

throughout the province within each **non-residential** property class. Taxes raised from these properties have historically contributed about 18% of public education costs.

Rural area property tax rates are set by the provincial government and are the same throughout the province. The revenue from these taxes helps pay for rural area public services such as police protection and local road maintenance.

Local service taxes shown on your tax notice raise revenues based on the budget needs set by local government bodies, such as regional districts and regional hospital districts. Also, there may be levies to pay for services, such as street lighting, fire protection, operating recreational facilities, and water and sewer systems. Your tax notice may also include local service levies calculated on a per-parcel basis or on the frontage of your property, rather than on its assessed value.

If you occupy **Crown land** in rural British Columbia, you are responsible for paying property taxes levied during your term of occupation. Property taxes are in addition to the rental fee charged by Land and Water British Columbia Inc. for use of the property. You must pay property taxes as a condition of your Crown lease, licence, permit, right-of-way or easement.

Tax Adjustments

Your property taxes may be adjusted due to a supplementary assessment adjustment, after the main assessment roll has been set. If an adjustment is made, you will receive a notice of the revised taxes.

✓ If you are expecting a **decrease** in your assessment and taxes, the amount on the original tax notice remains due and payable by July 2. If you do not pay by that date, you will have to pay a penalty on the unpaid amount. If you haven't claimed your home owner grant this amount will be included when the penalty is calculated. Your account will be adjusted when BC Assessment provides revised information.

If your taxes are reduced through a supplementary assessment adjustment **after** you have paid them, a refund will be sent to you.

✓ If you expect an **increase** in your assessment and taxes, you must still pay the original taxes by the due date to avoid a penalty on any outstanding amount.

If your taxes are increased **after** you have paid the original taxes, you have 30 days to pay the increased amount. After 30 days you are liable for a penalty on the additional unpaid amount.

If you overpay your account, a credit will be applied to your tax account unless you request a refund in writing. Credit balances accrue interest.

Changing Your Address

We need your correct address in order to mail a tax notice to you. If you move, or if the address to which your tax notice is sent has changed, inform the nearest BC Assessment office, your local Government Agents office, Land Title Office or the Surveyor of Taxes office in Victoria. Unless notified, we rely on the address and ownership records of the Land Title Office or Manufactured Home Registry, provided by BC Assessment.

It is your responsibility to enquire if you do not receive your tax notice by the middle of June. Failure to receive a tax notice will not prevent a penalty being applied after July 2.

New Homeowners

When you purchase a property, you become liable for all outstanding taxes. You cannot claim the home owner grant on the property in the year you purchase it, if the current year taxes were previously paid in full, or if you already claimed a grant on another property.

For more information on rural property taxes, tax deferment or the home owner grant:

Write: The Surveyor of Taxes
Ministry of Provincial Revenue
PO Box 9446 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9V6

In Person: The Surveyor of Taxes
1802 Douglas Street, Victoria.



Telephone: 250 387-0555 in Victoria
or toll-free through Enquiry BC:
1 800 663-7867 from within B.C. or
604 660-2421 from Vancouver,
and request a transfer to 250 387-0555.

Website: www.rev.gov.bc.ca/rpt

E-mail: ruraltax@gems3.gov.bc.ca

For information on the taxation of manufactured homes, occupied rural Crown land, and rural farm land, please refer to our website.

Government Agents offices:

Check the blue pages of your local telephone directory for the phone number.
Government Agents website:
www.governmentagents.gov.bc.ca

On province-wide property assessment:

Contact the BC Assessment office located nearest your property.

The offices are listed in the white pages of your telephone book.

BC Assessment website:
www.bcasessment.bc.ca

Your 2004 Rural Property Taxes



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

Ministry of Provincial Revenue

Visit Our Website at:
www.rev.gov.bc.ca/rpt

This pamphlet is for general guidance only.

Rural property is land outside cities, towns, districts, villages and other municipal areas.

Your Rural Property Tax Notice

You should receive your annual property tax notice in the mail by the middle of June. If you do not receive it by then, contact your local Government Agents office or the Surveyor of Taxes office in Victoria.

Home Owner Grant

The home owner grant application is on the back of the tax notice. To determine if you are eligible, refer to the brochure *Your 2004 Home Owner Grant*, included with every rural property tax notice.

Important reminders when claiming your home owner grant. You must:

- ✓ apply for the grant each year, as the grant is not automatic;
- ✓ complete and return the application form to the Surveyor of Taxes office, your local Government Agents office or your financial institution with your tax payment (see below for details); and
- ✓ claim your grant and make your tax payment by the July 2 due date to avoid a 5% penalty on any outstanding balance.

You can claim the home owner grant without paying taxes by applying for the grant before the due date; however, financial institutions cannot accept a home owner grant application unless it is accompanied by a property tax payment.

Paying Your Property Taxes

Rural property taxes must be paid by July 2. Payment may be made by mail, in person or at most financial institutions. If your payment is late, a 5% penalty will be added. A further 5% penalty will be added to any unpaid balance, including any unclaimed home owner grant amount, after October 31 of the current tax year.

Note: Payments made from outside Canada must be in Canadian funds drawn on a Canadian correspondent bank.

You can pay your rural property taxes:

- ✓ **By mail:** Send your payment to the Surveyor of Taxes, PO Box 9446 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, BC V8W 9V6. Mailed payments must be postmarked **not later than July 2** to avoid the late penalty. **Be sure to mail your cheque early, as some post offices do not always postmark mail on the deposit date.**
- ✓ **In person:** You can pay at most Canadian financial institutions and apply for the home owner grant at the same time. You can also pay at your local Government Agents office or through the drop box at 1802 Douglas Street in Victoria. Cash payments cannot be accepted at 1802 Douglas Street.
- ✓ **PC/Telephone Banking:** Contact your financial institution for details. Rural Property Taxation will be listed as a “payee” under one of the following: “Prov BC - Rural Property Tax” OR “BC - Rural Tax”. The complete 15 or 16 digit account number, as it appears on your rural property tax notice must be entered **without spaces or decimals**.

If eligible, complete and mail your home owner grant application to the Surveyor of Taxes or Government Agents office, before the due date.
- ✓ **As a group:** If you share ownership of a property, it is up to all owners to agree on what share of taxes each will pay. Make sure all taxes are fully paid from the shares determined, as **all** owners are jointly and individually liable for any unpaid taxes. Each owner receives a notice; therefore, you can make one owner responsible for payment.
- ✓ **Financial institutions:** Your financial institution can *pay your taxes on your behalf* if you have made such an arrangement through your mortgage agreement. If there is an error in the payment made by the financial institution you are still responsible and the resulting penalty will not be waived. You must still submit your home owner grant application directly through a Government Agents office or the Surveyor of Taxes office in Victoria.

- ✓ **If you will be away in May, June and July:** Mail a post-dated cheque before July 2. You may give power of attorney to another person to claim the grant for you. A power of attorney document must accompany your grant application. You may also download an application from the website and complete and submit it with your payment.

- ✓ **Prepayment:** You may make one prepayment per month of \$50 or more, each month from January 1 through to May 15. If you prepay your taxes (in full or in part) between January 1 and May 15, your account will be credited with interest from the prepayment date through to June 30.

You can only prepay your taxes if you have no unpaid taxes from previous years. If you prepay your taxes and qualify for a home owner grant, you must apply for your grant when you receive your tax notice. Contact your Government Agents office or the Surveyor of Taxes office for more details on how to prepay.

Tax Deferment

You may qualify to defer the taxes on your home if you are 60 years or older, or are a surviving spouse, or are a person with disabilities as defined by Regulation. For further information, refer to the contact information on the back of this brochure.

Farm Extension

The tax due date for rural farms may be extended to October 31, if your application is approved. First time applicants must apply by July 2. Contact your Government Agents office or the Surveyor of Taxes office for more information. Farmers who received the time extension for a property in the previous year and remain eligible are not required to reapply for the time extension in the current year. A 10% penalty applies to taxes unpaid after October 31.

How Your Property is Assessed

Property taxes are levied on the market value of real property (land and buildings). BC Assessment determines the market value of all properties in B.C. as of July 1 each year. The assessor also determines the classification of your property for tax purposes. An assessment notice is issued annually in January reflecting the value of the property on July 1 of the previous year.

Note: While your assessment can be appealed your property taxes cannot be appealed.

How Your Property is Taxed

Each year, the provincial government, school districts, regional districts, hospital districts and other public agencies need revenue for the services they provide to British Columbians.

Each public agency with taxing authority sets a budget for the amount of tax revenue it requires. Tax rates vary among property classifications, but most are calculated by dividing the budget needs of the agency by its assessment base.

The appropriate tax rate is then applied to individual property assessments, and the taxes owing are calculated. Tax exemptions for some categories of property — farms, for example — are calculated as part of the assessment before the tax rate is applied.

To adjust for the current level of inflation, the amount of school tax on the average residence has been increased by 2.1% for 2004. However, with rising assessed values, most residential school tax rates have been reduced.

School tax rates for residential properties are set by the provincial government. Residential school taxes have historically contributed about 12% of public education costs.

School tax rates for non-residential properties are also set by the provincial government. The rates vary by property classification, but are uniform