

Figuring out Assessment

What is Assessment?

In Nova Scotia, the assessment service assigns a value to every property based on the expected selling or “market” value. This is done by:

- maintaining a data base that keeps a record of the characteristics of every property
- analyse the sales of properties in different areas and looking for similar characteristics at a specific date and time.
- In Nova Scotia a re-assessment is done every year.
- Under Provincial law HRM can not change the value of your assessment. Individuals, however, can appeal their assessment.

How do property assessments relate to my municipal tax bill?

- Each year HRM is provided with the value of every property in the municipality. Municipal expenditures are divided into that total assessment to determine the new tax rates for that year.
- Every home receives a tax bill based on that year’s property value and tax rate.
- HRM has [lowered the tax rate](#) in six of the last nine years. Not everyone’s property value changes by the same amount, so not everyone benefits equally from any rate decline.
- HRM provides tax relief for low income families through [tax rebates and deferrals](#).

What is the “Assessment Cap”?

- The Provincial Government’s Cap Assessment Program (CAP) is designed to protect property owners from dramatic increases in market value. It "caps" assessment increases for eligible properties.
- For example, in 2007, the cap rate was set at 10%, meaning an eligible home could rise in value no more than 10%.
- Starting in 2008, the cap rate will be set at the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
- The Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (www.unsm.ca) has conducted an [analysis of the cap program](#). It has concluded that:
 - it provides relief to those “experiencing rapid increases in property taxes”
 - It will “lead municipalities to set higher property tax rates to maintain tax revenue” with rates rising to “compensate for flattening assessment values”.
 - “Uncapped properties will pay more tax and shoulder additional burden.”

For more information

- See HRM’s Tax Reform website at: <http://www.halifax.ca/taxreform/>, or
- Call HRM’s Tax Reform phone line at: (902) 490-4886, or
- Email us at: taxreform@halifax.ca

- For the UNSM’s “Cap Program Analysis Report” see www.unsm.ca. For the Nova Scotia Government’s “Legislated Review” of the Cap Program see <http://www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/muns/cap.asp>.

- For more information on property assessments see <http://gov.ns.ca/snsmr/asmt/ps/value/>