate, it is real property.

If it is owned by a lessor to the owner of the real estate, it could be either real or personal property, depending upon the intention to make it permanent. (If the lease says the lessor has the right to remove the tank, then the tank keeps its chattel nature and is not real estate, unless you have just cause to believe the lease was written in such a manner strictly to avoid taxation and that there is no intention of removing the tank in the future.) If the lessor has a history of removing tanks from lessees' properties under certain circumstances, you should treat the tank as personal property.

Government Property

Q: Do state and federal properties require a Change of Appraisal Notice when values change?

A: No. State and federally owned property is tax exempt and does not require a Change of Appraisal Notice.

Gravel Pits

There are a variety of ways you can go about valuing gravel pits. Here are some recommendations:

- Send an email to the Comp60 Listserve to ask for specific advice and comparable sales.
- Consider hiring a commercial appraiser who has gravel/batch plant experience.
- Grade the land comparable to commercial properties in town.
- Ask your District Advisor for suggestions.

Greenhouses

Q. How should we treat greenhouse valuation?

A. The Department [has a technical bulletin regarding greenhouses, TB-21](#). Greenhouses may be considered as real or business property, depending on several factors.

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Properties

HUD-owned properties are non-taxable. HUD is a department of the U.S. Government. [32 V.S.A. § 3802](#) and www.hud.gov.

Improvements to Property

Q. Are extensive fencing and landscaping valuable improvements? How about tennis courts and in-ground swimming pools?

A: Yes; examine the town's real estate market to answer these questions. The answer can be established with your hired reappraisal firm at the time of a reappraisal.

Improvements such as fencing and swimming pools may add or take away value depending on the type of property and the market area; paired sales analysis and consulting with local real estate agents are two ways to learn what specific improvements are worth, in a market area.

Incompatible Offices

Q: Can spouses be listers on the same board?

A: In Vermont, spouses can work together as listers on the same board. However, if either grieves, the third lister and/or a paid consultant should be responsible for addressing and determining the grievance outcome, not either spouse.

Q: Can listers also be on the selectboard?

A: No. [See 17 V.S.A. § 2647. Incompatible offices](#). Also, the [Vermont League of Cities and Towns has a chart of incompatible offices](#) (login required).

Q: Which offices can be held at the same time by the same person?

Auditor¹

May also be: School District Employee

May not be: Selectperson, School Director, Town Manager, Town Treasurer, Election Official & Candidate

¹ A spouse of a town clerk, town treasurer, selectperson, trustee of public funds, town manager, water commissioner, sewer system commissioner, sewer disposal commissioner, first constable, road commissioner, collector of current or delinquent taxes, or town district school director, or any person who assists any of these officers may not be an auditor. [17 V.S.A § 2647\(a\)\(1\)](#)

Selectperson

May also be: School Director, School District Employee in the same supervisory union

May not be: Auditor, Town Manager, Town Treasurer, Election Official & Candidate (no matter how voted)

School Director

May also be: Selectperson, Election Official & Candidate (if voting is by Australian ballot, must be unopposed)

May not be: Auditor, Town Manager, Town Treasurer, Election Official & Candidate (if voting is not by Australian Ballot), School District Employee in the same supervisory union

Town Manager

May also be: School District Employee¹

May not be: Auditor, Selectperson, School Director, Town Treasurer, Election Official & Candidate (no matter how voted)

Town Treasurer

May also be: Election Official & Candidate (if voting is by Australian ballot, must be unopposed), School District Employee in the same supervisory union

May not be: Auditor, Selectperson, School Director, Town Manager, Election Official & Candidate (if voting is not by Australian Ballot)

Town Clerk

May also be: Selectperson, School Director, Town Treasurer, Election Official & Candidate (if voting is by Australian ballot, may be opposed or unopposed), School District Employee in the same supervisory union

May not be: Auditor, Town Manager, Election Official & Candidate (if voting is not by Australian Ballot)

Assistant Town Clerk

May also be: Selectperson, School Director, School District Employee¹

May not be: Auditor, Town Manager

Whether an Assistant Town Clerk may also be a town treasurer [is subject to 24 V.S.A § 1622](#)

Not applicable: Election Official & Candidate

Town Agent

May also be: Auditor, Town Treasurer, Election Official & Candidate (if voting is by Australian ballot, must be unopposed) School District Employee in the same supervisory union

May not be: Selectperson, School Director, Town Manager, Election Official & Candidate (if voting is not by Australian Ballot)

First Constable

May also be: Town Treasurer, Election Official & Candidate (if voting is by Australian ballot, whether opposed or unopposed), School District Employee in the same supervisory union

May not be: Auditor, Selectperson, School Director, Town Manager, Election Official & Candidate (if voting is not by Australian Ballot)

Road Commissioner

May also be: Selectperson, School Director, Town Treasurer, Election Official & Candidate (if voting is by Australian ballot, must be unopposed), School District Employee in the same supervisory union

May not be: Auditor, Town Manager, Election Official & Candidate (if voting is not by Australian Ballot)

Cemetery Commissioner

May also be: Auditor, Selectperson, School Director, Election Official & Candidate (if by Australian ballot, must be unopposed), Employee in the same supervisory union

May not be: Town Manager, Town Treasurer, Election Official & Candidate (if no Australian Ballot)

Trustee of Public Funds

May also be: Selectperson, School Director, Town Treasurer, Election Official & Candidate (if by Australian ballot, must be unopposed), School District Employee in the same supervisory union

May not be: Auditor, Town Manager, Election Official & Candidate (if voting is not Australian Ballot)

Lister

May also be: Auditor, School Director, Town Treasurer, Election Official & Candidate (if voting is by Australian ballot, must be unopposed; or if not by Australian ballot), School District Employee in the same supervisory union

May not be: Selectperson, Town Manager

Assessor

May also be: Auditor, School Director, Town Treasurer, Election Official & Candidate (no restrictions), School District Employee in the same supervisory union

May not be: Selectperson, Town Manager

Tax Collector, Current

May also be: Town Manager, Town Treasurer, Election Official & Candidate (if voting is by Australian ballot, must be unopposed), School District Employee in the same supervisory union

May not be: Auditor, Selectperson, School Director, Election Official & Candidate (if voting is not Australian Ballot)

Tax Collector, Delinquent

May also be: Town Manager, Town Treasurer, Election Official & Candidate (if voting is by Australian ballot only), School District Employee in the same supervisory union

May not be: Auditor, Selectperson, School Director, Election Official & Candidate (if voting is not by Australian Ballot)

Grand Juror

May also be: Auditor, Selectperson, School Director, Town Treasurer, School District Employee in the same supervisory union

May not be: Town Manager, Election Official & Candidate (no matter how voted)

Inspector of Elections

May also be: Auditor, Selectperson, School Director, Town Treasurer, Election Official & Candidate (if voting is by Australian ballot, whether opposed or unopposed), School District Employee in the same supervisory union

May not be: Town Manager, Election Official & Candidate (if voting is not by Australian Ballot)

Justice of the Peace

May also be: Auditor, Selectperson, School Director, Town Treasurer, Election Official & Candidate (if voting is by Australian ballot, whether opposed or unopposed), School District Employee in the same supervisory union

May not be: Town Manager, Election Official & Candidate (if voting is not by Australian Ballot)

Inspecting Property

Q: Do listers need to obtain consent prior to inspecting real estate?

A: Listers need to obtain permission if: 1) they have been put on notice by the owner (in person or via a communication) or 2) the property is legally posted with “No Trespassing” signage.

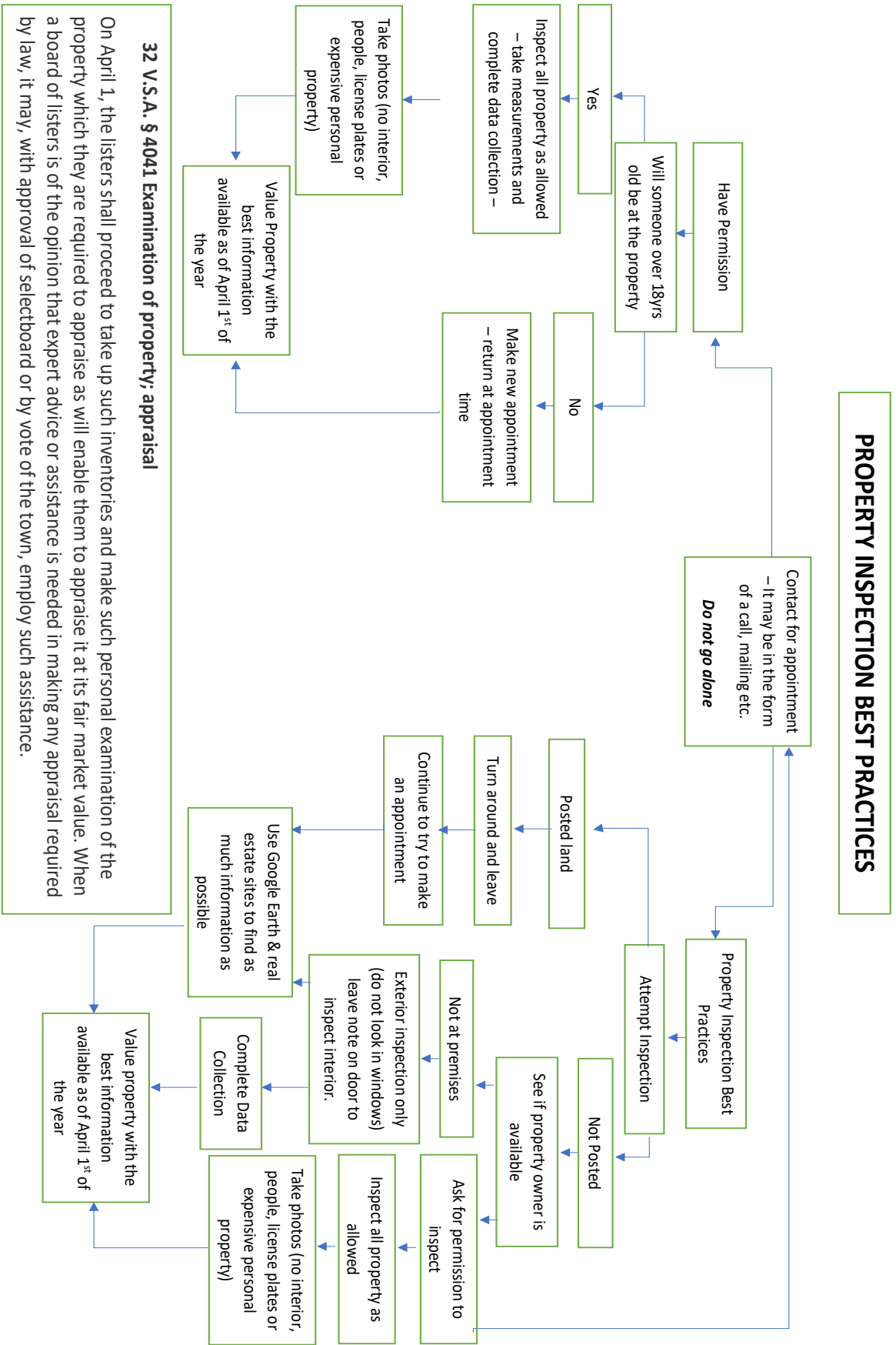
Although [32 V.S.A. § 4041](#) may appear to grant listers authority to inspect a property, it is prudent to obtain permission from the property owner before attempting to enter upon and inspect real estate. Do not inspect the interior of a dwelling (or any other building that would commonly or reasonably be locked – whether or not it is locked) without appropriate permission.

There are instances when listers or assessors need to consider alternatives to interior inspections to ensure that all properties are assessed equitably. Here are some options:

- Send out inventory sheet (mailer) for correction
- Log onto the contractor’s website to make corrections to data
 - ◇ Online Property Assessment Data Verification
- Video tour of property
 - ◇ Real-time tour with smart phone (not recorded or saved)
 - If recorded or saved, the videos become public record
- Homeowner could provide interior photos for viewing only
 - If photos are submitted, they become public record
- Telephone interview with homeowner
- Interview with homeowner at door

See Figure 10, Property Inspection Best Practices chart on the next page.

Figure 10. Flowchart: Property Inspection Best Practices



Interest

Q: Is a town obligated to pay interest on tax credit from an appeal?

A: When the appraised value of a property on appeal has been reduced, a taxpayer is entitled to a credit against the tax for the next ensuing tax year and for succeeding years if necessary to use up the amount of the credit. If the town has voted to collect interest on overdue taxes, a taxpayer will also become entitled to interest at that same rate on the overpayment.

Q: Upon winning a tax appeal, should the taxpayer receive credit for the prior year's taxes?

A: That depends. An appeal on the municipal level by a taxpayer of the listed valuation is a challenge of the current year's tax bill, assuming they appealed this year. In instances where the decision is reached in a subsequent tax year, often the case with court cases or Appeals to the Director, the taxpayer would receive credit. [See 32 V.S.A. § 4469.](#)

Land Schedules

The term "Land Schedule" refers to a list of land values identified by size, typically used by assessors as a basis of land values. The values are derived from the town's real estate market area sales data at the time of ad valorem reappraisal. The tables are developed to allow for uniform valuation of all property on an equal basis. This information is embedded in the computer's CAMA cost system and is used as a basis for land values when costing property. The schedule is often modified by significant characteristics such as location, topography, accessibility, and availability of utilities to establish individual lot values for assessment purposes.

Laws and Legislation

The Vermont League of Cities & Towns Municipal Assistance Center (MAC) provides municipal officials and employees with the education, training, and professional assistance to fulfill their statutory duties. Staff members answer lister questions.

Lister Certificates

[Listers provide filers these certificates](#) on request if the housesite cannot be determined on the prior year tax bills. The certificates are updated annually and available at in late January. Please make sure you are using the correct year.

- For full parcel or multiple ownership parcels, use Form HSD-315, Request for Lister's Certificate of Housesite Value.
- For subdivisions, use Form HSD-316, Request for Lister's Certificate of Housesite Value for a Subdivided Parcel

Listers (Lack of)

Q: Can fewer than three listers sign the grand list?

A: Vermont law requires a town to have three listers (unless additional listers are elected or the town has voted to eliminate the office of lister [pursuant to 17 V.S.A. § 2651\(c\); § 2649\(a\)\(1\)\(B\)](#)). Vermont law requires each lister to sign the grand list and swear that it is a true statement of all real estate and taxable personal estate. [32 V.S.A. § 4151](#).

If only one lister signs the grand list, a taxpayer may argue the grand list is invalid. [32 V.S.A. § 4262](#) allows listers to legalize a defective or invalid grand list (including when they fail to subscribe and attach the oath required in Section 4151) on or before February 15 of the following year.

If there are fewer than three listers, the selectboard shall fill the vacancy/vacancies until the next election. [24 V.S.A. § 963](#). If the board of listers falls below a majority and the selectboard is unable to find a person or persons to appoint as lister(s), it can appoint an assessor to perform the listers' duties until the next annual meeting. [17 V.S.A. § 2651c\(a\)\(1\)](#).

Be aware that a town could alter these requirements in its charter, so the town's charter should be consulted as well.

Another scenario: if there have been value changes to any parcels in town without the knowledge and support of other listers, to the point where a lister has reservations about signing the grand list, then it is incumbent upon the listers to resolve this. If necessary, listers may need to change the values back to their original levels. Refusing to sign a grand list because of changes made by another lister does not relieve a lister of their responsibility for the grand list product, nor from the responsibility for upholding the oath of office that was sworn to when elected.

Please [see the guide, Elect Listers and/or Hire an Assessor: Options for Your Town](#) for different scenarios.

List Value of Education Property Tax Liability

The Division of Property Valuation and Review must consider requests from municipalities for a recalculation of its education property tax liability when the education grand list is reduced due to a determination, declaratory judgment, or settlement, per [32 V.S.A. § 5412](#). The municipality must apply for this recalculation with the Director and must demonstrate that their actions in the appeal or court action were consistent with [Best Practices as published by PVR](#).

Towns must complete an online application and provide additional documentation to request any education property tax liability recalculation.

If a municipality would like to [submit a request for the recalculation of their education grand list liability](#) as defined by PVR and statute, please review the eligibility criteria and complete the form on the Department's website.

Marshall & Swift Cost System

Q: When should I update my Marshall & Swift books / digital cost data?

A: These are updated when a reappraisal is completed. At the time of reappraisal, the Marshall &

Swift cost information is updated in the computer assisted mass appraisal (CAMA) files. The Marshall & Swift books (residential and commercial) should reflect those new cost tables. Do not upgrade the books, or the computer cost schedule, in between reappraisal because values will be applied inequitably.

Q: How do we order our Marshall & Swift books at the time of reappraisal?

A: It is up to the town to order and pay for the actual books, which are updated monthly. [Contact CoreLogic](#). Discuss with the reappraisal contractor what tables will be used and request the closest book possible, understanding it will not be exact.

Methane Digesters

Q: Do methane digesters qualify as enrolled farm buildings in Current Use?

A: The Department's [Technical Bulletin-65 \(TB-65\)](#) addresses methan digesters.

Mobile Homes

A mobile home is considered real property when it is: (a) affixed to land, regardless of whether the underlying land is owned or leased by the mobile homeowner, or (b) financed as residential real estate. 9 V.S.A., Chapter 72 (legislature.vermont.gov).

Factors showing that a mobile home is affixed to land include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The mobile home has been set up on blocks or otherwise stabilized so that the wheels do not form a major part of the structural support.
- The mobile home has been connected to utilities such as electricity, sewage, water, gas, or oil.
- Skirting has been erected around the base of the mobile home.
- The wheels and/or tires have been removed.
- The mobile home has been situated in a place which makes its removal unlikely. For example, a mobile home located in a mobile home park and connected to utilities is affixed to the land even if the owner of the mobile home does not own the underlying land.

Grand list categorization should be either MH (mobile home landed) or MHU (mobile home unlanded).

Listers should be aware that data contained on the listers cost sheets and property record cards should not be changed upon request by property owners, financing agencies or realtors. This information is for valuation purposes only and should not be relied upon or edited for financing or permitting purpose. Grand list value should be arrived at in the same manner as other real property, using the schedules and cost tables put in place with the last reappraisal in the CAMA system.

On the Grand List, mobile home descriptions shall include, if available: manufacturer, model number, serial number and dimensions. [32 V.S.A. § 4152\(b\)](#). This information can be found on the manufacturer's data plate, which is typically located inside of a kitchen cabinet door or on the back wall of a bedroom closet.

Abandoned Mobile Homes

- Tax sale of Abandoned Mobile Homes: [32 V.S.A. § 5252, Levy and notice of sale](#)

- Abandonment of mobile home in mobile home park: [10 V.S.A. § 6248](#)
- Sale of abandoned mobile home: [32 V.S.A. § 6249](#)

Mobile Home Transfers

A. Mobile Home Uniform Bill of Sale

An owner of a mobile home (except those held for sale by a manufacturer, distributor or dealer that are stored or displayed on a sales lot and are not connected to utilities) may not sell, trade, transfer, or move the home without a Mobile Home Uniform Bill of Sale endorsed by the clerk of the municipality in which it is located indicating property taxes are paid.

A Mobile Home Uniform Bill of Sale is not required if the mobile home is transferred by deed and financed as residential real estate. It does however require a Property Transfer Tax Return (PTTR) [9 V.S.A. § 2602\(b\)\(8\)\(A\)](#).

In the case of removal of a mobile home from the municipality, or of a sale, trade, or transfer that will result in the removal of the mobile home from the municipality, the clerk shall not endorse the Mobile Home Uniform Bill of Sale unless all property taxes assessed regarding the mobile home, but not the mobile home site, have been paid. [9 V.S.A. § 2602\(b\)\(2\)](#); [32 V.S.A. § 5079](#).

If a mobile home is sold, traded, or moved between April 1 and the time that the grand list has been completed, listers may be asked to help estimate the amount of tax to be paid by the owner for that year.

B. Property Transfer Tax

See the fact sheet, [Vermont Taxation on Transfers of Mobile Homes](#).

If a mobile home is treated as real property (see Mobile Home section above), the transferor must file a Vermont Property Transfer Tax Return and pay the property transfer tax at the time of the transfer.

The above link to the Tax Department's fact sheet covers most common situations involving the transfer of a mobile home. If you have a situation that is not addressed here or need further explanation, contact the Vermont Department of Taxes at tax.rett@vermont.gov or 802-828-6851.

Mobile Home Forms

- [Form PVR-2602C, Vermont Mobile Home Uniform Bill of Sale](#)
- [Form PVR-2606Q, Mobile Home Quitclaim Deed](#)
- [Form PVR-2606A, Vermont Mobile Home Relocation Statement](#)
- [Form PVR-2606W, Mobile Home Warranty Deed](#)
- [Form PVR-2606B, Mobile Home Relocation Statement - Out of State](#)
- [Form PVR-2606T, Town Clerk Endorsement](#)

Mortgage Companies

Q: If a mortgage company overpays the taxes, who is entitled to the refund – the property owner or the mortgage company?

A: The taxpayer is the person legally responsible for paying the taxes regardless of who actually does pay. The mortgage company is paying the taxes on behalf of the owner. The homeowner is ultimately liable for the tax owed – therefore, the homeowner is the taxpayer, and any refund should be paid to the homeowner.

Name/Ownership Changes

Q: A Current Use notification has two added names, trustees of an estate. Can I just add their names to the property by reason of this change or do I need a PTTR or name change form to add the names to the GL?

A: The Current Use application in itself is not a reason to make a listing change. Please [see Current Use Applications | Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more info.

Q: What is required to change an ownership name after a marriage?

A: A warranty deed & PTTR (Property Transfer Tax Return) OR a Certificate of Name Change (available at many town offices) and a recording fee to get it into the land records.

Open Meeting Law

VLCT has general information about the open meeting law: [Quick Guide to Vermont's Open Meeting Law](#) and [Public Records](#).

The Vermont Secretary of State's Office [has information on open meetings and government transparency](#).

Orchard Lands

[32 V.S.A. § 3607. Orchard lands:](#)

“When the owner of land, cultivated or uncultivated, has planted the same to fruit trees, such land shall continue to be set in the list at the same valuation as similar land not so planted, but which is used for general agricultural purposes. Increase in the valuation of such land for taxation shall not be made for 15 years on account of trees growing thereon.”

Outdoor Furnaces

Q: How would I enter an outdoor wood heating furnace in CAMA?

A: Enter it by name and rate, although be aware that it may not warrant additional consideration beyond a heating system, which is part of the base calculations. Reference what the market shows and be consistent.

Personal Property and Equipment

Unless noted otherwise, the following personal property exemptions are drawn from [32 V.S.A. § 3802\(8\)](#) and [Rule 82-1 \(32\)3802\(8\)-1](#).

Personal property not used for profit is exempt. That includes:

- Household furniture, provisions, and equipment not regularly used for income producing purposes. This exemption applies to lawn mowers and garden tractors, privately owned satellite dishes, and swimming pools that are not attached to the land. Household fixtures used by bed and breakfast establishments are taxable because they are regularly used for income producing purposes.
- Personal wearing apparel and adornment
- Private and professional libraries
- Shrubs and plants in a commercial greenhouse
- Fowl and baby chickens, sheep, cattle, horses, goats, swine and bees
- Hay and produce sufficient to winter out the stock.
- Farm property constructed and used for manure storage and designed to avoid water pollution
- Tractors and other machinery of a farmer, including tractor drawn equipment, milking equipment, bulk tanks, gutter cleaners, silo unloaders, and maple syrup and sugaring equipment, not used for hire or contract purposes.
- Hand tools and implements of a farmer, mechanic, carpenter, electrician, plumber, or other craftsman.
- Aircraft, automobiles, and other motor vehicles. See the sections on mobile homes, travel trailers and construction equipment for more information on these categories.
- Money, stocks, bonds, mortgages, etc. [32 V.S.A. § 3803](#).
- Personal property owned by an inhabitant of this state but situated and taxed in another state. [32 V.S.A. § 3802\(3\)](#).
- Personal property owned by the federal, state or municipal government.
- Snowmobiles, boats and outboard motors except those held as inventory or stock in trade or used for income purposes, and travel trailers which are not on the same campsite for at least 180 days of the 365 days preceding April 1. [32 V.S.A. § 3692](#). See the section on trailer coaches.
- Personal property in interstate transit is exempt from local taxation by federal law. If the property is changed (processed) during the course of its stay in one place, it can be considered to have come to rest and be taxed.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)

The General PILOT, also known as Building PILOT, is designed to compensate municipalities for municipal taxes they are unable to collect on state-owned buildings. [32 V.S.A. § 3705](#).

The methodology to calculate the payment is as follows:

- Convert state-owned building values to grand list (adjusted by the local common level of

appraisal) to determine what an adjusted grand list would have been if such property was taxable.

- Determine an adjusted municipal tax rate (what the tax rate would have been if such property were taxable).
- Determine Full Pilot by multiplying adjusted municipal tax rate by adjusted municipal grand list.
- Prorate the payment to fit available funding.

Annually, on or about May 1, PVR provides an inventory of the assessed values of state buildings to each municipality in which state property is located. For the purposes of the [payment in lieu of taxes \(PILOT\)](#) calculation the assessed value of state buildings [is defined in 32 V.S.A. § 3701\(2\)](#). The file is also made available on the Tax Department website. As [per 32 V.S.A. § 3704\(b\)](#), municipalities have 30 days in which to appeal assessed values provided.

Payments by the State of Vermont to compensate municipalities for the taxes they are unable to collect on these exempt state-owned buildings are made to towns annually in November.

Property Transfers

Figure 11. Table: Requirements for a Property Transfer Tax Return

Type of Property Transfer	Is PTTR Required?
Cemetery Plot Deed	No
Controlling Interest in Property (transferred or acquired)	Yes
Corrective Deed	Yes
Court Decree of Distribution (Probate)	Yes
Court-ordered (divorce judgement)	Yes
Easement (right of way)	Yes
Easement (utility company or municipality) over \$500	Yes
Foreclosure	Yes
Government purchase or sale of less than \$10,000 (highway purposes only)	No
Lease (if for over 50 years; less than 50 years with option to renew beyond 50 years; or less than 50 years if purchase option and right to build or make major capital improvements)	Yes
Lien	No
Life estate	Yes
License or agreement to sell	Yes
Lot line adjustment	Yes
Mobile home - Bill of Sale (personal property - Vermont Sales Tax)	No
Mobile home - affixed to land	Yes
Mobile home - financed as real property	Yes
Mortgage deed	No
Mortgage deed assignment	No

Type of Property Transfer	Is PTTR Required?
Mortgage deed subordination	No
Mortgage deed release	No
Mortgage deed discharge	No
Option to buy	Yes
Quit Claim Deed	Yes
Real estate changes	Yes
Tax Collector Deed	Yes
Warranty Deed	Yes

Q: Can two or more non-contiguous parcels (separate parcel IDs) be conveyed with one Property Transfer Tax Return (PTTR)?

A: Yes, if they are on one deed then there is one transfer return. Use the value, SPAN, and category from the larger parcel when filling out your portion of the PTTR.

Foreclosures

Foreclosure transfers require Property Transfer Tax Returns. A Property Transfer Tax Return (PTTR) is required when there is a “transfer by deed of title to property.” [See 32 V.S.A. § 9602](#). With foreclosures, the timing of the transfer of title depends upon the type of foreclosure action:

1. Strict Foreclosure—Generally, in a strict foreclosure, title transfers with the judgment order, and a PTTR must be filed when the foreclosure judgment is filed. A court may order a sale in a strict foreclosure proceeding [12 V.S.A. § 4941](#).
2. Court-Ordered “Judicial” Sale—If the mortgage includes a power-of-sale clause, either party may request that the court order the sale of the property [12 V.S.A. § 4954\(b\)](#). In this type of foreclosure, transfer of title occurs when the confirmation order is filed in the land records and a PTTR is required at that time.
3. Non-judicial Foreclosure Sale—Under [12 V.S.A. § 4961](#), a mortgagee may “upon breach of mortgage condition, foreclose upon the property without first commencing a foreclosure action or obtaining a foreclosure decree. No sale under and by virtue of a non-judicial power of sale shall be valid and effectual to foreclose the mortgage unless the conditions of this subchapter are complied with.”

Foreclosure properties are often offered for sale by real estate firms that specialize in these types of properties. A popular method is for the property to be sold in ‘auction’. Visiting online auction sites is a way of learning about auction and foreclosure properties in your area. Doing an internet search for “Vermont Real Estate Auction” will result in a number of sites, for example, www.auction.com.

Auction and foreclosure sales are considered invalid and are removed from the equalization study by coding the sale as #10. These sales are grouped with similar distress sales including bank properties, liquidation, tax sales, Sheriff’s sales, bankruptcy, receivership, or dissolution sales. The District Advisor may ask for documentation in the form of a printed auction notice, deed pages mentioning

foreclosure, delinquent tax history prior to sale, PTTR wording, marketing/MLS wording that indicates liquidation, or a town sales verification letter stating a liquidation situation.

Public Posting

Q: What constitutes a public place for posting the “Notice to Taxpayers” document?

A: This notice needs to be posted in five (5) public places (the Town Clerk’s office plus four (4) others). The public places do not all have to be in your town, they can include neighboring towns that residents of your town frequent. The following examples are considered to be public places:

- Town Clerk’s Office (always post there)
- Outdoor public bulletin boards
- Grocery store bulletin board
- Library
- Post office
- Gas station
- Town website

Public Records

Q: Are things like draft cost sheets and listers’ notes considered to be public record?

A: The only things in listers’ files not considered public record are personal property information, income and expense information, and inventory forms. Temporary CAMA information (such as in a reappraisal, when a Property Record Card is still subject to change) is subject to the public records law.

If you provide someone with information that is subject to change, you should note that it is subject to change on their copy of the documents. (Consider keeping a photocopy of what was provided that includes the lister-created “Subject to Change” note.)

Q: Where can I get information about public records?

A: The Vermont Secretary of State’s Office [is a good resource for information on public records](#). The Vermont League of Cities & Towns also [has information about public records](#).

Property Valuation & Review

The Division of Property Valuation and Review (PVR) staff, which includes both office staff and traveling District Advisors, provides support to municipalities in developing and administering property tax policies and related programs at the local level. Our goal is to provide answers to common questions that municipal governments ask in order to help them meet their obligations.

PVR supports computer software programs used locally for grand list and property tax administration.

We provide municipal officials with training, online tools, and a wide variety of information to help ensure property is both assessed and taxed fairly and equitably.

Qualified Housing (aka Subsidized Housing)

Q: Does a qualified housing building automatically retain its exemption after a transfer to a new owner?

A: No. [See tax stabilization agreements, tax increment financing districts, at 32 V.S.A. § 5404a.](#)

Q: Should subsidized rental housing (Qualified Housing) values be adjusted annually?

A: The subsidized housing valuation process was crafted to allow the value, once determined, to remain the same until and unless the town reappraised all properties. However, there is nothing to prohibit a taxpayer from requesting a new appraisal or grieve the value of the property. Further, the property can and likely should be revalued if there is a substantial change, such as additional units, accelerated depreciation, etc.

Q. What should we do if we have reason to suspect an owner of Qualified Housing is including capital expenses in their Income & Expense document?

A: When valuing the property, an independently audited Income and Expense document should be provided, and all information should be reviewed.

Listers can request a further breakdown of the expenses. If the property owner refuses and it goes to grievance, listers can request the information again in the grievance process. The Tax Department's [technical bulletin, TB-32](#), may be of help.

When valuing the property, an independently audited Income and Expense document should be provided, and all information should be reviewed.

Please see www.housingdata.org/find-rental-housing for detailed information and contacts for these properties.

Railroad Property

Q: How should we account for railroad property?

A: Railroad property is non-taxable, [per 32 VSA §3803\(1\)](#). Railroad corporations pay a separate tax based on track mileage.

Reappraisals

Q: We are a reappraisal town and don't want to duplicate our efforts. Should we process Current Use downloads now, even though we don't have land size changes, value changes, etc. yet from the reappraisal?

A: When there is a subdivision of property, name change or death of the owner of property that is

enrolled in Current Use, often the Current Use Program does not have this information until it is provided by the listers/assessor. Once the Current Use Program is aware of these changes, they are required to write a letter to the property owners to request a new application, change of ownership application, etc., and the owner is afforded a minimum of 30 days to report back.

This process may take much longer than 30 days because of mapping needs, forester review, Current Use review, etc. Because of this timeline, it is crucial for Current Use to find out as early as possible about any of these changes. For reappraisal towns, this means that the values might not be correct yet, but at a minimum if listers can complete the file for acreages, names, and updated SPANS, it will start the rest of the timeline moving sooner.

Sale Date

Q: Is the “Sale Date” the recording date or the closing date?

A: See “Determining the Owner” in the chapter, **Annual Reporting and Maintenance**

Sheds

Q: Are sheds on skids (or other movable buildings) taxable or personal property?

A: There are a few things to consider when making this determination:

- Intent—is it the intent of the owner to leave it and utilize it for the property’s benefit indefinitely?
- Is it annexed to the real estate (foundation or other attachment)?
- Is it adapted to the realty by site work and/or landscaping?

If the answer is “yes” to any of the above, the shed is likely real property for taxation purposes unless:

- There is compelling evidence (more than verbal assertion) that the owner is merely storing the shed there temporarily.
- The property owner is a business, in which case it may be a trade fixture and, therefore, personal property. (Even when the owner is a business, there is a good likelihood that the shed may be real property, based on the intent and utilization.)
- If the listers have agreed not to value list sheds of a certain size and this one fits those parameters. This does not mean they are non- taxable, it simply means your town has determined they do not add value. You should note the structures’ existence on the lister card and indicate that no value was assigned.

Solar

Vermont imposes a Solar Energy Capacity Tax on operating solar plants with a plant capacity of 50 kW or more. The tax is imposed at a rate of \$4.00 per kW of plant capacity. Plant capacity is typically determined by the rated nameplate capacity stated on the plant’s Certificate of Public Good (CPG) and provided to the municipality [via Form PV-604, Vermont Photovoltaic \(PV\) System Inventory Form](#). Value is determined using the info provided [via the PVValue app](#). Please [see our instructional fact sheet Taxation of Solar Plants](#). We recommend you connect with your District Advisor before adding to your Grand List.

A solar plant subject to the Solar Energy Capacity Tax is exempt from the education property tax. [32 V.S.A. § 5401\(10\)\(J\)\(ii\)](#).

Municipal property tax is imposed on a solar plant unless one of the following applies:

- The solar plant has a plant capacity less than 50kW and is either: (a) operated on a net-metered system or (b) not connected to the electric grid and only provides power on the property on which it is located. [See 32 V.S.A. § 3802\(17\)](#); or
- The municipality has voted to exempt the plant [pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 3845](#); or
- The municipality has entered into a contract to stabilize the property's taxes [pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 2741](#).

Energy Storage Facilities subject to the Solar Energy Capacity Tax are exempt from the education property tax. [32 V.S.A. § 5401\(10\)\(J\)\(ii\)](#). An energy storage facility is defined as “a stationary device or system that captures energy produced at one time, stores that energy for a period of time, and delivers or may deliver that energy as electricity to the grid for use at a future time. [See 32 V.S.A. § 8701](#). Municipal property tax is imposed on an energy storage facility unless it has a plant energy rating of less than 600 kWh. [32 V.S.A. § 3802\(19\)](#).

When a solar plant or energy storage facility is subject to Uniform Capacity Tax (UCT), the underlying land must be valued as if the plant is not present. The municipality should instead value the land using their existing land schedule without consideration of the highest and best use as a solar facility.

A solar plant is subject to the Uniform Capacity Tax if it generates electricity from solar power and has a plant capacity of 50 kW or more. Any energy storage facility connected to the plant is considered part of the generating plant and also subject to UCT.

An energy storage facility is subject to Uniform Capacity Tax if it is connected to the grid (but not connected to a plant) and has a plant energy rating of 600 kWh or more.

Enrolled farms with a solar project [should review TB-69, Solar Generating Facilities Constructed on Land Enrolled in the Current Use Program](#).

Solar Definitions

Alternating Current (AC) — A type of [electrical current](#), the direction of which is reversed at regular intervals or cycles. Electricity transmission networks use AC because [voltage](#) can be controlled with relative ease.

Azimuth – The orientation of the total array in relationship to the sun. Ideal orientation is 180°

Direct Current (DC) — A type of electricity transmission and distribution by which electricity flows in one direction through the [conductor](#), usually relatively low voltage and high current. DC must be converted to [alternating current](#), its opposite.

Electrical Grid — Sometimes simply called “the grid,” this term refers to the system that delivers

electricity from suppliers to consumers. Electrical grids are made up of generating stations, transmission lines, and distribution lines. Generating stations produce the electrical power, which is carried over high-voltage transmission lines to demand centers. Distribution lines then move the electricity from the demand centers to individual customers.

Escalation Rate — Is the anticipated change in electricity cost.

CPG — Certificate of Public Good given from the Public Utility Commission (formerly Public Service Board)

Derate Factor - PVWatts Definition: The derate factor compensates for the loss electrical production due to a multitude of factors which can range from tree shading to loss of power when converting DC power to AC power. The assessor is concerned with the loss of electricity when converting from DC power to AC power.

Discount Rate — In commercial real estate the discount rate is used in a discounted cash flow analysis to compute a net present value. Typically, the investors require rate of return is used as a discount rate, or in the case of an institutional investor, the weighted average cost of capital.

Group Net Metered — Group net metering means that more than one account with the utility can share the benefit of a single solar array. The specifics of how group net metering work depend on the laws and regulations of the state.

Inverters — A [solar inverter](#) converts direct current (DC) power to alternating current (AC) electricity, either for individual solar panels or for grid-connected solar power systems. DC power produced by a solar array must be converted to AC electricity, so it can be used in household appliances — without an inverter, the energy from your solar panels cannot easily be put to use.

Kilowatt/Kilowatt Hours — kW— Kilowatts or 1000 Watts. A kilowatt (kW) is a measure of power — the demand at any given time. A kilowatt-hour (kWh), on the other hand, is a measure of energy — the consumption of power over a period of time. A kWh is the power demand (kW) multiplied by the total amount of time the power is being used (in hours). So, if a 30-watt bulb is running for 24 hours, 720 watt-hours or 0.72 kWh is consumed (30 watts times 24 hours).

The average household consumes about [30 kWh per day](#). If your solar panels receive five hours of peak sunlight per day, you need 6 kW of output (30 kWh divided by 5 hours — that's your demand) to cover 100% of your energy use. A typical solar panel can produce between 250 and 270 watts of peak power during ideal conditions, which means you'll need about 24 solar panels to make a 6-kW array.

Megawatt/Megawatt Hours — One megawatt (MW) is equal to one thousand kilowatts (kW). One megawatt hour (MWh) is equivalent to 1,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) continuously consumed in an hour.

Net Metering — a utility billing mechanism available that offers a credit to residential and business customers who are making excess electricity with their solar panel system and sending it back to the grid. With net metering, the homeowner is only billed for the “net” energy used each month, that is, the difference between the energy produced by the solar power system and the energy consumed by the house over the monthly billing period.

Operations and maintenance (O&M) — The ongoing operational needs of a solar system, including cleaning, repairs, replacement of parts, bill management and so on; primarily refers to larger-scale commercial and utility-scale solar systems.

Photovoltaic (PV) — The term photovoltaic (PV) comes from two root words: “photo” (light) and “voltaic” (voltage). In physics, “photovoltaic” refers to anything that produces electricity when exposed to light or other radiant energy. Solar cells, solar modules, and solar panels are often referred to as P V cells, PV modules, and PV panels to express how their electricity is produced.

PPA — Power Purchase Agreement

PUC (formerly PSB Public Service Board) — The Public Utility Commission is an independent, three-member, quasi-judicial commission that regulates the siting of electric and natural gas infrastructure and supervises the rates, quality of service, and overall financial management of Vermont’s public utilities: electric, gas, energy efficiency, telecommunications, cable television (terms of service only, not rates), water and large wastewater companies.

Solar Array — A solar array is a collection of solar panels wired together to create the desired energy output. The typical residential solar array consists of 20–25 solar panels to cover 100% of its energy consumption.

Solar Lease — Solar leases are contracts that allow the property owner to use solar panels on their homes without owning them. Instead, the property owner pays a monthly fee to a third-party company that owns the panels.

Solar Plant — For purposes of the Uniform Capacity Tax (UCT), a group of solar-generating facilities is considered one “plant” if the group is part of the same project and uses common equipment and infrastructure such as roads, control facilities, and connections to the electric grid. Each plant should have one CPG for the entire plant.

Solar Renewable Energy Credit (SREC) — An SREC is another way to monetize energy reduced by solar and other renewable energy sources. A solar producer earns one SREC for everyone thousand Kilowatts produced. The SRECs are sold on the open market.

Speed — In 2005, the Vermont General Assembly established the SPEED Program to encourage the development of renewable energy resources in Vermont as well as the purchase of renewable power by the state’s electric distribution utilities.

Tilt — the angle at which solar panels are mounted to optimize the energy yield.

Utility Rate — The utility rate is the rate provided to the producer by the utility. It can vary now based on location and siting of the plant.

State Hearing Officers

Q: Can property owners submit new evidence at state-level hearings?

A: Yes, they don’t have to use any of the evidence submitted during lister level grievance if they don’t want to. Each level of appeal is considered to be “de-novo” (new). This applies to evidence submitted by both the property owner and the town

Subdivided Land

Q: We are doing a reappraisal. How should we value parcels that have permitted subdivisions or contiguous parcels that are legally subdivided?

A: A reappraisal is an appropriate time to set up standards for placing value on all properties, especially the type mentioned; all new values should be at—but not above— market value.

This is true for undeveloped yet permitted lots in developments or adjoining lots owned in common. Here are some guidelines to follow during a reappraisal:

- Stick with the land schedule developed and used for all properties in town. We generally use one non- waterfront residential land schedule and adjust for location (neighborhood multiplier) and then each parcel is further adjusted for the specific characteristics (grade) as a site and residual (bulk) land. When applied correctly, this system is flexible (technically elastic in economic terms) enough to address nearly all variations in parcels of land (whether improved or not) in a town from the same land schedule.
- Each town must determine at what point Highest and Best Use is realized in their market and apply site values in accordance with that research and determination.
- If you have land such as waterfront that has a different market, a separate land schedule may be required.

Sugarhouses

Farms, farmland and buildings, including silos and sugarhouses, are taxable as real property. These farm buildings may be a) fully or partially exempted by vote under [32 V.S.A. § 3607a](#), or b) if they are qualified farm buildings under the Current Use program. [32 V.S.A. § 3752](#).

Towns may also vote to exempt or to reduce appraisals made under this section, which shall remain in effect for future tax years until amended or repealed by a similar vote of the municipality.

Sugarhouses located within the municipality which are owned or leased by a farmer as defined in subdivision [32 V.S.A. § 3752\(7\)](#) of this title and used by the farmer as part of a farming operation. Further, if your municipality taxes busioness personal property and machinery/equipment, sugaring equipment, not used for profit is exempt.

For more information about exempt farm equipment and tools, please [reference Rule 82-1](#).

Q: Are sugarhouses tax exempt?

A: There is no statute exempting sugarhouses. However, they can be enrolled and exempted in the Current Use Program as a qualifying farm building for qualified farmers.

Taxing the Wrong Person

Q: Our town has erroneously been collecting taxes on a parcel that transferred to a different owner over a year ago. The transfer was confusing and the parcel didn't get processed correctly. What should we do?

A: First, it should be noted that it is the taxpayer's responsibility to keep track of their holdings and assessments annually; there is a shared responsibility on the part of the listers and taxpayers to review an assessment. Assuming the grand list books have been closed out each year with a Certificate of No Appeals or Suits Pending form (Form 4155), there is no recourse for the taxpayer to go back in time to recoup payments.

Similarly, the time for Errors and Omissions would have passed on December 31. The only possible recourse for the taxpayer is to request a Board of Abatement hearing. They could argue that a mistake was made and ask for compensation for taxes paid in error. Many Boards of Abatement are reluctant to go back further than one year, as anything more than that could create a potential opening for any number of claims.

Town-Owned Property

Q: If a town purchases property after April 1, how do they handle taxes?

A: The property is taxable as of April 1 and needs to stay listed as such for that grand list year. The town should base their tax rate on not owning the property. The town can abate the taxes on the property if they choose, or like other taxpayers, they can handle the tax liability at closing.

Trailer Coaches/Campgrounds

Trailer Coaches (as defined and reference by statute) are now commonly known as campers or travel trailers. A trailer coach is "any trailer or semi-trailer designed to be towed by a motor vehicle and designed, equipped, or used for sleeping, eating or living quarters." [23 V.S.A. § 4\(41\)](#).

Trailer coaches are listed as real property and taxable if:

1. they are affixed to the land (water and sewer hook-up; electricity, etc.), or
2. they are situated in the town on the same trailer or campsite for more than 180 days during the 365 days prior to April 1. [32 V.S.A. § 3692](#).

Trailer coaches are taxable as personal property on the municipal grand list if:

1. they are considered inventory and inventory is taxed in your town. This would include inventory of a dealer and any trailer coach owned by an individual that is for sale, as distinguished from the one simply stored on the property upon which the owner resides in another dwelling. This property is exempt from the education grand list, whether for sale or being stored. [32 V.S.A. § 5401\(10\)\(D\)](#).
2. they are not affixed to the land and are used for income-producing purposes. This would include trailer coaches used for storage of materials or used at construction sites. These would be listed in the municipal grand list as machinery and equipment if your town taxes such property. This

property is exempt from the education grand list. [32 V.S.A. § 5401\(10\)\(D\)](#).

Valuation of Trailer Coaches

- For establishing value, we recommend utilizing either the NADA or Kelley Blue Books.
- Typically, these units should be categorized as either mobile home (MH) or mobile home unlanded (MHU) in the grand list. However, some towns have a significant inventory of campers which may be enough to use the Other (O) category; consult your District Advisor.
- As these units are designed to be mobile, we recommend an annual inspection of campgrounds to verify records correspond with what is in place as of April 1.

Treehouses

Q: Are treehouses taxable?

A: It depends. Would the average buyer pay more for that property because of the tree house? How big is it? Is it of substantial quality—enough to be of value? What can it be used for? Look at all of the factors about this particular structure and make a determination. Treehouses vary greatly in substance, so consider the previous questions when making a determination.

It might help to do some research online to get an idea of how much companies are charging to build similar treehouses. If a structure is homemade using low-cost materials and is open and small, it likely has no market value. If, however, it is a finished, fully functioning structure that can be rented for income, you will want to place a value on it.

Two Towns

Q: Who determines the allocation of a property/building is in more than one town?

A: Discuss this with the listers in the other town(s) to determine percentages.

Unlanded Building

Q: Person A built a camp (or house) on Person B's land. Person B just told us he is giving the camp to Person C. Does this transaction need a property transfer return filed?

A: Yes, a Property Transfer Tax Return needs to be filed, along with a bill of sale or a deed to evidence the transfer of the structure (whether it be a camp, dwelling or mobile home, etc.). If it is affixed to the underlying land (attached to utilities, not likely to be moved) it becomes part of the land and is considered real property, even though the land is not owned by the same party.

Use Value Change

Q: Is a change to the use value a grievable item?

A: If you change nothing on your use value records and the new year is the Common Level of Appraisal and the Advisory Board set current use per acre values, you are not obligated to send a

Change of Allocation Notice. Some listers send notices to all property owners in the Current Use Program for the use value change because it shows an updated taxability to prevent property owners from claiming they were not notified. Property owners receive notification from Current Use reflecting the annual per acre values. Allocation changes on the municipal level are made and noticed from VTPIE.

Allocation can be grieved, and the property owner needs to receive a notice when listers change allocation amounts. Ultimately, any taxpayer can grieve, but the listers do not have the authority to change use value.

Utilities

Q: Why do we update electric utilities every year?

A: Utilities tend to have changes every year—extending lines, improvements, etc. Bring their values up to fair market value and apply the Common Level of Appraisal each year. Inventory documents are made available by the state to municipalities in VTPIE annually in May. Contact your District Advisor for help.

Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA)

Q: I recently got a letter in the mail from the Vermont Housing Finance Agency. It states that a house it now owns is exempt from real estate taxes for the upcoming tax year. Is this a valid statement?

A: Yes. See the relevant statute, [Title 10: Conservation and Development, Chapter 25: Vermont Housing Finance Agency \(10 V.S.A. § 641\)](#).

Yurts

Q: How should we value yurts?

A: There are a number of ways to approach valuing yurts. Here are some recommendations:

- Look online at different yurt websites (there are a lot in the western part of the U.S. [One example is Pacific Yurts](#)).
- Look in the Marshall & Swift Commercial Handbook for guidance.
- Some yurts come in close to camp prices, and one recommendation is to use cabin rates for interior finish.
- Factors having a large impact on value: Cover material, roofing, finish-extent and quality, platform.
- Consider construction costs when considering kit pricing.
- These structures will likely depreciate faster than a home.
- Yurt sales are uncommon but try asking for comparable sales information on the listserv.

Online Resources

Vermont Department of Taxes

[Vermont Department of Taxes](#)

[eCUSE](#)

[myVTax](#)

Vermont Secretary of State

[About Abatement](#)

[A Handbook on Property Tax Appeals](#)

[Vermont Secretary of State's Services page](#)

Other Vermont Government

[Vermont Agency of Natural Resources](#)

[Vermont Center for Geographic Information \(VCGI\) – Parcel Mapping](#)

[Vermont General Assembly – Vermont Legislature](#)

[Vermont Property Tax Management System \(VTPIE\)](#) (login required to view)

[Vermont Public Utility Commission's online document management system \(ePUC\)](#)

[Vermont State Archives and Records Administration \(VSARA\)](#)

Nonprofit Organizations

[International Association of Assessing Officers \(IAAO\)](#)

[Vermont Assessor and Lister Association \(VALA\)](#)

[Vermont League of Cities and Towns \(VLCT\)](#)