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# PERSONAL PROPERTY TAXES: INFORMATION FOR STERLING BUSINESSES

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## WHAT IS PERSONAL PROPERTY?

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Personal property is assets that are not real estate and that are used in a business or to earn income. It includes furniture, equipment, machinery, fixtures (items that are not permanently attached to the real estate, such as display cases, reception desks, shelving, water coolers), tools, storage tanks, signs, vending machines, computer equipment, leasehold improvements, copy and fax machines and conveyor belts. It does not include household furnishings, clothing, companion animals and jewelry.

It also includes unregistered motor vehicles regardless of their condition or intended use; unregistered snowmobiles, personal watercraft (i.e., Jet Skis), golf carts and ATVs; motor vehicles registered in other states but located in Connecticut for the three or more months prior to October 1; and unregistered property used in construction, building, grading, paving or similar projects, including, but not limited to bulldozers, tractors and any trailer-type vehicle.

## WHY MUST BUSINESSES AND OWNERS OF UNREGISTERED MOTOR VEHICLES FILE PERSONAL PROPERTY DECLARATIONS ANNUALLY BETWEEN OCTOBER 1 AND NOVEMBER 1?

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Connecticut General Statutes require the filing of personal property declarations annually under C.G.S. §12-41, 12-43 and 12-71. If you fail to file a declaration, omit property or file incomplete information, the assessor will complete one for you based on the best available information, and your assessment will include a 25% penalty. The penalty cannot be removed by the Board of Assessment Appeals.

## WHAT INFORMATION IS REPORTED ON THE DECLARATION?

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A description of the item, including serial numbers, year manufactured and any other characteristic used to identify the item; the acquisition cost, including transportation and installation costs, and date of acquisition. If the acquisition cost is nominal or the item is a gift, estimate the market value of the property at the time of purchase.

Many of the items listed on a declaration are 5 and 7 year property for purposes of federal tax depreciation. Unlike federal taxes, however, the items will continue to be listed on the declaration at a 20% or 30% residual value until they are disposed of.

Asset lists containing the required information are a good way to track, property purchases and disposals.

## WHAT IF I FAIL TO FILE OR FILE LATE?

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If you fail to file a declaration, file late, omit property or file incomplete information, the assessor will complete a declaration for you based on the best available information, and your assessment will include a 25% penalty. The penalty cannot be removed by the Board of Assessment Appeals.

## WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW?

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If you need to file after November 1, you can request an extension of up to 45 days (December 15) for good cause. You must request the extension prior to November 1.

Under CGS §12-53, the assessor or his or her designee can audit the declarations for the current and two prior years. The property owner may have to produce invoices, depreciation schedules and other files to support his or her property values. Any items found omitted or erroneously reported will be valued and added to the declaration with a 25% penalty.

Keep track of asset disposals through invoices, junk receipts, auction house receipts.

Unlike registered motor vehicles, personal property taxes are not prorated. If you own an item on October 1 you will be taxed on it for the entire Grand List year, October 1 – September 30.

If you are uncertain as to what items should be included the assessor can visit your business location and identify items of personal property.

If you sell, close or move your business, notify the assessor. If you receive a declaration in the mail after the sale, closing or move, fill out the box on the 1<sup>st</sup> page of the declaration.

If you lease equipment, report it on the declaration so we can send the lessor a declaration. Otherwise, you will be responsible for paying the personal property tax.

SIGNED DECLARATIONS ARE DUE NOVEMBER 1. One will be mailed to you at the address on file. Failure to receive a declaration does not relieve you of the responsibility to file.

**CALL WITH ANY QUESTIONS. THE ASSESSOR IS HERE TO HELP  
YOU COMPLY WITH THE LAW.**

Tax Assessor  
860-564-3030  
860-564-1660 (fax)  
[assessor@sterlingct.us](mailto:assessor@sterlingct.us)

Monday, Tuesday, 8 AM – 4:30 PM  
Wednesday, 8 AM – 6 PM  
Thursday, 8 AM – 4 PM  
Friday, CLOSED

