

Tax Definitions and Terminology

The following definitions/terminologies are taken from specific property tax statutes, property tax rules, bulletins, advisories, or Black's Law Dictionary:

- A -

Ad valorem tax	A tax based on the value of property.
Additional tax (Current Use)	The difference between the property tax paid as open space land, farm and agricultural land, or timber land and the amount of property tax otherwise due and payable for the seven years last past had the land not been so classified; plus interest upon the amounts of such additional tax paid at the same statutory rate charged on delinquent property taxes from the dates on which such additional tax could have been paid without penalty if the land had been assessed without penalty if the land had been assessed without regard to classification. RCW 84.34.108
Additional tax (Historic Property)	"Additional taxes, interest and penalties: (a) The cost multiplied by the levy rate in each year the property was subject to special valuation; plus (b) interest on the amounts of the additional tax at the statutory rate charged on delinquent property taxes from the dates on which the additional tax could have been paid without penalty if the property had not been valued as historic property under chapter 84.26 RCW ; plus (c) a penalty equal to twelve percent of the amount determined in (a) and (b)." RCW 84.26.090 WAC 458-15-015
Administrative Refunds	It is when an ad valorem tax paid before or after delinquency is refunded for one of the following reasons: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Paid more than once. (2) Paid as a result of manifest error in description. (3) Paid as a result of a clerical error in extending the tax rolls. (4) Paid as a result of other clerical errors in listing property. (5) Paid with respect to improvements which did not exist on assessment date. (6) Paid under levies or statutes adjudicated to be illegal or unconstitutional. (7) Paid as a result of mistake, inadvertence, or lack of knowledge by any person exempted or partially exempted from paying real property taxes. (8) Paid or overpaid as a result of mistake, inadvertence, or lack of knowledge by either a public official or employee or by any person paying the same with respect to real property in which the person paying the same has no legal interest. (9) Paid on the basis of an assessed valuation which was appealed to the county board of equalization and ordered reduced by the board.

	(10) Paid on the basis of an assessed valuation which was appealed to the state board of tax appeals and ordered reduced by the board. PROVIDED, That the amount refunded under subsections (9) and (10) shall only be for the difference between the tax paid on the basis of the appealed valuation and the tax payable on the valuation adjusted in accordance with the board's order.
	(11) Paid as a state property tax levied upon property, the assessed value of which has been established by the state board of tax appeals for the year of such levy: PROVIDED, HOWEVER, That the amount refunded shall only be for the difference between the state property tax paid and the amount of state property tax that would, when added to all other property taxes within the 1 percent limitation of the state constitution equal 1 percent of the assessed value established by the board.
	(12) Paid on the basis of an assessed valuation which was adjudicated to be unlawful or excessive: PROVIDED, That the amount refunded shall be for the difference between the amount of tax payable on the basis of the assessed valuation determined as a result of the preceding.
	(13) Paid on property acquired under a tax lien. (RCW 84.69.020)
	(14) Paid on the basis of an assessed valuation that was reduced under RCW 84.48.065 .
	(15) Paid on the basis of an assessed valuation that was reduced under RCW 84.40.039 .
	(16) Abated under RCW 84.70.010 .
Advance tax (Quick collect)	Tax collected on personal property, which is to be sold, moved, or liquidated. The tax is calculated and collected on current year levy, based on new value. RCW 84.56.070
Advisory value	The true and fair value determinations by department appraisers or auditors made at the request of the county assessor. The value made by them shall not in any manner be binding upon the assessor. RCW 84.41.110 WAC 458-53-020
AGO	Attorney General's Opinion.
Annexation	The act of a taxing district taking in a part of another area.
Anticipated taxes	Any person filing a plat subsequent to May 31 in any year and prior to the date of collection of taxes shall deposit with the county treasurer a sum equal to the product of the county assessor's latest valuation on unimproved property in such subdivision multiplied by the current year's dollar rate increased by 25 percent on the property platted. This amount is sometimes referred to as an advance tax. RCW 58.08.040
Appeal Board (State)	Means the State Board of Tax Appeals. For more information, please see State Board of Tax Appeals
Appraisal	An estimate of value.

Assess	(1) To estimate property value as a basis of taxation. (2) To fix or determine, e.g., by a court or commission, the compensation due to a property owner for the taking of real property.
Assessed value (AV)	The value of property placed on the assessment rolls for property tax purposes. In the State of Washington, assessed value may not always be the true and fair market value. RCW 84.04.020 and RCW 84.04.030
Assessment	(1) The official valuation of property for ad valorem taxation. (2) A single charge levied against a parcel of real estate to defray the cost of a public improvement that presumably will benefit only the properties it serves, e.g., assessment for the installation of sidewalks, curbs, or sewer or water lines. See also Special Assessment. (3) An official determination of the amount to be paid by or to the owners of real estate to defray the cost of a public improvement that is presumed to benefit the properties it serves in an amount at least equal to the cost of the improvement, e.g., assessment of benefits and damages for public sewer or water lines.
Assessment base	See Property Tax Base.
Assessment cycle	The cycle during which all property in an assessment (area) district must be reassessed.
Assessment date	All taxable real and personal property is subject to valuation at noon on January 1 of the assessment year for taxes collectable the following year except if the law specifically states otherwise. The greatest exception is new construction, which is to be placed on the assessment rolls by August 31st, with reference to value on July 31st of that year. When a mobile home first becomes subject to taxation, the valuation of the mobile home is as of the July 31st immediately preceding the date that the mobile home is placed on the assessment roll, and listed by August 31 of that year. (RCW 36.21.070 through 36.21.090)
Assessment date	All real and personal property in this state that is subject to taxation shall be listed and assessed every year, with reference to its value on the first day of January of the year in which it is assessed. RCW 84.40.020 WAC 458-12-360
Assessment district	Formed to provide a specific service or benefit to lands contained within its boundaries. They are empowered to impose an assessment to fund district operations or to fund projects that fulfill the purpose for which the district was formed.
Assessment process	The discovery, listing, and valuation of property for taxation.
Assessment ratio	See Ratio.
Assessment ratio	All property shall be valued at one hundred percent of its true and fair value in money and assessed on the same basis unless specifically provided otherwise by law. RCW 84.40.030
Assessment year	January 1 through December 31st of any year. The year the property is listed and assessed by the county assessor.

AV The assessment year is the calendar year prior to the year the taxes become due and payable. [RCW 84.40.020](#) [RCW 84.04.040](#)
Assessed value.

- B -

Banked capacity	The difference between the highest lawful levy that could have been made and the actual levy that was imposed.
Benefit assessment district	See Assessment district.
Board of equalization – County	A county board, independent of the assessor’s office that may adjust valuations and hears specific appeals of valuations and decisions made by the assessor. The county governmental authority has the option of either appointing the members or constituting the board. The board shall consist of not less than three nor more than seven members. This board shall convene in July and as needed, according to statute. RCW 84.48.010 and WAC 458-14-001
BOE	The county Board of Equalization.
Bond	A form of interest-bearing note used by government to borrow on a long-term (one year or more).
Boundaries	The boundaries of counties, cities and all other taxing districts are set on the first day of August of the year which the levy is made, with some exceptions. (For exceptions, please see RCW 84.09.030 .)
Boundary change	Any change in taxing district boundaries, for the purpose of property taxation and the levy of property taxes. RCW 84.09.030 WAC 458-12-140 .
BTA or BOTA	State Board of Tax Appeals

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Cancellation	Reduction to the tax roll after the roll has been certified for collection for a specific year.
Certified property tax levy	The lawful levy dollar amount certified by the taxing district governing body to the county legislative authority.
Certified property tax rate	The tax rate calculated for the Levy Rate certified levy (budget divided by assessed value): $\frac{\text{Budget}}{\text{Assessed Value}} = \text{Rate}$
Chattel	In law, any property other than a freehold or fee estate in land; treated as personal property, although divisible into chattels real and chattels personal.
Chattels personal	Tangible, movable items that generally constitute personal property.
Chattels real	Intangible personal property right that may be created by leases.
Change of use	When land which is classified under chapter 84.34 RCW or chapter 84.33 RCW for special valuation based on its use and then the use of the land is changed. Chapter 84.34 RCW . Chapter 84.33 RCW .
Change of venue	The removal of a suit begun in one county or district to another

<i>(Black's Law Dictionary)</i> City	county or district for trial, though the term is also sometimes applied to the removal of a suit from one court of the same county or district. A municipal corporation that occupies a definite area and is subject to the laws of the state in which it is located.
Classified forest land	Effective July 22, 2001, Classified Forest Land and Designated Forest Land were combined into one category. See Designated Forest Land.
Compensating tax	Tax calculated on removal from designated forest land classification. Chapter 84.33 RCW
Compliance, Notice of	An affidavit on the real estate excise tax form which is signed by the new owner/owners at the time of sale or transfer of ownership of historic property when they desire the property to continue under that respective classification. RCW 84.26.080 . WAC 458-15-070 .
Composite property tax levy rate	Total property taxes levied, excluding the state school levy, on classified and designated forest land, divided by the total assessed value of classified and designated forest land.
Consolidated regular levy rate	The sum of all regular levy rates set for collection exclusive of rate set for port and public utility districts, emergency medical services under RCW 84.52.069 , and conservation futures under RCW 84.34.230 and affordable housing.
Consolidated taxing district	A combination of all taxing districts whose combined levy for tax purposes makes up the total levy applicable to an individual property. WAC 458-12-140
Consolidation	The act of combining two or more taxing districts into one taxing district.
Constitutional 1 percent limit	The levy limit established by Article VII , section 2 of the Washington Constitution. Stating that taxes may not exceed 1 percent (\$10.00 per \$1,000 of A.V.) of the <u>true and fair</u> value of the property.
Contiguous	Land sharing a common boundary or edge or point. Even if the property is divided by a road it is still considered contiguous. RCW 84.34.020
Corporeal property	Tangible property.
Cost method	One of three professional appraisal methods used to value property. This method considers what it would cost to replace an existing structure with a similar one that serves the same purpose. The cost method is also widely used in new construction valuation.
Coterminous County	Having the same boundaries or limits. The largest division of local government in all states except Louisiana and Alaska, where the comparable units are parish and borough, respectively.
County commissioner	The term county commissioners when used in Title 36 or other provision of law shall include the governmental authority empowered to so act under the provisions of a charter adopted by any county of the state. RCW 36.32.005
County governmental	The board of county commissioners or county legislative body as

authority	established under Home Rule Charter.
County legislative authority	The county commissioners, or in a case of a home rule charter county, the governmental authority empowered to so act. WAC 458-18-510
County recording authority	The county auditor or the county recording authority as authorized under Home Rule Charter. RCW 84.04.045 WAC 458-15-015
Coupon	The interest document specifying the amount of interest and date of payment, attached to a bond or coupon warrant.
Coupon warrant	A warrant payable to the bearer with interest coupons attached. When issued, constitutes a general obligation of the district.
Current assessment year	The year the property is listed and valued by the county assessor.
Current tax year	The year the taxes are due and payable.
Current use	Present use of the land.
Current use	Present use of the land. Not necessarily its highest and best use. Chapter 84.34 RCW .
Current use assessment	Special assessment of land under the Open Space Act. Please see Open Space.

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Deferred taxes	A retired person qualifying under RCW 84.36.381 through 84.36.389 may elect to defer payment of special assessments and/or real property taxes on his/her residence an amount of up to 80 percent of their equity. DOR pays the “deferred” taxes in exchange for a lien position; taxes are repaid to DOR later. RCW 84.38.010 and WAC 458-18-010 . Or, the Limited Income Deferral allows property owners to defer their 2 nd half property tax under chapter 84.37 RCW. The application must be submitted annually to the assessor’s office.
Delinquent assessments	Assessment remaining unpaid on and after the due date for which a penalty for non-payment is attached.
Delinquent interest	Penalty for non-payment of a tax or assessment by due date. RCW 84.56.020
Department	Department means the Department of Revenue of the state of Washington. RCW 84.04.047
Designated forest land	Land which is devoted primarily to growing and harvesting timber. The land must total twenty or more acres and may be one parcel or multiple contiguous parcels. Designated Forest Land means the land only, and does not include a residential homesite. Chapter 84.33 RCW
Destroyed property	If real or personal property is destroyed in whole or in part in a calendar year, or if it is in an area declared to be a disaster area, the assessed value may be reduced for that assessment year to the true and fair market value that remains after the destruction. The loss must be greater than 20 percent. Under certain conditions, the taxes collected during the year may be abated proportionately. RCW 36.21.080 and RCW 84.70.010

Disputed value	Generally used in describing highly valued property whose valuation dispute may have a significant impact on a taxing district's levy. Whenever any property value or claim for exemption or cancellation of a property assessment is appealed to the state board of tax appeals or to the courts, the difference between the values that are asserted by the taxpayer and the assessor is considered the disputed value. When that disputed value exceeds <u>1/4 of 1 percent</u> of the total assessed value of property in the county, the assessor shall use only that portion of the total value which is not in controversy for purposes of computing the levy rates and extending the tax on the tax roll, unless the state board of tax appeals has issued its determination at the time of extending taxes. RCW 84.52.018
District	For taxation, it is a unit of local government with the authority to levy taxes and issue bonds to finance schools, parks, sewers, etc. WAC 458-18-510 .
DNR	Department of Natural Resources
DOR	Department of Revenue
Drainage	A system of drains, e.g., tiles, pipes, conduits, designed to remove surface or subsurface water or waste water and sewage.
Drainage district	A unit of local government set up to construct and operate a drainage system for the area, usually to achieve a higher and better use of the land.
DSHS	Department of Social and Health Services

- E -

Eminent domain, Power of	The right of government to take private property for public use (usually by purchase).
Emergency medical service districts	Districts created specifically to provide emergency medical care or emergency medical services. RCW 84.52.069
EMS	Emergency Medical Service. EMS levies may be excess or regular levies.
Equalization	The process in which a government body attempts to ensure that all property under its jurisdiction is assessed at true and fair market value.
ESD	Educational Service District Not a taxing district, but a regional administrative agency between the local school districts and the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
Ex officio	By virtue of the office.
Excess levy	Levy of additional taxes by any taxing district over and above the regular/statutory rate. Approved by the electors at a special or general election. Voter approved levies in accordance with RCW 84.52.052 ; this does not include the EMS, Port, and PUD districts. RCW 84.52.052
Excess levy	Levy of additional taxes by any taxing district over and above the regular/statutory rate. Approved by the electors at a special or

Exemption	<p>general election. This does not include the Emergency Medical Service (EMS), Port, or Public Utility (PUD) districts.</p> <p>All property is subject to taxation, unless specifically exempted by law. The department of revenue administers nonprofit exemptions (hospitals, churches, schools, etc.). Exemptions that are administered by the assessor are senior citizen, head-of-family (personal property), historical property, and the remodel exemption. Chapter 84.36 RCW.</p>
Export	<p>An export is an article that is sent, taken or carried out (<i>Black's Law Dictionary</i>) of a state destined to a foreign country. (Rules relating to the Revenue Act of 1935, Washington state tax commission, p. 135.)</p>

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Farm and agricultural land	Land devoted primarily to the production of livestock and agricultural commodities, etc. RCW 84.34.020
FBC	Fire Benefit Charge
Fiscal year	For property tax purposes, the assessment year and fiscal year are both January 1 st through December 31 st in each year. RCW 84.04.040
FLAV	Forest Land Assessed Value
Floating home	A building on a float used in whole or in part for human habitation as a single family dwelling, which is not designed for self propulsion by mechanical means or for propulsion by means of wind, and which is on the property tax rolls of the county in which it is located. RCW 82.45.032 .
Foreign commerce	Means that commerce, commercial intercourse, traffic or trade which involves the purchase, sale or exchange of property and its transportation, or the transportation of persons, or the transportation of communications or electrical energy, from a state or territory of the United States to a foreign country, or from a foreign country to a state or territory of the United States. It includes fish, seafood, or other products originating on the high seas beyond the territorial limits of the state. (Rules relating to the Revenue Act of 1935, Washington state tax commission, p. 135.)
Forest land	"Forest land" is synonymous with "designated forest land" and means any parcel of land that is twenty or more acres or multiple parcels of land that are contiguous and total twenty or more acres that is or are devoted primarily to growing and harvesting timber. Designated forest land means the land only and does not include a residential homesite. Chapter 84.33 RCW .
Forest land	Means all land in any contiguous ownership of twenty or more acres which is primarily devoted to and used for growing and harvesting timber and means the land only. Also see Open Space (Timber Land) (RCW 84.33.035)
Forest land assessed	For purposes of computing the 2009 distribution, the FLAV is the

value (FLAV)	January 1, 2007, assessed value of classified and designated forest land and reclassified 1931 Reforestation Land in the county and on the 2008 tax rolls.
Fund	A self-balancing set of accounts that records revenues together with all related liabilities which are segregated for the purpose of carrying on specific activities.
Funding bond	A general obligation bond issued to cancel the outstanding indebtedness of warrants or bonds of waterworks or other public utilities that were payable only from the income of those utilities.

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Gender, Number and	Every word importing the singular number only may be extended to or embrace the plural number, and every word importing the plural number may be applied and limited to the singular number, and every word importing the masculine gender only may be extended and applied to females as well as males. RCW 84.04.065 .
General Obligation Bond (GO Bond)	Any bond, note, warrant, certificate of indebtedness or other obligation of a public body which constitutes indebtedness within the meaning of the constitutional debt limitation. RCW 39.53.010 . A bond secured by pledge of the issuer's full faith, credit, and taxing power.

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Head of family exemption	An exemption of \$15,000 of value of personal property owned by a head of family and used for business purposes as of January 1, 2007. Prior to this date, the exemption amount was \$3,000. This exemption is not allowed for partnerships and/or corporations. RCW 84.36.110 .
Highest and best use	Basis for valuing property for assessment purposes. Highest and best use is the most profitable likely use for which a property can be put. It is the use, which will yield the highest return on the owner's investment.
Historic district Historic property	An area designated to retain and preserve its historic quality. Real Property together with improvements thereon, except property listed in a register primarily for objects buried below ground, which is: (1) listed in a local register of historic places created by a comprehensive ordinance, certified by the secretary of the interior; or (2) listed in the national register of historic place. RCW 84.26.020 . WAC 458-15-015
Householder	Every person, married or single, who resides within the state of Washington being the owner or holder of an estate or having a house or place of abode, either as owner or lessee. RCW 84.04.050 .

- I -

Import	An import is an article, which comes from a foreign country (not
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	from a state, territory, or possession of the United States) or originates on the high seas and is brought into the taxing jurisdiction of a state. (Rules relating to the Revenue Act of 1935, Washington State Tax Commission, p. 135.)
Improvement	"Improvement" means any valuable change in or addition to real property, including the subdivision or segregation of parcels of real property or the merger of parcels of real property. (WAC 458-19-005(2)(i) .) Commonly used to describe the buildings and structures added to land.
Income method	One of three professional appraisal methods used to value property. This method is used primarily to value business property where the property tends to be worth its income producing potential
Indicated personal property ratio	The sum of the actual total county assessed values is divided by the sum of the indicated market values to determine the county indicated personal property ratio. WAC 458-53-160 .
Indicated real property ratio	The sum total real property assessed and true and fair values, forest land assessed and true and fair values, and current use assessed and true and fair values. WAC 458-53-135 .
Intercounty rural library district	A municipal corporation organized to provide library service for all areas outside of incorporated cities and towns within two or more counties: PROVIDED, That any city or town with a population of one hundred thousand or less at the time of annexation may be included therein as provided in RCW 27.12.360 through 27.12.390 .
Interstate	Refers to goods in transit to this state from another state.
Interstate commerce	Includes, but is not limited to, that commerce, commercial intercourse, traffic, or trade which involves the purchase, sale or exchange of property and its transportation, or the transportation of persons, from one state or territory of the United States to another. (Rules relating to the Revenue Act of 1935, Washington state tax commission, p. 135.)
Intrastate	Refers to goods in transit from one point in this state to another point within this state. WAC 458-12-115 .
IPD	Implicit price deflator, a measure of inflation used in the calculation of levy limits.
Irrigation	The artificial application of water to the soil for full crop production; used in arid regions or when rainfall is not sufficient.
Irrigation district	An agency established by local government that has the authority to implement and operate an irrigation system for the district and to levy taxes to finance its operations.
Island library district	A municipal corporation organized to provide library service for all areas outside of incorporated cities and towns on a single island only, when it's not the only area of the county, and in counties composed entirely of islands and having a population of less than twenty-five thousand at the time the library district was created: PROVIDED, That any city or town with a population of one hundred thousand or less at the time of annexation may be included therein as

provided in RCW [27.12.360](#) through [27.12.390](#).

- J -

Joint taxing district	A district that lies in more than one county, such as a jointly supported school district. (Also known as a split district.)
Judgment	An amount to be paid or collected by a governmental unit as the result of a court decision, including condemnation awards in payment for private property taken for public use.
July board	Nickname for the county Board of Equalization. The BOE convenes annually on the 15 th day of July.
Junior taxing districts	All taxing districts other than the state, county, county roads, city, port, and public utility districts.

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- L -

Land	The soil with everything on it and under it.
Land use code	The identification of each real property parcel by numerical digits as representations of the major use of the property. The Land Use Code is derived from the Standard Land Use Coding Manual as prepared by the Federal Bureau of Public Roads and includes use classifications specified by state law. WAC 458-53-020
Lease for life	A lease that terminates upon the demise of the lessee. WAC 458-16A-100 .
Legislative authority	Government authority of a city, town, or county.
Levy	Verb: To impose taxes, assessments or charges for support of governmental activities. Noun: The total amount of taxes, assessments or charges imposed by a governmental unit
Levy code area	See Tax Code Area description.
Levy limit	The restriction on the amount that a district's property tax levy may increase over the previous year. Districts with population below 10,000 – The levy limit for a district of this size is 101 percent. Districts with population at or above 10,000 - The levy limit for a taxing district of this size is determined by the need of the district for funds above the rate of inflation (Implicit Price Deflator, IPD). The limit factor for districts that have a substantial need for funding above the IPD is the lesser of the limit factor authorized by RCW 84.55.0101 or 101 percent. For all other districts of this size, the limit factor is the lesser of 101 percent or 100 plus the IPD. The levy for a taxing district in any year shall be set so that the regular property taxes payable in the following year shall not exceed the limit factor times the highest amount that could have lawfully been levied since 1985 plus an additional dollar amount calculated

	by multiplying the increase in assessed value resulting from new construction, improvements to property, and any increase in the assessed value of state assessed property times the levy rate of that district for the preceding year.
Levy rate	The rate necessary to raise the amount of taxes for any taxing district within the county. Expressed in dollars and cents per one thousand dollars assessed value and are calculated by dividing the total amount of the authorized levy of a taxing district by the total assessed value of that district. Also see Certified Property Tax Levy Rate.
LID	Local improvement district
Lid-lift	A ballot measure, wherein the voters authorize the district to increase their levy rate beyond the levy limit. RCW 84.55.050 .
Life estate	An estate whose duration is limited to the life of the party holding it or of some other person. WAC 458-16A-100 .
Local review board	A local body designated by the local legislative authority. RCW 84.26.020 .
Local improvement district (LID)	A single charge levied against a parcel of real estate to defray the cost of a public improvement that presumably will benefit only the properties it serves, e.g., assessment for the installation of sidewalks, curbs, or sewer or water lines. See also Special Assessments.
Lot, tract, etc.	A piece or parcel of real property and piece or parcel of land is any contiguous quantity of land in the possession of, owned by, or recorded as property of the same claimant, person or company.

- M -

M & O	Maintenance and operations
Maintenance assessments (dike, flood control, drainage, irrigation)	Special assessments for districts that provide continuous benefit to the property owners and are receipted as ad valorem taxes; however, the due date and delinquent interest differs. The first half of full assessment is due on or before April 30, and the second half is due on or before October 31. RCW 85.08.480 , 86.09.493 , and 87.03.270 .
Maintenance assessments (weed, rodents, pests, mosquitoes)	These special assessments provide continuous benefit to the property owners and are receipted in the same manner as ad valorem taxes with the same due dates and delinquent interest rates. RCW 17.04.250 .
Manifest error	An error in listing or assessment which does not involve a revaluation of property. WAC 458-14-005 (13). Correction of these errors would not require appraisal judgment.
Major taxing districts	State, county, city and road districts. Also referred to as Senior Districts.
Market comparison method	One of the three professional appraisal methods used by assessors in valuing property. In this method sales are used to provide estimates of value for similar properties. This method is also called the Sales Comparison Method and most residential property is valued this

	way.
Market value	See True and Fair Market Value.
Mergers of taxing districts	For levy rate calculation purposes, it is the same thing as a consolidation. The only difference is that in a merger, the individual taxing districts that combine retain their commissioners, while one commissioner board is created in a consolidation. For intercounty mergers, the county with the district with the highest assessed value should set the levy rate.
Mobile home	Or manufactured home. A structure, designed and constructed to be transportable in one or more sections, and is built on a permanent chassis, and designed to be used as a dwelling with or without a permanent foundation when connected to the required utilities that include plumbing, heating, and electrical systems contained therein. RCW 82.50.010 . RCW 46.04.302 .
Modular home	A factory-assembled structure designed primarily for use as a dwelling when connected to the required utilities that include plumbing, heating, and electrical systems contained therein. It does not contain its own running gear, and it must be mounted on a permanent foundation. RCW 46.04.303 .
Money, moneys	Money or moneys shall be held to mean gold and silver coin, gold and silver certificates, treasury notes, United States notes, and bank notes.
Municipality	A district having powers of local self-government. City, town, etc., having its own self-government.

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Net cash rental	Average rental paid on an annual basis, in cash, for the land being appraised and other farm and agricultural land of similar quality and similarly situated that is available for lease for a period of at least three years to any reliable person without unreasonable restrictions on its use for production of agricultural crops. RCW 84.34.065 .
New construction	Means the construction or alteration of any property for which a building permit was issued, or should have been issued, under chapter 19.27 , 19.27A , or 19.28 RCW or other laws providing for building permits, which results in an increase in the value of the property. WAC 458-19-005 .
Notice of change of value	A notice mailed by the assessor to the taxpayer when there is a change in the true and fair value of real property (land and/or improvements) or a change in value of land in open space classification. RCW 84.40.045 . WAC 458-12-360
Notice of compliance	An affidavit on the real estate excise tax form which is signed by the new owner/owners at the time of sale or transfer of ownership of historic property when they desire the property to continue under that respective classification. RCW 84.26.080
Notice of continuance	An affidavit on the real estate excise tax form or a separate form which is signed by the new owner/owners at the time of sale or

transfer of ownership when classified land (open space, forest land or farm and agricultural land) is desired to continue under the respective classification. Chapters [82.45](#), [84.33](#), and [84.34](#) RCW and Chapters [458-30](#) and [458-40](#) WAC

Number and gender Every word importing the singular number only may be extended to or embrace the plural number, and every word importing the plural number may be applied and limited to the singular number, and every word importing the masculine gender only may be extended and applied to females as well as males. [RCW 84.04.065](#).

- O -

Oath/swear "Oath" may be held to mean affirmation and the word "swear" may be held to mean affirm. [RCW 84.04.070](#).

Omitted personal property Personal property omitted from the assessment roll. It shall not include personalty that was listed but improperly valued. [RCW 84.40.080](#). [WAC 458-12-050](#).

Omitted real property Real property omitted from the assessment roll for any preceding year at the value for that year. (Limitation of no more than three assessment years from the year of discovery.) [RCW 84.40.080](#). [WAC 458-12-050](#).

Omitted value All personalty that was assessed at less than market value due to inaccurate reporting by the taxpayer or person reporting said property. [RCW 84.40.080](#). [WAC 458-12-050](#).

Open space/Current use Assessment Land designated for non-building uses, typically of three types: Farm and Agricultural land, Timber Land, and Open Space Land. If qualified the land may benefit from reduced assessments [Chapter 84.34 RCW](#)

Open space land "Open space land" means (a) any land area so designated by an official comprehensive land use plan adopted by any city or county and zoned accordingly, or (b) any land area, the preservation of which in its present use would (i) conserve and enhance natural or scenic resources, or (ii) protect streams or water supply, or (iii) promote conservation of soils, wetlands, beaches or tidal marshes, or (iv) enhance the value to the public of abutting or neighboring parks, forests, wildlife preserves, nature reservations or sanctuaries or other open space, or (v) enhance recreation opportunities, or (vi) preserve historic sites, or (vii) preserve visual quality along highway, road, and street corridors or scenic vistas, or (viii) retain in its natural state tracts of land not less than one acre situated in an urban area and open to public use on such conditions as may be reasonably required by the legislative body granting the open space classification, or (c) any land meeting the definition of farm and agricultural conservation land under subsection (8) of this section. As a condition of granting open space classification, the legislative body may not require public access on land classified under (b)(iii) of this subsection for the purpose of promoting conservation of wetlands. [RCW 84.34.020](#).

Open space ratio	The ratio of open space to the total site or the land area improved with buildings.
Ordinance	An ordinance of a city or town or resolution or other instrument by which the governing body of the public body exercising any power hereunder takes formal action and adopts legislative provisions and matters of some permanency.
Ownership of real property	The holding of rights or interests in real estate.

- P -

Person	Person shall be construed to include firm, company, association, or corporation. RCW 84.04.075 .
Personal property	The term personal property is defined in RCW 84.04.080 , which should be consulted in any case where it is at all doubtful whether a given piece of property is real or personal.
Personal property	For the purpose of taxation, personal property is all goods, chattels, stocks, estates or moneys, standing timber, etc., items not affixed to the real estate, but used for the purpose of doing business. Personal property also includes boats and mobile homes not affixed to any real estate. Personal property may also include buildings that are owned privately but located on leased government lands. RCW 84.04.080 .
Plat	A map or representation of a subdivision, showing thereon the division of a tract or parcel of land into lots, blocks, streets and alleys, or other divisions and dedications. RCW 58.17.020 .
Power of eminent domain	The right of government to take private property for public use (usually by purchase).
Property tax	A tax levied on real and personal property, based on value (ad valorem).
Property tax base	The assessed value of all property within a designated area, e.g., an assessment or tax district.
Prorationing of levies	A term meaning the statutory process for reducing local regular property tax levies other than the state levy for K-12 education <u>if</u> the aggregate of those levies exceeds either the aggregate \$5.90 limit or the 1 percent constitutional limit in a specific tax code area.
PTA	Property Tax Advisories—replace PTBs, Property Tax Bulletins.
Public property (exempt)	All property belonging exclusively to the United States, the state, any county or municipal corporation, and all property under a recorded agreement granting immediate possession and use pursuant to RCW 8.04.090, shall be exempt from taxation. All property belonging exclusively to a foreign national government shall be exempt from taxation if such property is used exclusively as an office or resident for a consul or other official representative of such foreign national government, and if the consul or other official representative is a citizen of such a foreign nation. Generally, property owned by a municipal corporation or a state

	agency is exempt from property taxes. Property leased by government remains taxable to the owner. Governments may “pay” property tax by agreeing to reimbursements of the owner’s tax payments by contract. RCW 84.36.010 .
Public utilities	Each company doing intercounty or interstate business in this state that is assessed and has values certified to the county assessor by the Department of Revenue. The term "centrally assessed properties" is sometimes used for these properties. The properties consist of power, communication, and transportation companies. RCW 84.12.200 . Chapter 458-50 WAC .
Public utility district (PUD)	A district formed to conserve the water and power resources of the state of Washington for the benefit of the people thereof, and to supply public utility services including water and electricity for all uses. Title 54 RCW .
- Q -	
Quick collect	The collection of taxes which have been levied (second Monday of October) on personal property that is about to be moved from the county where it has been assessed, about to be destroyed, sold or disposed of. RCW 84.56.070
- R -	
Rate	Numerical amount of property taxes to be levied expressed in terms of dollars per \$1,000 of assessed value, e.g., \$1.00 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Sometimes the rate is described without including "per \$1,000 of assessed value."
Ratio	The percentage relationship of real property assessed value to the true and fair value of real property as determined by real property sales, by department appraisals, or by department approved county appraisals, or the percentage relationship of personal property assessed value to the true and fair value of personal property as determined from department audits or from department approved county audits. RCW 84.48.075 and WAC 458-53-020 .
Ratio study	The Department's annual comparison of the relationship between the county assessed values of real and personal property with the market value of that property as determined by the Department's analysis of sales, appraisals, and/or audits or the comparison of the relationship between the county assessed values of real property classified under chapter 84.34 RCW (current use) with the current use value of that property as determined by the department. RCW 84.48.075 . WAC 458-53-020 .
RCW	Revised Code of Washington
Real estate	An identified parcel or tract of land, including improvements, if any. Also see Real Property.
Real property	For purposes of taxation, the term "real property" means the land

	itself and all buildings, structures or improvements or other fixtures including mobile homes that are permanently fixed in location. RCW 84.04.090
Refund fund	A fund within the county treasury that is used to refund to taxpayers the amount of all taxes held illegal and recoverable by <u>judgments</u> rendered against the county within the preceding twelve months, including legal interest and a proper share of the costs, where allowed by the judgment.
Regular property taxes/ regular property tax levies	The term "regular property taxes" and the term "regular property tax levy" shall mean a property tax levy by or for a taxing district which levy is subject to the aggregate limitation set forth in RCW 84.52.043 and 84.52.050 , as now or hereafter amended, or which is imposed by or for a port district or a public utility district. RCW 84.04.140 .
Rehabilitation	The process of returning a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its architectural and cultural values. RCW 84.26.020 .
Resolution	A special or temporary order of a legislative body (requires less legal formality than an ordinance or statute). (See definition of Ordinance.)
Revaluation	The process in which the assessed value of all real property is adjusted, to reflect the market or true and fair value of the property. Revaluation, which consists of a physical inspection of property, occurs every four years, except if a county statistically updates real property values annually. Then physical inspection is required every six years. RCW 84.41.030
Revenue bond	Any bond, note, warrant, certificate of indebtedness, or other obligation for the payment of money issued by a public body or any predecessor of any public body and which is payable from designated revenues or a special fund but excluding any obligation constituting an indebtedness within the meaning of the constitutional debt limitation and any obligation payable solely from special assessments or special assessments and a guaranty fund. RCW 39.53.010 .
Road levy shift	A temporary shift of levy capacity (rate) from the county's road levy to the county's current expense levy. Any county is authorized to increase its levy from one dollar and eighty cents to a rate not to exceed two dollars and forty-seven and one-half cents per thousand dollars of assessed value for general county purposes if the total levies for both the county and any road district within the county do not exceed four dollars and five cents per thousand dollars of assessed value, and no other taxing district has its levy reduced as a result of the increased county levy. RCW 84.52.043

Rural county library district Means a library serving all the area of a county not included within the area of incorporated cities and towns: PROVIDED, That any city or town with a population of one hundred thousand or less at the time of annexation may be included therein as provided in [RCW 27.12.360](#) through [27.12.390](#).

- S -

Sales comparison method See Market Comparison Method.

Sales study A study of comparable sales within the past five years for appraisal of real property using all factors as to time of sale, location, physical or other factors affecting value as of the assessment date. [RCW 84.40.030](#). [Chapter 458-53 WAC](#).

Sanitary district An assessment district established with particular reference to improvements (e.g., sewers and sewage disposal plants) that are constructed in the interest of sanitation and health; a municipal corporation organized to secure, preserve, and promote the public health.

Segregation (Seg) Separation of a tax parcel into two or more pieces.

Senior taxing district Means the state (for support of common schools), the county, county road, and city or town.

Short plat The map or representation of a short subdivision. [RCW 58.17.020](#).

Short subdivision The division or redivision of land into four or fewer lots, tracts, parcels, sites, or divisions for the purpose of sale, lease, or transfer of ownership. [RCW 58.17.020](#).

Situs, taxable personal property Personal property shall be listed and assessed in the county where it is located. [RCW 84.44.010](#). [WAC 458-12-115](#)

Situs, taxable real property The situs of real property is at the place where the property is located. The situs of a possessory interest in real property is at the place where the real property is situated. Where a parcel of real property is located in more than one taxing district the portion lying within a particular district is assessable only in that district. [WAC 458-12-055](#).

Special assessment The charge or obligation imposed by local government upon real property specially benefited by improvements. [WAC 458-18-010](#)

Special districts Districts created to provide a particular service, e.g., economic development districts, water resource management districts.

Special valuation The determination of the assessed value of the historic property subtracting, for up to ten years, such cost as is approved by the local review board. [RCW 84.26.020](#)

State-assessed property Intercounty or interstate utilities, railcar companies, and transportation companies valued by the Department of Revenue. These values are equalized using the ratio study. Once these properties are valued and equalized, they are certified (apportioned) to the counties, for placement on the assessment rolls.

State Board of Tax Appeals (BTA) If a taxpayer is not satisfied with their county's Board of Equalization decision, they can bring their appeal of their assessed

	value, before the state BTA. It is the job of the BTA to determine the correct value. The BTA also reviews certain property tax decisions made by DOR
State levy	The levy for state taxes as authorized by law not to exceed the lawful limit of \$3.60 per thousand dollars of assessed value, which is adjusted to the state equalized value in accordance with the indicated ratio fixed by DOR. The levy is for the support of Common Schools in the State of Washington. Remember that the state levy is not included in the \$5.90 statutory limit. RCW 84.48.080 .
State review board	The advisory council on historic preservation established under chapter 27.34 RCW , or any successor agency designated by the state to act as the state historic preservation review board under federal law. RCW 84.26.020
Statutory dollar rate	The maximum levy rate as set by statute for each type of regular levy. Currently, the aggregate limit is \$5.90.
Stratification	The grouping of the real or personal property assessment records into specific assessed value and/or use categories for ratio sampling and calculation purposes. WAC 458-53-020 .
Subdivision	The division of land into five or more lots, tracts, parcels, sites, or divisions for the purpose of sale, lease, or transfer of ownership. This does not include a short subdivision. RCW 58.17.020 .
Supplemental	Tax added to the roll after the roll has been certified for a specific year.
Survey	Survey shall mean the locating and monumenting in accordance with sound principles of land surveying, by or under the supervision of a licensed land surveyor, of points or lines which define the exterior boundary or boundaries common to two or more ownerships or which reestablish or restore general land office corners. RCW 58.09.020 .
Swear, oath	Oath may be held to mean affirmation, and the word <i>swear</i> may be held to mean affirm. RCW 84.04.070 .

- T -

Tangible property	Property that can be perceived by the senses; includes land, fixed improvements, furnishings, merchandise, cash, and other items of working capital used in an enterprise.
TAV	Timber assessed value
Tax/taxes	The word "tax" and its derivatives, "taxes," "taxing," "taxed," "taxation" and so forth shall be held and construed to mean the imposing of burdens upon property in proportion to the value thereof, for the purpose of raising revenue for public purposes. RCW 84.04.100 .
Tax base	The unit of value to which the tax rate is applied to determine the tax due; for property taxes, the assessed valuation of the property within the district.
Tax code area	Means a geographical area made up of a unique mix of one or more

	<p>taxing districts, which is established for the purpose of properly calculating, collecting and distributing taxes. Only one tax code area will have the same combination of taxing districts, except that an additional tax code area made up of the same taxing districts will be temporarily created when one of the taxing districts in the tax code area annexes additional area and the voters of the annexing district have previously authorized a bond levy upon which those taxpayers are still paying, and for which the taxpayers in the annexed area are not responsible. WAC 458-19-005</p>
Tax exemption	<p>Total exemption or freedom from tax granted to educational, charitable, religious, and other nonprofit organizations. Exemptions from personal property tax, such as the head-of-family, the historical property, and the remodel exemptions, are also granted. Also see Exemptions.</p>
Tax levy	<p>In property taxation, the total revenue that will be realized by the tax.</p>
Tax rate	<p>See Certified Property Tax Levy Rate.</p>
Tax roll	<p>The official list of all taxpayers subject to property tax, the amounts of their assessments, and the amounts of taxes to be collected by the Treasurer.</p>
Taxable situs – personalty	<p>Personal property shall be listed and assessed in the county where it is situated. The personal property pertaining to the business of a merchant or of a manufacturer shall be listed in the town or place where the business is carried. RCW 84.44.010, WAC 458-12-115, and WAC 458-12-120.</p>
Taxable situs – real property	<p>The situs of real property is at the place where the property is located. The situs of a possessory interest in real property is at the place where the real property is situated. Where a parcel of real property is located in more than one taxing district the portion lying within a particular district is assessable only in that district. WAC 458-12-055.</p>
Taxable value	<p>According to RCW 84.04.020 taxable value should be construed to mean assessed value, when used in the statutes. Please see Assessed Value for a definition. Note: In the case of partial exemptions, taxable and assessed value would not mean the same thing. For example, if a house with an assessed value of \$100,000 has exemptions worth \$30,000, the taxable value would equal \$70,000.</p>
Taxation	<p>The right of government to raise revenue through assessments on valuable goods, products, and rights.</p>
Taxing district	<p>"Taxing district" shall be held and construed to mean and include the state and any county, city, town, port district, school district, road district, metropolitan park district, water-sewer district or other municipal corporation, now or hereafter existing, having the power or authorized by law to impose burdens upon property within the district in proportion to the value thereof, for the purpose of obtaining revenue for public purposes, as distinguished from</p>

	<p>municipal corporations authorized to impose burdens, or for which burdens may be imposed, for such purposes, upon property in proportion to the benefits accruing thereto.</p> <p>RCW 84.04.120. WAC 458-12-140. WAC 458-18-510.</p>
Taxing district	A political subdivision for one or more assessment districts where a governmental unit has the authority to levy tax.
Taxing district boundaries	See Boundaries.
Taxpayer	Taxpayer shall mean any individual, corporation, association, partnership, trust, or estate whose property has been or will be assessed for property tax purposes according to Title 84 RCW . WAC 458-18-510 .
TCA	Tax code area
Timber	"Timber" means forest trees, standing or down, on privately or publicly owned land, and except as provided in RCW 84.33.170 includes Christmas trees and short-rotation hardwoods.
Timber assessed value (TAV)	A figure computed annually by the Department of Revenue based on a statutory formula (RCW 84.33.035 [18]). Briefly, the annual harvest value multiplied by the county timber tax rate (4.0 percent) divided by the county composite tax rate.
Timber land	Any parcel of land that is five or more acres or multiple parcels of land that are contiguous and total five or more acres which is or are devoted primarily to the growth and harvest of timber for commercial purposes. Timber land means the land only.
Timber land	RCW 84.34.020 (3)
Town	Please see Open Space (Timber Land)
Tract, lot	Technically, a territorial quasi-corporation, e.g., a New England town, or a political subdivision of the state or county, e.g., townships; commonly, an urban community; sometimes applied to any form of municipal corporation.
Trending	"Tract" or "lot," and "piece or parcel of real property," and "piece or parcel of lands" shall each be held to mean any contiguous quantity of land in the possession of, owned by, or recorded as the property of the same claimant, person, or company. RCW 84.04.130 .
True and fair value	Trending consists of adjusting the sale price of a property or the appraisal value from the time of sale or appraisal to a specific point in time, which is the January 1 assessment date.
	True and fair value is that value expressed in terms paid in a market transaction - willing buyer, willing seller, both buyer and seller knowledgeable of the uses to which the property can be put to, neither under duress.
	True and fair value is important since this is the value that the constitutional 1 percent levy limitation is based upon.
	RCW 84.40.030 . RCW 84.34.065 . WAC 458-07-030 .

- U -

Uniformity	<p>All taxes shall be uniform upon the same class of property within the territorial limits of the authority levying the tax and shall be levied and collected for public purposes only. (Article VII, Section 1, State Constitution.)</p> <p>The county commissioners are the authority that levies the tax (not individual taxing districts) in the county, and all property that comes within their jurisdiction must be uniformly valued and assessed. This rule firmly prohibits the use of varying assessment ratios within the confines of the county borders. The assessor must value all real and personal property at its fair market value and then apply the same or a uniform assessment ratio thereto. (Carroll Barlow, <i>Snohomish County Assessor v. Washington State Tax Commission</i> (1967).)</p>
Use classification	Property that is assessed as open space land, classified forest land or designated forest land.
Utility local improvement district (ULID)	See Local Improvement District (LID).

- V -

Value/valuation <i>(Black's Law Dictionary)</i>	<p>Relationship between a thing desired and a potential purchaser. Volume of goods, commodities, service a thing will command in exchange. It exists in the minds of men (people create value). Value is related to and influenced by need, utility, scarcity, and purchasing power.</p>
Valuation	The process of estimating the market value of an identified interest or interests in a specific parcel or parcels of real estate as of a given date.

- W -

WAC	Washington Administrative Code
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- X Y Z -