

**MARSHA M. FAUX CFA, ASA  
POLK COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER**



## EXEMPTIONS

### Homestead, Widow, Disability, Veterans and Total Exemption

**Bartow Office**

255 N. Wilson Ave  
Bartow, FL 33830

Phone: 863-534-4777  
Fax: 863-534-4753  
Hours: 8:30am-5:00pm (M-F)

**Lakeland Office**

930 E. Parker St.  
Suite 272  
Lakeland, FL 33801

Phone: 863-802-6150  
Fax: 863-802-6163  
Hours: 8:00am-5:00pm (M-F)

**Winter Haven Office**

3425 Lake Alfred Rd.  
3 Gill Jones Plaza  
Winter Haven, FL 33881

Phone: 863-401-2424  
Fax: 863-401-2428  
Hours: 8:00am-5:00pm (M-F)

Website: [www.polkpa.org](http://www.polkpa.org)

## HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION

Every person who has the legal or equitable right to real estate and maintains it as his/her permanent residence or as the residence of another legally or naturally dependent upon the owner shall be entitled to Homestead Exemption.

**NOTICE:**

F.S.196.131(2) Any person who knowingly and willfully gives false information for the purpose of claiming Homestead Exemption as provided for in this chapter is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided by in F.S. 775.082 (term of imprisonment not exceeding one year) or a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or both.

F.S.191.161(1)(b) Any property owner who knowingly received Homestead Exemption and was not entitled thereto for ten (10) prior years, is subject to a fine plus penalties for any or all of the prior ten years.

- You and your spouse (if married) must present proof of legal residence which may be established by some or all of the following:
  - Florida Driver License —with current address
  - Florida vehicle registration—with current address
  - Voter registration — with current address
  - Local employment.

NOTE: Under Florida law you are required to update your address on your driver license and vehicle tag within 10 days of moving.

- You must have legal or equitable title to the property as of January 1st.
- You and your spouse (if married) must reside on the property and live in the home as of January 1st.
- You must provide the social security card for you and your spouse (if married and both live in the home).
- If you are not a citizen of the United States, you must provide your Permanent Resident Card to be entitled to Homestead Exemption.

**YOU MUST APPLY, IN PERSON, BY MARCH 1ST  
OF THE YEAR FOR WHICH YOU ARE FILING.**

**PRE-FILING FOR THE FOLLOWING YEAR:**  
Applications are accepted beginning March 2nd for the following year.

## ADDITIONAL HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION

Property owners who qualify for the initial \$25,000 Homestead Exemption may also be eligible to receive the additional \$25,000 homestead described under Amendment 1 beginning in the 2008 tax year. The additional exemption is applied toward the assessed value between \$50,000 and \$75,000. The difference between this exemption and the initial \$25,000 Homestead Exemption is that the school board portion of the millage rate is NOT exempt.

EXAMPLE: If a parcel has a value less than \$75,000 then they will only receive the exemption on the value above \$50,000 (i.e. if their value is \$65,000 then they will only receive an additional exemption in the amount of \$15,000: if their value is below \$50,000 they will not receive any additional homestead exemption).

The Additional Homestead Exemption will be applied automatically.

Reference F.S.196.031(1)(b)

**\*\*\*You must be a permanent resident of the State of Florida to qualify for any exemptions (described in this brochure) in the State of Florida, according to Florida Statute 196.015.\*\*\* <http://www.leg.state.fl.us>**

## LOSS OF HOMESTEAD

F.S. 196.061 the rental of an entire dwelling previously claimed to be a homestead for tax purposes shall constitute the abandonment of said dwelling as a homestead.

---

## \$500 WIDOW'S OR WIDOWER'S EXEMPTION

To file for Widow's or Widower's Exemption, you must be a widow or widower by January 1st of the tax year. You must apply and provide a copy of the death certificate.

---

## \$500 DISABILITY EXEMPTION

Property to the value of \$500 of every blind person or totally and permanently disabled person shall be exempt from taxation. You must apply and present written proof of total & permanent disability from a licensed Florida physician or present proof of legal blindness.

---

## \$5,000 VETERANS EXEMPTION

Any ex-service member who has 10% or more disability while serving during a period of wartime service or by misfortune, is entitled to a \$5,000 **service-connected** disability exemption. You must apply and a certificate of disability from the U.S. Government or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or its predecessor must be presented as evidence.

---

## V-7 EXEMPTION

Amendment 7 provides an additional property tax discount for eligible Florida veterans. This is a discount from the amount of ad valorem tax on the homestead of a partially disabled veteran who is 65 or older, who was a Florida resident at the time of entering the military, who has a combat related disability, and who was honorably discharged. The discount shall be a percentage equal to the percentage of the veteran's permanent, service-connected disability determined by the US Department of Veterans Affairs. You must apply and provide supporting documents.

---

## TOTAL EXEMPTION OF HOMESTEAD FROM TAXATION

**F.S. 196.081** provides that property owned and used as homestead by a Veteran, honorably discharged with a SERVICE-CONNECTED TOTAL and PERMANENT disability, having a letter from the U.S. Government or U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs certifying that the veteran is totally and permanently disabled is exempt from taxation.

**F.S. 196.101(1)** provides that property owned and used as homestead by a quadriplegic shall be exempt from taxation.

**F.S. 196.101(2)** provides that property owned and used as homestead by a paraplegic, hemiplegic or other totally and permanently disabled person who must use a wheelchair for mobility or who is legally blind may be exempt from taxation if they meet certain income limitations as set by F.S.

**196.101(4)** In addition, a certificate of Total & Permanent Disability from two licensed, professionally unrelated Florida physicians or from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is required per F.S. 196.101(3). You must apply and provide supporting documents.

---

## SENIOR EXEMPTION

The Senior Exemption is only applicable within the county or municipality that authorizes an additional exemption. School taxes and independent taxing districts (such as water management districts) are not covered by this exemption.

In order to qualify for the Senior Exemption, a homeowner must be at least 65 years of age as of January 1 and have a total household adjusted gross income that does not exceed the set limit during the preceding tax year. They must also qualify for regular Homestead Exemption. You must apply and provide supporting documents.

**NOTE:** The Senior Exemption is based on the previous year's adjusted gross income. (Adjusted each January for inflation.)

The following link will provide you with more information regarding Adjusted Gross Income.

[http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode26/usc\\_sec\\_26\\_00000062---000-.html](http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode26/usc_sec_26_00000062---000-.html)

---

## CONSERVATION EXEMPTION

The 2009 Legislature enacted legislation creating an exemption for real property dedicated in perpetuity for conservation purposes and requirements to file an application to be assessed for lands subject to a conservation easement, environmentally endangered or land used for outdoor recreational or park purposes. The new legislation created [section 196.26](#), Florida Statutes, outlining the definitions and requirements for owners to apply for an exemption for real property dedicated in perpetuity for conservation purposes. [Form DR-418C](#), Real Property Dedicated in Perpetuity for Conservation Purposes Exemption Application, was drafted for applicants whose property meets the requirements for a conservation exemption from [section 196.26](#), Florida Statutes. Those granted the exemption must reapply annually.

---

## ASSESSMENT REDUCTION FOR PROPERTY USED FOR LAND CONSERVATION

Legislation amended [section 193.501](#), Florida Statutes, requiring an application to be filed with the Property Appraiser for property to be assessed at a reduced value if used for conservation. [Form DR-482C](#) was drafted for applicants whose property meets the requirements. [Form DR-482CR](#), Land Used for Conservation Assessment Reapplication is a short form to annually reapply for the assessment.

---

## DEPLOYED MILITARY EXEMPTION

The 2011 Florida Legislature enacted the implementing legislation for the deployed servicemember exemption adopted as a constitutional amendment in the 2010 election. The law is retroactive to January 1, 2011. The exemption is available for the 2011 assessment year to servicemembers who received a homestead exemption and were deployed during the 2010 calendar year.

A **servicemember** is defined as a member or former member of any branch of the United States military or military reserves, the United States Coast Guard or its reserves, or the Florida National Guard.

**Deployed in the preceding calendar year** is defined as a servicemember deployed outside the continental United States, Alaska, or Hawaii in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, or Operation New Dawn.

The percent of the taxable value that is exempt for the current year is determined by the percent of time during the last year when the servicemember was deployed on a designated operation.

---

## PROPERTY ENTITLED TO TAX EXEMPTION

To be wholly or partially exempt from ad valorem taxation, property must be owned by an organization qualified for the exemption and the property must be used exclusively or predominantly for charitable, religious, educational, governmental, literary or scientific purposes.

- All property used exclusively for exempt purposes shall be totally exempt from ad valorem taxation.
- All property used predominantly for exempt purposes shall be exempt from ad valorem taxation to the extent of the ratio that such predominant use bears the non-exempt use.
- No application for exemption may be granted for religious, literary, scientific or charitable use of property until the application has been found by the Property Appraiser, or the Value Adjustment Board to be non-profit as defined in F.S.196.196.
- Educational institutions include state, parochial, Church and private schools, colleges and universities conducting regular classes and courses of study required for eligibility to, certification by, accreditation to, or membership in the State Department of Education of Florida, Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, or the Florida Council of Independent Schools.