

# Excise Tax Awareness

It's your money ask for it!



Did you know that when you buy a new car, or change vehicles you need to ask for an Excise Tax Refund?

Under Mass General Law Chapter 60A, all Massachusetts residents who own and register a motor vehicle must annually pay a motor vehicle excise. Bills are issued by Cities and Towns in the beginning of the year for the 12 months of the calendar year. If you register a vehicle after the beginning of the calendar year you will be billed for the month you registered it until the end of the calendar year.

*IF YOU TRANSFER REGISTRATION OR GET A NEW ONE - YOU ARE ENTITLED TO A REFUND FOR THE UNUSED PORTION OF THE EXCISE TAX THAT YOU ALREADY PAID TO THE END OF THE CALENDAR YEAR*

This does not happen automatically. It is up to you to request the refund by applying for abatement of the unused portion of the year. There are two things that the Assessor will need to have proof of.

1. **What happened to the Plate?** - It is really the License Plate that controls the bill. It is the proof your vehicle is registered and the information that the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) uses to tell Cities and Towns where to send the bills. When your relationship with a vehicle is at an end one of your first priorities should be to properly deal with your license plate. If you are not transferring the plate to your next vehicle the best thing you can do is cancel your registration at the RMV. This is easily done online at- <https://secure.rmv.state.ma.us/PlateReturn/intro.aspx> or at the RMV. This not only cancels your registration, but the plate as well. By canceling/returning the Plate you are telling the RMV, don't give me any more bills on this, I used the plate only until this date.
2. **What happened to the vehicle?** - You are required to pay excise tax for the calendar year as long as the vehicle remains in your possession. To qualify for an abatement the Assessor needs proof of when the vehicle left your possession. If you still own the vehicle the state considers it your personal property and you will not be eligible for

abatement. If you no longer own/possess the vehicle, we need proof of where it went. A bill of sale to the new owner, a Purchase and Sale agreement showing the car being traded, or a letter from the Insurance company showing the vehicle was a total loss are some acceptable forms of documentation. (see below for instructions for different circumstances)

Once you have the proof of those two things it is time to apply for the abatement. You will need a copy of the Abatement Application that should be available on the Town's website or in the Assessor's office. Abatements can be requested up to 3 years after the date of issue, or for 1 year after the tax has been paid if it was paid after that 3 year time period.

\* No abatement can reduce a tax to less than \$5.00, and no abatement of less than \$5 will be granted