

*All of the following abatements and exemptions require an application, which must be filed timely with the Board of Assessors in the city or town in which the applicant resides.*

*Abatement for over valuation*

If the value seems to be more than one would expect to receive for a sale of property between a willing buyer and a willing seller, neither under any compulsion to buy or sell, the parcel is exposed to the market for a reasonable time period, and both are cognizant of the market.

Residential parcels, with less than four units, market sales of similar type and style and age, in similar location are the best way to determine value.

Residential parcels that have four or more units and all commercial and industrial properties are valued using the income approach.

This means that no one would pay more than what a property would support and return a reasonable profit to the investor.

This is based on the principle that an investor will pay an amount for a property based on the income (rents), less expenses and providing for replacement of the wasting asset. (Depreciation) And provide a reasonable return on his investment.

In either case the taxpayer must provide data that will show that the value is more than a prudent person would pay for the parcel.

*Exemptions for eligible persons.*

There are several exemptions available for real estate owners if they meet the requirements of the provisions of Chapter 59, MGL. All require an annual filing.

There are two elderly exemptions. Applicant must be 70 years of age by July 1 of the fiscal year applied

for. There is a residency requirement.

The first is \$500, (Clause 41's) and there are income and whole estate limits that must be met. The second is \$175, (Clause 17's) and needs to meet the whole estate limit.

There are several *Veteran's exemptions*, (Clause 22's) based on a service connected disability or award for certain listed conflicts. There are no age, income or whole estate requirements; Certification of Veteran's eligibility only. Amounts vary for % of disability.

*Blind exemption*, \$500, (Clause 37) Requires an annual certificate, from the Blind Guild, of eligibility. No age requirement.

*Widow/widower exemption* \$175, (Clause 17's) Must meet whole estate limit. As in elderly exemption, qualification date is July 1. No age requirement.

***Dependent Child of deceased Police officer or Firefighter, (Clause 17's)***  
Qualifications are the same as widow / widower requirements.

***Infirm, elderly, and financial hardship,(Clause 18).*** An amount to be determined by the assessors based on facts presented by applicant. Applicant should be 65 years of age.

The above exemptions may be increased, by vote of the appropriating body, up to 100%. Determination is voted annually.

In addition, there is a ***Deferral of tax option, (Clause 41A).*** Applicant must be 65 years of age, meet earnings limit and provide affidavit. Deferral allows up to 50% of assessed value to be deferred over time. Amount paid upon sale or demise of applicant(s).

***Circuit breaker***

There is also a Commonwealth of Massachusetts exemption available

to anyone 65 years of age, whose real estate tax and 50% of water and sewer fees exceed 10% of total income. This is a part of income tax filing even if one has no taxable income. Law requires a filing and completion of appropriate form.

There is a ***Senior Work Off*** program in some cities and towns. \$500 maximum Applicant must be 60 years of age. Applicant must meet income & asset requirements, determined by each community.

There is, in some communities, a ***Municipal Employment option.*** An amount determined by the city or town based on age, income, and assets determined by the community.

For answers regarding the market value of your property and / or the exemptions and amounts available or options available to you, stop in or call the assessors' office staff in your community.



## **How may a taxpayer reduce real estate or personal property tax?**

There are several ways that could reduce tax. There is an over value abatement, an exemption for a qualified person, the senior work off or municipal employment programs, and the circuit breaker from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.