

City of Dover  
Office of City Assessor

Understanding Your Assessment



***What authority does the City have to conduct a revaluation?***

City of Dover ordinance, by way of the City Charter, the City of Dover Assessor's Office revalues all property every five years to keep current with changes in the market. During a revaluation all assessments are examined and adjustments are made where necessary to guarantee that all property is assessed uniformly. This is done to assure that taxes are distributed equitably and uniformly.

***What is the Assessor's role?***

The Assessor is a City Council Appointed Official, whose duties are to discover, list, and place a value on all taxable real property in the city, in a uniform manner.

***How does the assessor value property?***

City of Dover Ordinance requires property assessments based on fair market value. Estimating the market value of your property is a matter of determining the price a typical buyer would pay for it in its present condition. Some factors the assessor considers are: what similar properties are selling for, what it would cost to replace your property, the rent it may earn, and any other factors that affect value. **IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT THE ASSESSOR DOES NOT CREATE THIS VALUE, BUT RATHER INTERPRETS WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE MARKET PLACE.**

***What is Market Value?***

Market Value is defined as the amount a typical, well-informed purchaser would be willing to pay for a property. The seller and buyer must be unrelated, the seller must be willing, but not under pressure to sell, and the buyer must be willing, but not under any obligation to buy. The property must be on the market for a reasonable length of time, the payment must be in cash or its equivalent, and the financing must be typical for that type of property. If all of these conditions are present, this would be a market value, arm's length sale.

***Are values developed by a computer?***

Computers are useful in the assessment process. Assessors are trained to look for relationships between property characteristics and market value. By coding these characteristics and studying sales prices, assessors can estimate value by developing formulas and models. Computers are much faster and are capable of advanced analysis in this area. But despite these capabilities, common sense and assessor judgment are always required to verify assessments. Assessors most familiar with the neighborhoods and properties review all assessments.

***Can the assessment on my property be changed even if the assessor has not been inside my property?***

It is desirable for the assessor to see the inside and outside of every property, to make a proper inspection. The law requires that the property be valued from actual view or the best information available. The assessor's office keeps records of every property within its jurisdiction. If the assessor cannot view the property from the inside, the assessment will be reviewed based upon existing data.

***What will happen to my assessment if I improve my property?***

Improvements that increase the market value of a property will most likely increase the assessment value of the property. The following are typical items that will increase the assessed value: Added rooms or garages, replacement of siding, substantial remodeling, adding central air conditioning, decks, porches, etc.

The inspection by the assessor's office and the change to your assessment will be triggered by a Building Permit that is copied to our department via the Inspection and Planning Department.

***How can my assessment change when I haven't done anything to my property?***

General economic conditions such as interest rates, inflation rates, supply and demand, and changes in tax laws, will influence the value of real estate. As property values change in the market place, those changes must be reflected on the assessment role. These changes will only be reflected during a revaluation year.

***Do all assessments change at the same rate?***

There are differences between individual property and between neighborhoods. In one area the sales may indicate substantial increase in value in a give year or three year period. In another neighborhood there may be no change in value or even a decrease in property values. Different types of properties within the same neighborhood may also show different value changes.

***Will I be notified if there is a change in my assessment?***

The assessor's office notifies all property owners of any change in their assessment, in writing. The property owner is also notified of their right to appeal the new assessment.

***How do I know if my assessment is correct?***

You should first attempt to decide for yourself what your property is worth. This can be done by looking at area sales, contacting appraisers, and comparing assessments of similar homes. Sales and assessment information is available in the assessor's office. The information in the Assessor's office is available for review during our regular business hours. The first week in April, the annual assessment registers go out. They are in street address order and can be viewed for comparing your values as well.

This brochure has been prepared to help you better understand the functions of the Assessor's Office. The information contained, will assist you in understanding assessment procedures.

The assessor does not establish the dollar amount of taxes required nor does the assessor collect the taxes. The city of Dover Customer Service Department bills and collects the real estate property taxes. Their number is (302) 736-7035.

It is our responsibility to ensure that all properties are treated fairly and impartially in accordance with our State Laws and City Charter and Ordinances. It is our desire to help and support you in an effective, responsible and courteous manner.

The City of Dover Assessor's Office welcomes your inquiries and concerns on how your property is assessed. We are committed to serve and assist you on any matters dealing with this office. Please contact the City of Dover Assessor's Office for more information. Our number is (302) 736-7022.

#### Mission Statement

We, the employees of the City of Dover Assessor's Office, have a primary mission to maintain the property assessment system in a way that is equitable, fair and uniform to all citizens of the City of Dover and at the same time meet all constitutional and statutory requirements. We will strive to provide an optimal level of service, information and policy guidance to the public and to other governmental agencies.