

The background features a gradient from red at the top to blue at the bottom. Overlaid on this are several abstract circular elements: a large circular scale on the left with numerical markings from 140 to 260, and several smaller circles with dashed lines and arrows, suggesting a process or cycle.

PUBLIC RECORDS IN THE ASSESSORS OFFICE

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HOW DO WE KNOW?

Most forms in the Assessors Office will clearly state if they are not open for public disclosure

When you have questions you can call the Secretary of State and ask the Attorney of the Day

Your Town Clerk can give you guidance

When in question ask. If you think parts of a document may be in questions, then redact the sections out and turn the document over

EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTS THAT ARE NEVER PUBLIC RECORD

Abatement Applications and attached documentation

Exemption Applications and attached documentation

Forms of List

Motor Vehicle Excise billing information – Subject to the Drivers Privacy Protection Act

Only the owner of a vehicle can have access to their billing information. Vehicles that are leased can only be accessed by the Leasing Company.

38 D Request

Chapter 61A 61B and 61 Applications

Form 3ABC

Executive Session minutes

ABATEMENTS, EXEMPTIONS AND DEFERRALS

- Minutes are public records - keeping good minutes that cover the requirements of the open meeting law is important
 - Just as important is to NEVER discuss Abatement, Exemption or Deferral Applications in a public forum
 - Your board should always go into Executive Session before acting on, or discussing applications
 - Unlike other executive session minutes Assessor's executive session minutes are never published, even after the matter is settled
 - When you come out of executive session you should read the resulting decisions into the minutes
- The fact that somebody gets an abatement or exemption IS public record, along with the amount, the clause and the address of the property.

WHO MAY SEE RECORDS THAT ARE NOT PUBLIC

- The Taxpayer or their personal representative may request to see their own documents
- Assessors and their Staff
- DOR and other Local Officials – only in the performance of their Official Duties
- Designated Private Auditors
- You can be demanded by Court Order to disclose documents

Never share records with Selectmen, Town Managers, or any other officials in your Town. They have no official capacity that would require access to those records.

THINGS THAT ARE SUBJECT TO PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

- Property Record Cards
- Commitment Book for Real and Personal Property
- Abatement Record Book
- Exemption Record Book
- Meeting minutes
- Correspondence
- Email – You may redact out anything dealing with abatements or litigation
- Personal Property record cards are a gray area

DOCUMENTS SUBJECT TO PUBLIC DISCLOSURE (CONT)

- Assessor's Maps
- Street Listings
- Any information which is used to product valuation in your office or computer system which is readily extracted is public information
- Income Cards for Commercial / Industrial Properties
 - Only the economic (market) data is public. The actual income and expenses should be omitted or redacted if the income card is requested

CUSTOM REPORTING

- Information that exists and is readily available is public and subject to request
- If you have a request for information or content that does not currently exist or cannot be easily extracted you do not have to comply. Custom manipulation of your data is not a public record request

KEEPING TRACK OF YOUR REQUESTS

- When you have somebody make a request for data ask them to request it in writing
- They do not have to comply, so if they refuse, document their request and refusal so that if there are any questions at a later date you can document that you complied with the request
- Most towns have a procedures in place to make sure they are in compliance. Make sure you follow the rules