

Assessing Department - Real Estate
FAQs Frequently Asked Questions

At what ratio is property assessed? 100% of full and fair cash value.

What does 100% of full and fair cash value mean?

The courts have defined this phrase to mean "current market value", the price arrived at by a willing buyer and a willing seller, each with a good knowledge of the market and each acting without undue pressure or compulsion. Thus, in determining value, assessors seek to approximate what property would sell for on the open market, within an acceptable range of error.

How do I check ownership of property & property valuation?

Go to the Cambridge Property Database or, if you need certified owner information you can either (a) go to the Assessor's Office for this information or (b) mail in a request for information, with an inquiry fee of \$3.00 per parcel. Owners requesting one copy of their personal real estate property card are not charged a fee. All properties are listed by street name and number.

Do you have book and page reference?

Yes, the Assessor's Office lists a book and page reference on the current year's assessments and for most of the properties sold from the late 1980's on. Those not listed must be obtained at the Registry of Deeds. You will also need the year of the sale, and the name of either the buyer or the seller.

Can I find out when a property sold?

Yes, you can find this information listed by location for sales which occurred from the early 1980's through most of the prior year. The Assessor's Office usually does not have current sales data.

Do you have sales reports?

Yes, the Assessor's Office has sales reports, which are created upon receipt of the transfers from the Registry of Deeds.

Can I view assessors maps?

Yes, you can view the maps in the Assessor's Office.

Where can I obtain a copy of assessing maps?

You can buy individual maps at the Engineer's Office at 147 Hampshire Street (Public Works Department), for a nominal fee.

What is the charge for purchasing copies of commitment books?

A complete set of Commitment Books can be purchased at the Assessor's Office for \$125.00. You can also order copies of the Commitment Books for 20 cents a page. The copies can be picked up at 11:00am and 3:00pm or they can be mailed to you with an additional fee for postage.

How do I change my mailing address for tax billing?

You must fill out a "mail address change" card. You can either do this in person at the Assessor's Office or use the on line form, which can be fax or mailed.

When do I file for overvaluation abatement?

You must file on or before the payment due date of the first-half installment tax bill for that fiscal year. However, you should ask yourself three questions before filing for an abatement.

1. Is the data on my property correct?
2. Is my value in line with others on my street?
3. Is my value in line with recent sale prices in my neighborhood?

Where do I file an abatement application?

You can file an application in the Assessors Office on the 2nd floor of City Hall.

If my application is denied by the city do I have any recourse?

You can file for an appeal within 3 months of the date of denial to:

**Appellate Tax Board
100 Cambridge Street - Suite 200
Boston, MA 02114
617-727-3100**

Call the ATB for an application. The application is not difficult, and the ATB is more than fair to homeowners. However, your hearing may not occur for a year or so.

You are appealing your assessment, not your taxes. Therefore, you must pay your taxes pending your appeal.

What happens if my abatement is approved?

You will receive a notice indicating the amount of the abatement.

How much was your assessment reduced?

Divide the abatement by the tax rate, Your abatement will normally be credited toward the second-half tax bill. If your abatement is granted after this second-half tax bill you will be issued a refund check.