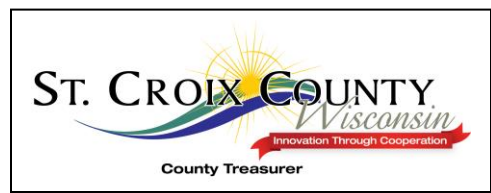


Glossary of Property Tax Terms



- **Real Property or Real Estate:** This term refers to land and any buildings (improvements) on that land.
- **Personal Property:** Refers to items such as machinery, furniture and fixtures used to operate a business. It also refers to buildings on leased land when the lessee owns the buildings.
- **Improvements:** On a real estate property bill, improvements are buildings assessed as part of the property. On a personal property bill, improvements are machinery, furniture and fixtures used to operate the business or buildings on leased land.
- **Assessment or Assessed Value:** The value that is placed on a property by the municipal assessor for purposes of taxation. The assessed value is used to determine the property tax amount and may be below the current market value of the property.
- **Average Assessment Ratio:** A ratio determined by the Department of Revenue showing the relationship between the assessed value of all taxable property in a municipality regardless of type or location. Assessed value divided by estimated fair market value equals average assessment ratio.
- **Equalized Value:** The estimated market value of all taxable non-agricultural property, both real and personal, plus the use value of agricultural lands in a municipality. The Department of Revenue each year determines the equalized value by August 15.
- **Estimated Fair Market Value:** A value calculated by dividing the property's assessed value by the municipality's average assessment ratio. This value may not be the actual market value of a property and is not used in the calculation of taxes. Agricultural property value is based on use, not market, thus the estimated fair market value is not calculated for parcels in the agricultural class.
- **Net Mill Rate:** The net mill rate is the rate used to calculate tax amounts on property. The rate is calculated by taking the levy of a municipality divided by the total assessed value of the municipality which equals the net mill rate. This rate is then multiplied times the assessed value of individual parcels to determine the gross tax of a property. Click [here](#) for prior years municipal mill rates.
- **Postponed Taxes:** The balance due of current year taxes when prior installments are paid by the due dates. Example: Total tax \$4,000 - first installment due January 31 of \$2,000 paid on time the July 31 payment of \$2,000 is known as the "postponed" tax, because the first installment was paid on time.
Note: If prior installments are not paid or are paid late, the entire remaining tax bill becomes delinquent and subject to interest and penalty charged from the preceding February 1, per Wisconsin Statutes 74.11(11).
- **Delinquent Taxes:** Property taxes that haven't been paid by the due dates of January 31 or July 31. Delinquent taxes are subject to 1% interest charge and 1/2 % penalty charge accruing monthly on the unpaid tax balance until paid in full. The penalty and interest are calculated on the unpaid balance as of the first day of the month.
- **Tax Certificate Issued:** A tax certificate is issued annually on September 1 of each year for all properties that have unpaid current year taxes. It represents a lien on the property on behalf of the county. This is the first step of the tax foreclosure process per Wisconsin Statutes. The certificate must be held by the County for two years before foreclosure action can be started. Payment of the entire amount delinquent for that tax year voids the tax certificate.
- **Notice of Real Estate Tax Due (Reminder Notice):** This is a statement that shows delinquent taxes, interest and penalty on specific parcels. Interest and penalty amounts are valid through the end of the month the statement is mailed. Statements are mailed by the St Croix County Treasurer on a monthly basis.
- **Lottery and Gaming Credit:** A credit that may be applied to a property tax bill per Wisconsin Statute 79.10.