

Frequently Asked Questions

APPLICATION HELP

What is available for me to reference when E-filing my Business Property Statement (Form 571-L)?

- An E-File User Guide is available to facilitate screen navigations. Refer to E-Filing User Guide link on E-File system page.
- You may wish to print or view the Form 571-L Instructions for additional filing information. Link to open is identified as BOE Form Instructions.

What are the steps to using e-filing system to electronically submit my Business Property Statement (Form 571L)?

1. Log in to the system using your Property ID and the password supplied by the County Assessor.
 - a. Note: you will be automatically logged off if more than one hour passes between page submissions.
2. Make sure you answer all required fields.
3. Make use of the 'Remarks' section to provide special notations related to your filing.
4. Report costs in the appropriate categories consistent with form instructions.
5. Submit and Save the form.
6. Print and/or Save the completed form for your records.

What are the system requirements to successfully use Business Property Statement E-filing?

- Internet Explorer 5 or better, Firefox 3.0 or better, Chrome or Safari required for operation.
- For best results, screen resolution should be set to 1024x768 and browser maximized.

What are the requirements to successfully submit and/or print Business Property Statement draft or final forms?

- The form created is a Portable Document Format (PDF).
- The form accepted as an electronic submittal may only be a PDF.
- Note that your browser pop-up blocker must be totally disabled when printing forms.
 - Internet Explorer will provide a warning message.
 - Firefox on a Windows PC can be disabled from Tools menu, select Options.
 - Firefox on a Mac, from menu, preferences window, content tab to edit pop-up window.
 - Chrome will provide an icon in address bar to manage pop-up window.
 - Safari from menu, confirm that Block Pop-Up Windows is unchecked.

BUSINESS PROPERTY STATEMENTS

What is a Business Property Statement (BOE Form 571L)?

California Law prescribes a yearly ad valorem tax based on property as it exists at 12:01 a.m. on January 1 (tax lien date). The Form 571L or 571A constitutes an official request that you declare all assessable business property situated in this county which you owned, claimed, possessed, controlled or managed on the tax lien date. The form is approved by the State Board of Equalization (BOE) but forms are administered by the county.

Why did I receive a Business Property Statement?

The Assessor's office sends a Business Property Statement to all known businesses in the county. Each person owning taxable personal property having an aggregate cost of \$100,000 or more for any assessment year shall file a signed property statement with the assessor. Every person owning personal property that does not require the filing of a property statement shall, upon request of the assessor, file a signed property statement. Failure of the assessor to request or secure the property statement does not render any assessment invalid. (Revenue and Taxation Code 441)

What constitutes business property?

Business property includes all property, unless exempted by state or federal law, and real estate owned and/or used by a business. Examples of business personal property include operating supplies, office furniture, computers, machinery, and hand tools. Business property also includes leasehold fixtures and leasehold structures (tenant improvements).

Are non-profit organizations required to file Business Property Statements?

Yes, the filing laws that apply to business also apply to non-profit organizations. Non-profit organizations may, however, qualify for exemptions.

What is the due date for filing the Business Property Statement (571-L)?

The due date is April 1st of each year.

What is the last day to file the Business Property Statement (571-L) without a penalty?

The final date for filing the form without penalty is May 7th, or the next business day if May 7th falls on a Saturday or Sunday. You have until May 31st to amend your filing without penalty if the Business Property Statement was filed timely. The Assessor does not have the authorization to grant extensions to the due dates.

What happens if I do not file the Business Property Statement?

Failure to complete and file the form (571-L) will result in an estimated assessment. A mandatory 10% penalty is added for failing to file by the due date. (Revenue and Taxation Code 441, 463 & 501)

If the statement is not filed, how is my assessed value determined?

The Assessor's Office is responsible for making reasonable assessments based on available information. If you do not file a property statement, the assessor will estimate the assessable value. In addition, a 10% penalty for failure to file will be added to your assessment.

I moved out of the county or sold my business after lien date (January 1). Do I still have to pay the bill?

Yes. You must pay the whole amount. The legal obligation to pay taxes is determined by ownership, possession, claim to, or control of the property on the lien date (January 1). The law does not provide for pro-ration of personal property taxes by the assessor.

If a business is sold, does the Assessor prorate taxes between buyer and seller?

No. Any arrangement regarding property tax liability must be worked out contractually, between the buyer and seller.

I received a tax bill and believe that the assessment is incorrect. What can I do?

It is recommended that you first contact an Auditor in the Assessor's Business Property Division to get a full explanation of how the assessment was determined. At that time you can provide the Auditor with any new information that he or she may not have had at the time the assessment was originally determined. The Auditor may request additional documentation. The Auditor will recommend a correction of the original assessment should an adjustment be warranted. If an agreement about the value cannot be reached, you have the right to formally appeal your assessment by filing an Application for Changed Assessment with the Clerk of the Board.

How do I file an appeal of my assessment?

An Application for Changed Assessment may be obtained from the Clerk of the Board for Santa Barbara County. The application must be filed by November 30 of the year in which the tax is due. If you wish to appeal an audit finding, the Application for Changed Assessment must be filed within 60 days of your notification regarding the changed assessment. You may contact the Clerk of the Board at their offices located at 105 East Anapamu Street, Room 407, Santa Barbara CA, 93101; or by calling (805) 568-2240.

The staff of the Assessor's Business Property Division is available to assist you with filing your Business Property Statement and to answer any additional questions. Please call (805) 568-2550 and ask for an Auditor in the Business Property Section.