

# Challenging Your Value or Exemption Status

If you disagree with your property value or exemption status, three options are available to you:

## 1 Informal Conference with your Appraiser or Exemption Specialist

If you believe your 2014 proposed value is higher or lower than market value on **January 1, 2014**, we encourage you to speak to your area appraiser. Our goal is to ensure that your property is appraised equitably and accurately, and we are happy to speak with you about your value.

Our Exemption Department can help you with questions about exemptions.

## 2 Petition to the Value Adjustment Board (VAB)

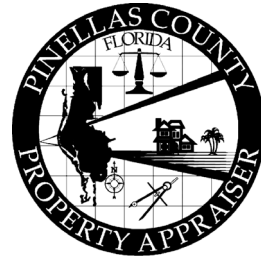
You may file a petition with the Value Adjustment Board (VAB) by the **deadline** listed at the bottom of your TRIM Notice. The VAB appoints Special Magistrates, who are qualified real estate appraisers or attorneys, to conduct the informal hearings on petitions challenging assessments or exemption denials. The magistrates are independent of the Property Appraiser's office. Like you, we are simply a party before the Board.

The Value Adjustment Board does not set millage rates and has no jurisdiction over taxes. You can prevail before the VAB in a value dispute if you prove that your proposed value does not reflect market value as of January 1st. The best way to prepare for a VAB hearing is to produce market evidence such as sales of comparable properties that sold before January 1, 2014.

The VAB may charge up to \$15 for filing a petition. For a petition form or more details, please contact our office or file online at the Clerk of the Circuit Court's web site: <http://www.pinellasclerk.org>

## 3 Circuit Court Complaint (Lawsuit)

Your third option is to file a Civil Action in the Circuit Court under section 194.171 of Florida Statutes. You can do this whether or not you file a petition. Please read the statutes or contact an attorney to determine the filing deadline and other requirements.



PAM DUBOV, CFA, CAE  
Pinellas County Property Appraiser

[www.pcpao.org](http://www.pcpao.org)

# 2014 TRIM GUIDE

Explaining Your Annual  
Truth in Millage or  
TRIM Notice

## Contact Us:

315 Court Street - 2nd Fl  
Clearwater, FL 33756  
Mail to: PO Box 1957 - Clearwater, FL 33757  
Telephone: (727) 464-3207  
Fax: (727) 464-3448  
[www.pcpao.org](http://www.pcpao.org)  
Hearing Impaired ONLY (727) 464-3370

## WHY SEND A TRIM NOTICE?

Florida law mandates the mailing of an annual TRIM Notice to give property owners the opportunity to review their proposed property taxes prior to the mailing of tax bills. There are the three variables that impact property taxes: 1) property values; 2) tax exemptions; and 3) millage (or tax) rates. Changes in any of these factors can impact your annual tax bill. The TRIM Notice is designed to illustrate the interaction between these elements, so you can understand how your taxes are calculated.

## HOW ARE VALUES AND TAXES DETERMINED?

The Property Appraiser's office is independent from your taxing authorities, and is charged with assessing the value of every property in Pinellas County every year, based on the status of the property as of the annual **January 1** assessment date. Buyers and sellers of property create market value by their actions in the real estate market.

The Property Appraiser considers three approaches to value when preparing the real property tax roll: cost, sales comparison, and income. Appraisers may reconcile two or more of the value indications into a final reconciled value based on the appropriateness, accuracy, and quantity of market information from the three approaches. For residential real property, the sale prices of properties similar to yours represent some of the best evidence of market value, so the comparable sales approach is often given more weight. Your 2014 value is based on market information including sales of comparable properties that occurred during 2013, prior to the assessment date of January 1, 2014. You can review sales in your neighborhood on the Property Appraiser's website, or call the phone number on your TRIM Notice to speak to your area appraiser.

Once annual property values have been established, the Property Appraiser provides each local taxing authority with the taxable value of all property in the district, which is used to calculate the millage (tax) rate needed to raise the money necessary to fund the annual budget. To calculate the annual tax amount, the millage rate for each taxing authority in your tax district is applied to the taxable value of your property for the corresponding authority.

## TAX BILLS

The Tax Collector will mail tax bills on or about **November 1**. If you have questions for the Tax Collector, you may call their office at (727) 464-7777. You can also review or pay your tax bill online after November 1 at: [www.taxcollect.com](http://www.taxcollect.com).

## TAX EXEMPTIONS

Florida law provides for several different property tax exemptions, including homestead, widow/widower, disabled veteran, disability, and low-income senior exemptions.

Homestead exemption is a \$50,000 reduction in the assessed value of your home. It is granted to property owners who: 1) possess title to real property; 2) are bona fide Florida residents living in the dwelling and making it their permanent home on January 1; and, 3) file an application by March 1. The first \$25,000 of value is entirely exempt from taxes. The second \$25,000 is exempted from the assessed value between \$50,000 and \$75,000, and does not apply to school taxes. The exemption reduces the property tax bill by approximately \$500-\$800.

Homestead exemption is not transferable. You must file a new application if you establish a new residence. If you move during 2014, you must file a new application by March 1, 2015 to qualify for the 2015 exemption on your new home.

**You can now file for homestead exemption online at [www.pcpao.org](http://www.pcpao.org), or visit any of our branch offices.** Our website includes our office locations; details on how to apply for homestead and other exemptions; how adding an owner may impact your exemption; and more.

### You no longer qualify for homestead exemption if, as of January 1, 2014:

- You moved;
- You rented the home;
- You or your spouse applied for or received any residency-based property tax benefit elsewhere; or you married and your spouse receives an exemption elsewhere. You must notify our office if you marry after filing for an exemption, even if your spouse is not on the deed.

**Notify our office at (727) 464-3294 of any change in your exemption status to avoid possible penalties.**

## ASSESSMENT CAPS

The Save-Our-Homes cap limits the annual increase in the **assessed value** (not taxes) of a homestead property to 3% or the percent change in the Consumer Price Index, whichever is lower, beginning the second year of the exemption. For 2014, the cap limitation is **1.5%**. The 10% non-homestead cap limits annual increases in the assessed value of certain non-homestead property to no more than 10%. This benefit is automatically applied to qualifying properties. Assessment caps are removed when a property changes ownership or use. For details on assessment caps, please call us or visit [www.pcpao.org](http://www.pcpao.org).

# YOUR TRIM NOTICE, DISSECTED:

## 1 YOUR PROPERTY IDENTIFIERS

At the top of the form is the parcel number or tangible personal property account number identifying your property, as well as the site address, legal description, appraisal area, and tax district. The mailing address printed here is the address where your tax bill will be mailed; please notify us in writing of any address changes.

## 2 PROPERTY VALUES

The following values are listed for last year and this year (highlighted in blue). Because certain exemptions and assessment caps only apply to the millage rate for specific taxing authorities, there may be different taxable values for different authorities (see # 8 and # 9).

**Assessed/Capped Value** - This is the value as limited by an assessment cap, such as the Save-Our-Homes cap or the 10% cap on non-homestead parcels, or by an assessment classification (such as agricultural classification). Because the 10% non-homestead cap does not apply to school millages, there may be a different value for school and non-school millages.

**Market Value** - The 2014 market value is an estimate of the most probable selling price as of January 1, 2014, based on sales and other market data from 2013.

**Taxable Value** - This is the assessed value less any exemptions, such as the homestead exemption. Millage rates are levied against this value.

## 7 BUDGET HEARINGS

Budget hearing dates and contact information for each taxing authority that levies taxes in your taxing district are provided on the reverse side of this notice.

If you wish to discuss the amount or use of taxes, we encourage you to attend the hearings or call the taxing authority.

## TAXING AUTHORITIES

These are the local government agencies with the power to levy taxes. Every taxing authority will hold a public hearing on its proposed budget for the coming year. The size of the budget determines the millage rate that will be applied to your property's taxable value, resulting in your annual tax amount.

## 4 YOUR FINAL TAX RATE AND TAXES LAST YEAR (2013)

These are the millage rates and taxes for each taxing authority for 2013. The 2013 tax roll has been certified and closed so this is informational only.

## 5 YOUR TAX RATE AND TAXES THIS YEAR IF NO BUDGET CHANGE IS MADE

This column shows what your tax rate and taxes will be if each taxing authority does not change its budget or property tax levy. These amounts are based on last year's budget and the current year taxable value, and are for comparative purposes only.

## 6 YOUR TAX RATE AND TAXES THIS YEAR IF PROPOSED BUDGET CHANGE IS MADE

This is your 2014 proposed tax amount.

This column includes the millage rate and resulting tax amount *already proposed* by your taxing authorities based on their new budgets. Your taxes this year will not be more than the total proposed amount at the bottom of the column, plus any non-ad valorem assessments (see # 12). If, during the final budget hearings, millage rates are decreased, your taxes may decrease from this amount.

## 8 ASSESSMENT REDUCTION APPLIED

This is the value of any assessment reductions such as the Save-Our-Homes cap or 10% non-homestead cap. If you applied for and received a Save-Our-Homes cap portability benefit, it will be reflected here and in the current year assessed value. The 10% non-homestead cap does not apply to school millages.

## 9 EXEMPTION AMOUNTS

This is the amount of all your exemptions. Some exemptions only reduce the taxable value for specific taxing authorities. For example, the second \$25,000 of the homestead exemption does not apply to the school millage, and the additional homestead exemption for low-income seniors only applies to the municipal or MSTU millage rate. This is why there may be different assessed and taxable values for the county, school, and municipal taxing authorities, as listed in #2.

## CONTACT NUMBERS

If you have any questions about your property value or exemptions, please contact our office at the numbers provided. We are happy to speak with you.

## VAB FILING DEADLINE

This is the deadline for filing a petition to the Value Adjustment Board to appeal your property value or exemption status. More information is included on the back of this Guide.

PLEASE NOTE: This document is intended to help you understand the information on your TRIM Notice. It does not constitute legal advice or a comprehensive review of property tax or exemption law. Please contact our office if you have any questions.

## Tangible Personal Property

Tangible Personal Property (TPP) is property, other than real property, used by a business or to earn income. One example is business equipment. Owners of TPP must file an annual TPP Business Return (DR-405 form) by April 1. Filing this return automatically qualifies an owner for an exemption of up to \$25,000 from the taxable value. If a TPP account is valued less than \$25,000, the exemption will automatically renew after the first year. A DR-405 filing is only required in subsequent years if the value increases to more than \$25,000. In all other circumstances, failure to file an annual TPP return by April 1 leads to the imposition of statutory penalties. Please check your records to ensure compliance. Call (727) 464-8484 with questions.

## NON-AD VALOREM ASSESSMENTS

Non-Ad Valorem assessments are based on a rate schedule set by each governing body. They are NOT based on the value of your property. Please direct all questions regarding these assessments to the levying authorities.

**2014 NOTICE OF PROPOSED PROPERTY TAXES AND PROPOSED OR ADOPTED NON-AD VALOREM ASSESSMENTS**  
PINELLAS COUNTY TAXING AUTHORITIES  
315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida 33756-5191

PARCEL NUMBER: 00-00-00-00000-000-0000 APPRaisal AREA: 00  
SITE ADDRESS: 123 SAMPLER RD 2014 TAX DISTRICT: CITY  
LEO SAMPLE RECLAM VACATION 0013 TAX DISTRICT: CITY

**DO NOT PAY THIS IS NOT A BILL**  
The taxing authorities which levy property taxes against your property will soon hold PUBLIC HEARINGS to adopt budgets and tax rates for the coming year.  
The purpose of these public hearings is to give you an opportunity to voice your opinion or question the proposed tax change and to make any amendments or alterations at the public hearing. The list on Page 2 includes the dates and times of public hearings, and contact information for the taxing authorities that levy taxes on your property. PLEASE READ THE REVERSE FOR EXPLANATIONS.

**PROPERTY APPRAISER VALUE INFORMATION**

	LAST YEAR (2013)			THIS YEAR (2014)		
	MARKET VALUE	ASSESSED/ CAPPED VALUE	TAXABLE VALUE	MARKET VALUE	ASSESSED/ CAPPED VALUE	TAXABLE VALUE
COUNTY / INDEPENDENT DIST.	400,000	250,000	200,000	300,000	250,750	203,750
SCHOOL DIST.	400,000	250,000	225,000	300,000	250,750	228,750
MUNICIPALITY/MSTU	400,000	250,000	200,000	300,000	250,750	203,750

**TAXING AUTHORITY TAX INFORMATION**

TAXING AUTHORITY	YOUR FINAL TAX RATE AND TAXES LAST YEAR (2013)		YOUR TAX RATE AND TAXES THIS YEAR IF NO BUDGET CHANGE IS MADE (2014)		YOUR TAX RATE AND TAXES THIS YEAR IF PROPOSED BUDGET CHANGE IS MADE (2014)		A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED TAXES AND BUDGET WILL BE HELD:
	MILLAGE RATE	TAXES	MILLAGE RATE	TAXES	MILLAGE RATE	TAXES	
COUNTY	0.0000	0.00	0.0000	0.00	0.0000	0.00	
COUNTY GENERAL FUND	4.8108	962.16	5.0000	1,000.00	4.8108	962.16	
HEALTH DEPT	0.0622	12.44	0.0622	12.44	0.0622	12.47	
PLANNING COUNCIL	0.0112	2.24	0.0112	2.24	0.0125	2.51	
REG. MGMT SVCS	0.2500	50.00	0.2500	50.00	0.2500	50.00	
PUBLIC SCHOOLS	5.3420	1,068.40	5.1911	1,038.22	5.3420	1,068.40	
BY STATE LAW	2.9980	599.60	3.3176	663.52	2.9980	599.60	
BY LOCAL BOARD							
MUNICIPAL OR MSTU	4.3113	862.26	4.8406	968.12	4.3113	862.26	
CITY							
WATER MGMT DISTRICT							
SW FL WATER MGMT	0.7066	141.32	0.7937	158.74	0.7066	141.32	
CITY							
INDEPENDENT SP DIST	0.7915	158.30	0.8884	177.68	0.7915	158.30	
GOVERNOR WELFARE RD	0.5601	112.02	0.6297	125.94	0.5601	112.02	
TRANSIT AUTH.							
<b>TOTAL PROPERTY TAX</b>		<b>4,245.49</b>		<b>4,808.10</b>		<b>4,245.49</b>	

--- SAMPLE ONLY! THESE VALUES/TAXES ARE NOT ACCURATE! ---

**ASSESSMENT REDUCTIONS APPLIED**

APPLIES TO	2013	2014
SAVE-OUR-HOMES CAP	150,000	46,250
NON-HOMESTEAD 10% CAP	0	0
AGRICULTURAL CLASSIFICATION	0	0
OTHER	0	0

**EXEMPTIONS**

APPLIES TO	2013	2014
FIRST HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION	25,000	25,000
ADDITIONAL HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION	25,000	25,000
LIMITED-INCOME SENIOR EXEMPTION	0	0
OTHER	0	0

SEPTEMBER 17, 2014

**PROPOSED OR ADOPTED NON-AD VALOREM ASSESSMENTS**

LEVYING AUTHORITY	CONTACT	PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT OR PUBLIC HEARING TIME	UNITS	RATE	ASSESSMENT
STREET LIGHTING DISTRICT	TEL	STREET LIGHTING	1	200.00	200.00

**TOTAL NON-AD VALOREM ASSESSMENT: 200.00**

YOUR FINAL TAX BILL MAY CONTAIN NON-AD VALOREM ASSESSMENTS WHICH MAY NOT BE REFLECTED ON THIS NOTICE, SUCH AS ASSESSMENTS FOR ROADS, FIRE, GARBAGE, LIGHTING, DRAINAGE, WATER, SEWER OR OTHER GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES WHICH MAY BE LEVIED BY YOUR LOCAL COUNTY, CITY OR ANY SPECIAL DISTRICT. Non-ad valorem assessments are placed on this notice at the request of the respective local governing body. The Tax Collector will include the non-ad valorem assessments on the November tax bill. For details on a particular assessment, you must contact the local governing board directly.  
\*Note: Amounts shown on this form do NOT reflect early payment discounts you may have received or may be eligible to receive. Discounts are a maximum of 4 percent of the amounts shown on this form.