

Excise on Boats, Ships, and Vessels

Chapter 60B of the Massachusetts General Laws imposes an excise on the privilege of using the waterways of the Commonwealth. The excise is levied annually in lieu of a tangible personal property tax.

1) Reporting Requirements

Any person who owns a vessel on July 1st must annually, on or before August 1st, make a return to the Assessors of the city or town where such vessel is habitually moored or docked, or, if the vessel has no mooring or docking space, where the vessel is principally situated or registered.

Failure to timely file this return adversely affects the owner's abatement rights. If for reasonable excuse, the return is filed after August 1st but not later than October 31st, the Assessors may grant an abatement, but only if the amount of the bill is more than 50% above what the owner would otherwise be required to pay. If the return is not filed on or before October 31st, the Assessors do not have authority to grant abatement.

2) Valuation

The amount of the excise is based upon the fair cash value of the vessel and its equipment as determined by the local Assessors but may not exceed valuations listed in Chapter 60B, which are defined in terms of the length and age of the vessel.

3) Payment

An excise at the rate of \$10.00 per thousand is assessed for each fiscal year, beginning July 1st and ending June 30th, on vessels with a value of more than \$1,000. The bill is due and payable within 60 days from the date the notice is issued. A penalty of \$20.00 or 20% of the amount of the excise, whichever is greater, will be imposed if the excise remains unpaid after the due date.

4) Abatement

Applications for abatement must be filed with the Board of Assessors within three (3) years after the excise was due, or one year after the excise was paid, whichever is later.

Abatement may be granted under the following conditions:

1. The owner sells or otherwise transfers ownership of the vessel and cancels the registration **or**
2. The vessel is removed to another state and is registered in such other state and the Massachusetts registration is surrendered or not renewed.

The amount of the abatement depends upon the number of months remaining in the fiscal year after the month in which the sale or removal and surrender takes place.

For further information, please contact the Assessors' Office at 508-785-0032 ext. 241.