

## **MOTOR VEHICLE EXCISE**

### **What is motor vehicle excise?**

Chapter 60A of the Massachusetts General Laws imposes an excise on the privilege of registering a motor vehicle or trailer anywhere in the commonwealth of Massachusetts. The excise is billed by the community where the vehicle is principally garaged.

### **How is my motor vehicle excise tax figured and when do I pay it?**

All motor vehicle excise tax information comes directly from the records of the Registry of Motor Vehicles. The valuation is a percentage of the vehicle's original suggested retail price (sticker price) when new. Please make note of the following percentages:

- In year preceding the year of manufacture i.e. 2003 model in 2002.....50%
- In the year of manufacture.....90%
- In the second year.....60%
- In the third year.....40%
- In the fourth year.....25%
- In the fifth and succeeding years.....10%

You will be billed for the entire year by the community where your vehicle is principally garaged as of January 1. The rate is \$25.00 per thousand of value for the calendar year. For vehicles registered after January 1, the bill is pro rated by the number of months that the vehicle is on the road. All payments should be mailed to the Tax Collector at Town Hall – 1 Lafayette St., Wakefield, MA 01880 or at P.O. Box 269, Wakefield, MA 01880

### **What if I no longer own a car?**

If you receive a bill for something that you no longer own, or have previously paid an excise bill and have since disposed of the vehicle, stop by the Assessors Department with the following so that we can properly adjust the bill:

**Copy of Bill of Sale and; Plate Return Receipt, or Copy of Insurance Cancellation form, or Plate Lost or Stolen receipt; or, in the event of a Plate Transfer, the New Vehicle Registration.**

Adjustments can be made to the bill prior to the due date so that you pay only what you owe, or, in the event of a bill that has already been paid, you can get a refund.

### **What if I move?**

Since all excise information comes from the Registry of Motor Vehicles, you should ensure that your vehicle registration and license are updated to facilitate proper excise billing. Excise bills will be collected by the community in which you reside as of January 1.

**Outside of Massachusetts:** In order to receive an abatement, registrants need to provide a copy of the plate return receipt and a copy of the vehicle registration from the new state.

**What happens if my payment is late?**

If an excise is not paid within 30 days of the issue date, the tax collector will send a demand with an attachment of \$5 plus interest. If the demand is not answered within 14 days, the collector may issue a warrant to a deputy tax collector or other agent with more collection fees attached. If this notice is not answered, a final warrant with more collection fees will be issued.

**How does non-payment of an excise affect my license and vehicle registration privileges?**

If a final warrant goes unanswered, the deputy collector will notify the Registry of Motor Vehicles. The Registrar may then mark the individual's registration preventing the renewal of the motor vehicle registration and the owner's driver's license until such time as the Registrar is notified that the town had received full and final payment. This final payment will also include a \$20 release fee as part of the final settlement.

Please call 1-800-491-9788 for further details concerning the deputy collector. Also, it is very important for you to retain receipts for your records.

**What are some of the reasons an excise may be abated?**

- if the vehicle was sold or traded, or
- if the vehicle was stolen, or
- if the owner has moved out of state, or
- in some cases where the owner had moved prior to January 1.

**Can I be exempted from excise?**

Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 60A, Section 1 does provide for exemptions of excise tax for vehicles owned by certain disabled individuals and veterans, ex-prisoners of war, as well as certain charitable organizations. Please call the Assessors Department at 781-246-6380 with any questions that you may have.