

2024 Guide to Wisconsin Manufacturing Property Assessment



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I. Introduction

In 1973, the Wisconsin legislature created a state law (sec. [70.995](#), Wis. Stats.), making the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) responsible for the assessment of manufacturing real estate and personal property. This law was created to help ensure fair and equitable assessments for manufacturing property and assessment uniformity statewide. In 2023, the Wisconsin legislature passed [2023 WI Act 12](#) exempting personal property from assessment.

II. Manufacturing Classification

A manufacturing operating establishment is engaged in the assembling, processing, fabricating, making or milling of tangible personal property for profit.

A. SIC manual

The [Standard Industrial Classification Manual \(SIC Manual\)](#) organizes economic activities and defines industries for reporting economic statistical data. The manual organizes business establishments based on primary activity into nine divisions. Within [Division D – Manufacturing](#) – establishments engaged in the mechanical or transformation of materials or substances into new products are organized into 20 major groups of similar activity. The 1987 Edition plays a major role in identifying business activities that qualify as manufacturing.

Under state law (sec. [70.995\(2\)](#), Wis. Stats.), an operating establishment may be classified as "manufacturing" if the operating establishment's activity is included in one of the major group classifications found in Division D of the SIC Manual.

B. Manufacturing real property

Manufacturing real estate is defined as all real property, as defined in sec. [70.03](#), Wis. Stats., in this state, used in manufacturing, assembling, processing, fabricating, making, or milling tangible personal property for profit. Manufacturing property also includes warehouses, storage facilities, and office structures in this state when the predominant use of the warehouses, storage facilities, or offices is in support of the manufacturing property.

C. Requesting a manufacturing classification

1. Qualifying as a manufacturer

If you feel your business activity qualifies as manufacturing, you must contact the [Manufacturing & Utility Bureau District Office](#) in your area in writing, by July 1 of the assessment year. Requests received after July 1 are considered for the following year.

- Complete the [Questionnaire for Potential Manufacturers \(Form PA-780\)](#) and submit it to the [Manufacturing & Utility Bureau District Office](#) where your property is located
- Include a fixed asset list or depreciation schedule detailing all personal property assets owned and/or leased by the business. For each asset, include an item description, original cost, and a date of acquisition.
- The business activity will not be considered for classification unless a fixed asset list is submitted

Note: DOR requests you write a letter or email, and provide a brochure or web address that helps explain your business activities. A visit to your property may be required prior to classification.

2. Sales tax exemption

Sales and use tax exemption may apply to machinery and equipment used by a business in producing tangible personal property.

Note: Sales tax and manufacturing property tax are administered under different statutes. To be classified as manufacturing with DOR's Manufacturing & Utility Bureau, you must complete the process described in [Qualifying as a manufacturer](#).

3. Income tax credit

The [manufacturing and agriculture credit](#) is available to businesses engaged in a qualifying manufacturing or agricultural activity. A claimant that is approved by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue to be classified as a manufacturer for purposes of sec. [70.995](#), Wis. Stats., but who is not eligible to be listed on the department's manufacturing roll until January 1 of the following year, may claim the credit in the year in which the manufacturing classification is approved.

If you have questions, contact Corporation Franchise/Income Tax Assistance at (608) 266-2772 or DORFranchise@wisconsin.gov.

D. DOR issues a manufacturing classification decision

1. Manufacturing classification is granted

If your business activity meets the requirements for a manufacturing classification, DOR sends you written confirmation that DOR classified your business as a manufacturing activity

2. Manufacturing classification is denied

- If your business is denied manufacturing classification, DOR sends you a letter explaining the basis for the denial
- DOR also sends a copy of the denial letter to the municipal assessor – to avoid an omitted assessment. This letter states that the local assessor is responsible for your property assessment.

If you have questions:

- Contact the [Manufacturing & Utility Bureau District Office](#) in your area to discuss the basis for the decision
- If you remain dissatisfied, you can file an appeal with the Wisconsin State Board of Assessors (BOA), objecting to the classification denial. For more information, review [Filing an appeal](#) in this guide.

E. DOR issues a manufacturing real estate classification decision

Substantial use

State law (sec. [70.995\(4\)](#), Wis. Stats.), states in part, "...For all purposes of this section the department of revenue shall have sole discretion for the determination of what is substantial use and what description of real property shall constitute "the property" to be included for assessment purposes, and, in connection herewith, the department may include in a real property unit, real property owned by different persons..." The substantial use of real estate by a manufacturer generally determines whether the assessment responsibility is with DOR or the municipal assessor.

- **DOR** – generally assesses the real estate if the activity is classified as manufacturing and occupies more than 50% of the square footage in the building
- **Municipal assessor** – generally assesses the real estate if the activity classified as manufacturing occupies less than 50% of the square footage in the building. Occupancy can be based on a lease agreement, or the area used.

Note: If the substantial use of the real estate changes, DOR investigates the change. Assessment authority will shift from DOR to the municipal assessor if a non-manufacturing use is imminent.

If you have questions:

- Contact the [Manufacturing & Utility Bureau District Office](#) in your area to discuss the basis for the decision
- If you remain dissatisfied, you may file an appeal with the Wisconsin State Board of Assessors (BOA), objecting to the classification denial. For more information, review [Filing an appeal](#) in this guide.

F. Statutory filing requirements

1. Real estate – if you own or lease real estate classified as manufacturing

- **M-R form** – you must annually file a [Manufacturing Real Estate Return \(PA-750R\)](#)
- **You must file a separate M-R form for:**
 - » Each parcel or legal description – parcels must not be combined on one M-R for
 - » Property located in different special districts within the same municipality are considered separate parcels
- **Real estate changes (completed by owner or tenant) to report on the M-R form include:** new construction, construction in progress, remodeling, demolition, land improvements, waste treatment, and lease information

Note:

- M-R form collects changes made to your real estate from January 1 of the prior year, to January 1 of the current year
- Your assessment is based on what is in place as of January 1
Filing an accurate M-R form helps ensure you receive a fair and accurate assessment

2. Filing your form

a. E-filing

DOR recommends you e-file your M-R form and extension requests through My Tax Account ([MTA](#)). Electronic forms are convenient, easy to use, and allow you to:

- File your M-R form on a secure, confidential website
- Receive immediate confirmation of the filing
- Request one filing extension to April 1 and receive immediate approval
- Prepare, save, view and print your M-R form online
- Notify DOR of ownership and address changes
- View historical filings

b. Paper forms – if you choose to file a paper form:

- You must complete a Manufacturing and Utility Electronic Filing Waiver Request ([Form EFT-102M](#)) and submit to DOR for approval
- If your waiver is approved, contact your [Manufacturing & Utility Bureau District Office](#) for the paper M-R form

Note: DOR does not accept modified versions of any M-R form, prior year returns or faxed paper returns (since an original signature is required).

c. Filing deadlines and extensions

1) Filing date – to file timely, you must submit your M-R form to DOR using one of the following methods with the stated guidelines on or before the March 1 due date:

- **Electronically through MTA** – finalize by midnight, March 1
- **Deliver in-person** – must be received by the appropriate [Manufacturing & Utility Bureau District Office](#) on or before March 1
- **First class mail** – finalize and submit by midnight, March 1
- **Certified mail** – must be postmarked by midnight, March 1

2) Filing an extension request

- Manufacturers can request one filing extension to April 1
 - » File an extension request through [MTA](#), or file a written extension request by email, first class mail or fax with the [Manufacturing & Utility Bureau District Office](#) in your area
 - » DOR must receive your extension request on or before the March 1 due date
 - » DOR will not grant filing extensions based on a phone request
 - » All requests must include the DOR State ID number or Wisconsin Tax Number (WTN)

Note: If the due date for filing an M-R form or an extension fall on a Saturday or Sunday, the due date shifts to the following Monday.

3) Receipt acknowledgement – if you need acknowledgement of mailing, make sure to send your M-R form by certified mail. DOR will not acknowledge receipt of mailed M-R forms or extensions in any other manner.

d. Late or non-filing penalties

1) If an M-R form is not filed – DOR reviews the prior year assessment, building permits, and current economic conditions. DOR will set the real estate assessment and issue a penalty.

2) Penalties are issued for late M-R forms or non-filing, based on the statutory guidelines below:

Days filed late	Late fee
1 to 10 days	\$25
11 to 30 days	\$50 or 0.05% of prior year's assessment (whichever is greater, not to exceed \$250)
Over 30 days	\$100 or 0.1% of the prior year's assessment (whichever is greater, not to exceed \$750)

3) Penalty information

- To avoid interest and collection fees, you must pay your penalty to DOR within 30 days of the Assessment Notice date
- Payment instructions are on the penalty notice
- If you have a penalty question, contact your [Manufacturing & Utility Bureau District Office](#) within 30 days of the Assessment Notice date

III. Manufacturing Assessment

A. Market value for real estate

Market value is the statutory standard for valuing real estate. It is generally defined as the value a property would ordinarily sell for in an arms-length sale, where both the buyer and seller are knowledgeable and willing participants, and neither are compelled to act. The relationship between the parties, their motives, and all circumstances involved in the transaction are investigated to determine the validity of the sale.

Evidence used to determine market value

Under state law (sec. [70.32\(1\)](#), Wis. Stats.), the assessor must first consider a recent arm's-length sale of the subject property to value the property.

- **If there is no recent arm's-length sale of the subject property** – assessor should consider recent sales of reasonably comparable or similar properties
- **If there is no recent arm's-length sale of the subject property, or recent sales of reasonably comparable properties** – assessor will consider all other relevant data that may impact the property value

B. DOR site visits

Periodically, DOR conducts a site visit (field audit) of your property. In the years without a site visit, we rely on your filed M-R forms to track your property changes.

At the site visit, the DOR appraiser:

- Tours your property
- Reviews the dimensions, construction components, features, physical condition and obsolescence of each building on the property
- Reviews land improvements
- Inquires about issues with your buildings and the neighborhood
- Photographs exterior views of your facility

- Discusses any concerns you have about your property
- Updates DOR records (after the visit) to accurately reflect your property characteristics

C. Your real estate assessment

After updating DOR records, the appraiser considers which approach(es) to value to consider when determining your assessment: Sales Comparison Approach, Cost Approach and/or Income Approach.

1. Approaches

- a. Sales comparison approach** – if there is no recent sale of the subject, the appraiser reviews the DOR sales data base for recently sold properties with characteristics similar to the subject property. After adjusting for differences, the appraiser reviews the adjusted sale prices to help determine the value of your property.
- b. Cost and income approaches** – if there are insufficient sales available, the Cost Approach (estimate of market value using the replacement cost new less depreciation) and Income Approach (estimate of market value based on the income of the property) may be used to determine the market value of your property

2. Market

Current market activity – is also considered when determining your assessment. Current market activity impacts real estate assessments, in addition to physical changes made to the property.

DOR monitors:

- Improved and vacant land sales
- Current property listings, including subject property
- Lease rates and vacancy rates
- Changes in the economy (local, state, national)
- Current lending practices
- New construction

D. Notice of Assessment

- In June of each year, DOR mails a Notice of Assessment to the owner for each real estate parcel assessed
- If you have questions or concerns about your assessment, contact the [Manufacturing & Utility Bureau District Office](#) where the property is located
- Appeal instructions are on the reverse side of the notice

E. Assessment information is given to the municipal clerk

Full market value – by statute, DOR is required to assess all property at full market value. However, Wisconsin law allows municipal assessors to assess real estate at a fraction of full market value. To maintain equity between all taxpayers, manufacturing assessments are adjusted to the local level of assessment.

DOR provides the municipal clerk with assessed values for manufacturing real estate. The municipal clerk calculates and collects property taxes for manufacturers, in the same manner and at the same rate as all other property.

Example 1

DOR full value assessment	\$500,000
Local level of assessment	x 90%
Adjusted assessment used to extend taxes	\$450,000

Example 2

DOR full value assessment	\$500,000
Local level of assessment	x 105%
Adjusted assessment used to extend taxes	\$525,000

IV. Filing an Appeal

A. Before you file an appeal

- If you have questions or concerns about your manufacturing real estate assessment, or classification decision, contact the [Manufacturing & Utility Bureau District Office](#) responsible for the location of your manufacturing property. In some cases, an issue can be resolved without filing a formal appeal.
- If you have new information (ex: recent fee appraisal, recent listing price) showing the assessment is incorrect, DOR will work with you to ensure a fair and equitable assessment

B. Filing procedure

Property owners must file an objection to their real estate assessment online through My Tax Account ([MTA](#)). You will need the Letter ID from your Notice of Manufacturing Real Estate Assessment.

Objections to a Manufacturing Classification Decision (Form [PA-130](#)) and to Manufacturing Filing Penalties (Form [PA-133](#)) can only be filed by paper.

The following apply to all first-level BOA appeals, including: real estate valuation and classification decisions.

1. Agent representation

- Legal representation is not required to proceed through the appeal process. A determination is based on evidence provided with the appeal. It does not rest on a hearing or the testimony of witnesses.
- As a property owner, you may proceed on your own behalf or hire an agent. If you choose to hire an agent, you must submit a signed Agent Authorization Form ([PA-105](#)) or other written document authorizing the agent to represent your interests in the appeal process.

2. Appeals filed by a tenant

As a manufacturing tenant (lessee), you may file an assessment appeal for the real estate you lease. However, you must provide written authorization from the real estate owner to appeal the assessment. In most cases, a tenant may provide an Agent Authorization Form ([PA-105](#)) signed by the owner, giving authorization to the tenant to file an appeal. If authorization is included in the current lease agreement, you must submit the lease agreement to meet the authorization requirement.

3. Types of appeals – forms

There are several types of appeals. Each objection form addresses a specific appeal type. Real estate objection forms are located in My Tax Account ([MTA](#)). Classification, penalty and municipal appeal objection forms are located on our [website](#).

C. Filing the objection form

1. Objection to Manufacturing Real Estate Assessment

To file a real estate assessment appeal, login to My Tax Account ([MTA](#)). Choose your account and select "File/View Returns." Select "Appeal" and follow the prompts to complete the objection form.

If applicable, you must pay the \$200 filing fee online before you can submit the form. For valuation appeals, under state law (sec. [70.995\(8\)\(c\)\(1\)](#), Wis. Stats.), you must provide specific information to the BOA in the form, including:

- Reason for objection
- Opinion of the correct full value assessment
- Basis for the opinion of value

Note: Complete all sections of the form and provide all statutorily required information. If you file an incomplete form, DOR may deny your appeal. Review [MTA Manufacturing Appeal Filing Instructions](#) for detailed information about filing your appeal in My Tax Account.

2. Objection to Manufacturing Filing Penalty or Manufacturing Classification Decision

To file a filing penalty appeal or a manufacturing classification appeal, you must file the appropriate paper form located on our [website](#).

Note: Complete all sections of the form and provide all statutorily required information. If you file an incomplete form, DOR may deny your appeal.

3. Due date

You must file your appeal no later than 60 days after the date of the assessment, filing penalty, or classification notice.

- Your valuation appeal is considered timely filed if filed through MTA, with the applicable filing fee, by midnight of the 60th day
- Your filing penalty or classification appeal is considered timely filed if the BOA receives it with the filing fee, by the 60th day or you send your appeal form by certified mail with the filing fee, and it is postmarked before midnight of the 60th day

4. Deadlines for submitting evidence

You may submit supporting evidence/documents with your appeal. Under state law (sec. [70.995\(8\)\(c\)\(2\)](#), Wis. Stats.), you may submit additional information supporting your appeal to the BOA within 60 days of filing your appeal. See [Due date](#) above to determine timely filing of evidence.

Important: If you do not intend to provide additional information, choose “Yes” in the “Submitting Additional Information” section of the objection form and the state board of assessors may be able to process your appeal sooner if you choose to waive your right to provide additional information.

Note: The deadline applies to filing of appeals of manufacturing property notices of assessment, appeals of notices of classification determinations, and appeals of imposition of penalties.

5. Current year M-R form filing

DOR must have a current, timely-filed M-R form for the account under appeal received prior to setting the original assessments. If you did not file a timely return, you lost your right to appeal and your appeal will be dismissed.

Note: If the due dates for filing the objection form (or submitting evidence) falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or a holiday, the due date shifts to the following Monday or first business day.

D. Submitting your appeal to DOR

1. To file an appeal, you must submit the following to DOR for each appeal

a. State prescribed form – under state law ([sec. 70.995\(8\)\(c\)](#), [Wis. Stats.](#)), you are required to file a state prescribed objection form with the BOA

- **Real estate assessment objection form** – located in My Tax Account ([MTA](#)) and must be e-filed
- **Penalty and classification determination objection forms** – located on our website in PDF format. You must print, complete and send the form to the BOA address noted on the form.

b. Agent authorization – if you are an agent filing on behalf of an owner, you must complete and simultaneously file the [PA-105](#) Agent Authorization Form. There is a place to attach this form within [MTA](#).

c. Filing fee – you must pay the \$200 filing fee online at the time you file your objection in MTA or include it with your paper objection form

- DOR does not consider your objection filed until you pay this fee
- DOR waives the fee if a prior year appeal on the same property is pending, under state law (sec. 70.995(8)(c) and (d), Wis. Stats.)

2. Where to file

a. Electronic filing – real estate assessment objections are found in My Tax Account ([MTA](#)) and must be filed electronically

b. Paper form filing – submit the completed paper objection form and a \$200 filing fee for **each** real estate parcel, classification appeal, your agent authorization (if appropriate), and one copy of all supporting documents to:

By mail

Wisconsin Department of Revenue
State Board of Assessors
PO Box 8971 MS 6-97
Madison WI 53708-8971

By certified mail

Wisconsin Department of Revenue
State Board of Assessors
2135 Rimrock Rd MS 6-97
Madison WI 53713

3. DOR receives your appeal

After we receive your appeal, it is reviewed to ensure the filing requirements are met. DOR will send you, your agent (if applicable), and the municipal clerk an acknowledgement letter explaining the appeal process, and directions on how to provide supplemental information to support your objection.

Note: If the municipality appeals your assessment, the acknowledgement letter contains information on filing a cross-appeal.

4. Filing requirements are met and DOR reviews the evidence

After your objection form is reviewed and filing requirements are met, a DOR assessor is assigned to the case. Throughout the appeal process, you (the property owner) are referred to as the "appellant."

When your deadline to submit evidence is over, the appraiser investigates the information provided with the appeal and reviews DOR records.

If you don't submit timely-filed evidence or submit evidence with no analysis, you are not providing clear and convincing evidence to show the assessment is inaccurate. In this case, the appraiser would recommend the assessment be sustained. Generally, the investigation includes a site visit to your property. The appraiser may request additional information or evidence as necessary.

V. Board of Assessors

After the investigation is concluded, the appraiser prepares and submits a written recommendation to the BOA. BOA members include: DOR employees selected by the DOR Secretary. The Manufacturing & Utility Bureau Director chairs this board.

A. BOA's decision

1. Appeal resources available – the appraiser and the BOA have the same resources available to address the appeal:

- Wisconsin statutes
- Wisconsin Property Assessment Manual
- Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) Code Manual
- Judicial rulings
- Prior year BOA determinations

2. BOA review

BOA does the following:

- Reviews the appraiser's recommendation, as well as the property owner's evidence
- May request that additional information be provided or suggest other changes to consider

- Verifies the recommendation meets the threshold for BOA approval before issuing an assessment determination
- Sends a BOA determination notice to the property owner, the agent (if one is authorized), and the municipal clerk where the property is located. Under state law, the BOA must address every appeal and send a determination by April 1 of the year following the appeal.

B. Appealing the BOA determination

- If you are dissatisfied with the determination, you may appeal the BOA's decision to the [Wisconsin Tax Appeals Commission \(TAC\)](#) within 60 days of the date on the determination notice
- General TAC appeal instructions are provided on the determination notice
- TAC may conduct a trial providing you the opportunity to present evidence and cross-examine DOR witnesses in a formal setting
- If you are dissatisfied with the TAC's determination, you may appeal the decision to Circuit Court

C. Municipal appeals

1. Information

- Your municipal clerk is notified of your assessment and can appeal your assessment or any decision made by the BOA or the TAC
- In addition, both you and the municipality are notified of any appeal filed by the other party and can provide information or present evidence regarding the appeal

2. Filing an appeal

a. Property owner

If the property owner files an objection, the municipality affected may file an appeal to the property owner's objection within 15 days after the owner's objection is filed, under state law ([sec. 70.995\(8\)\(d\)](#), Wis. Stats.).

b. Municipality

- May file an objection to the amount, valuation or taxability of a property, whether or not the owner of the specific property filed an objection
- May file a cross-appeal within 15 days of receiving notice that the property owner is appealing
- Must file the appeal within 60 days of the date on the property's Assessment Notice
- Must attach a dated copy of the governing body's authorization with the objection form
- DOR will notify the property owner that the municipality filed an objection

Note:

- If a municipality files a real estate appeal, the property owner can also file an appeal
- If a municipality files an objection and the property owner did not file an objection, the property owner may file an appeal within 15 days after the municipality's objection is filed, under state law ([sec. 70.995\(8\)\(b\)2](#), Wis. Stats.)

D. Withdrawing an appeal

- You may withdraw your appeal at any time before the BOA issues a determination
- To withdraw your appeal, complete Objection Form PA-138 (Appeal Withdrawal) – complete and file a separate form for each property appealed
- Send your original withdrawal form to:
State Board of Assessors
PO Box 8971
MS 6-97
Madison WI 53708-8971

Note: For additional information on appeals, review the [Guide to Manufacturing Board of Assessor Appeals](#).

VI. Resources/Contact Information

Wisconsin Statutes

- State assessment of manufacturing property – sec. [70.995](#), Wis. Stats.
- General property taxes – [Chapter 70](#)

DOR website – [Manufacturers landing page](#)

[State prescribed forms](#)

[My Tax Account \(MTA\)](#)

[Wisconsin Tax Appeals Commission](#)

[DOR Manufacturing Bureau District Office locations](#)

[DOR manufacturing email list](#)