

Question: Why must I file a personal property declaration?

Answer: Connecticut Statute 12-71 requires that all personal property be reported each year to the Assessor's Office. If you receive a declaration, it is because our office has determined that you may have property to report. If you no longer have personal property to declare, you must fill out the information in the box on the first page of the declaration. **YOUR BUSINESS WILL NOT BE REMOVED UNLESS YOU ATTACH THE APPROPRIATE PROOF.** Failure to receive a personal property declaration does not relieve you of your obligation to file.

Question: How can I obtain this form?

Answer: In September of each year, a personal property declaration is mailed to each business owner. If you do not receive this form, contact the Assessor's Office at (203) 937-3515 or 3520.

Question: What if I receive more than one personal property declaration?

Answer: All declarations must be returned to the Assessor. If you have more than one location, the assets of each should be listed separately on each return.

Question: What if I have old equipment that has been fully depreciated and written off the books?

Answer: Whether fully depreciated in your accounting records or not, all property still in use or in your possession must be reported.

Question: Do I have to report assets that I lease, loan, rent, borrow or are provided in the rent?

Answer: Yes. There is a section on the declaration entitled "Lessee's Listing Report" that is specifically for those assets. Even though assets are assessed

to the owner, they must be listed on this form for informational purposes. Be sure to include the full name and address of the lessor.

Question: Is there a filing deadline?

Answer: Yes. The deadline for filing a timely declaration is November 1st. **FOR 2014, the deadline is Monday November 3.** There is a 25% assessment penalty for failure to file a personal property declaration by that date.

Question: What if I buy or sell an existing business during the year – who is responsible for the taxes?

Answer: Personal property is assessed to the owner of record as of October 1st of each year. In other words, if you sell your business on January 15th you would be responsible for the tax bill that comes out in July of that year. It is our suggestion that this issue be resolved between buyer and seller prior to the purchase or sale of a business. We also suggest that you check with the Tax Collector if you plan to purchase an existing business to make sure that the taxes are current. There is a limited provision in the Connecticut Statutes for proration of personal property in a fire event only.

Question: What if my business closes during the year, after October 1st?

Answer: There is no proration for personal property if owned on October 1st, exception being a fire event. Therefore you will be responsible to pay for the full year's tax bill if your business closes after October 1st of the assessment year. This is also applicable if you sold (see question above) or moved out of West Haven. **Notify the Assessor's office immediately.**

Question: What if I don't file my declaration?

Answer: When a declaration is not filed by November 1st (Nov 3rd for 2014 filing), this office is required to place an assessment on the property. This assessment represents an estimate based on

the value of businesses with similar equipment and assets. Being assessed does not alleviate your responsibility to file an accurate declaration. You will also be penalized 25% for failure to file. To appeal the assessment, you must file an appeal to the Board of Assessment Appeals. The form must be received on or before February 20th.

TIPS

- File the original declaration with pre-printed label.
- The Declaration must be filled out in its entirety, signed, dated and returned on or before November 1st (**November 3rd for 2014 filing**). Late or incomplete forms will receive an added penalty.
- Provide a phone number for any questions that may arise.
- DO NOT USE vague terms such as "various" or "same as last year" this is considered incomplete.
- If you have an asset listing or depreciation schedule that identifies each piece of equipment, attach it to your completed declaration.
- Please indicate the original cost of each item plus transportation cost and installation, if applicable, on your declaration. They are important considerations in determining an accurate assessment.
- Work with your accountant to identify any equipment that may have been physically removed. List those items in the appropriate space on your declaration.
- **UNREGISTERED MOTOR VEHICLES MUST BE DECLARED EVEN IF THEY ARE NON-OPERABLE.**

Personal Property-Important Filing Information, Questions and Answers

Answers

Question: What is Personal Property?

Answer: Personal property is everything other than real estate that has value by itself. It would include possessions such as furniture, fixtures, computer equipment, tools, machinery, **non-registered motor vehicles**, mobile storage buildings, signs, leasehold improvements, video tapes, vending machines, leased equipment and any other equipment used in a business or to earn income. **Motor vehicles garaged in Connecticut but registered in another state must be declared.** Personal property such as residential furnishings, clothing and jewelry is not taxable.

ALL PROPERTY, INCLUDING ITEMS FULLY DEPRECIATED FOR IRS PURPOSES MUST BE REPORTED. THE ASSESSOR HAS THE RIGHT TO AUDIT YOUR BOOKS AND REPORTS, WITHIN 3 YEARS OF THE DATE THE RETURN IS FILED. SUBSTANTIAL PENALTIES ARE APPLICABLE IF SUCH AN AUDIT REVEALS THAT THE PROPERTY HAS NOT BEEN FILED AS IS REQUIRED BY LAW. (Sec. 12-53)

Question: Who must file?

Answer: Anyone in possession of assets on October 1 or having had assets in West Haven for three months prior to October 1 who has a proprietorship, partnership, or corporation, or is a self-employed agent or contractor, must file each year. Property owners who lease, loan, or rent property must also file.

If you are aware of someone who has a Non-Connecticut registered motor vehicle garaged in West Haven or an unregistered motor vehicle on their property please contact the Assessor's Office at 937-3515.

This pamphlet answers some common questions taxpayers have concerning personal property and provides information that will help you file an accurate personal property declaration. If you should have any questions regarding personal property or need help in filing your declaration, please feel free to call our office at (203) 937-3515 for assistance.