

## **City of Ocala Non-Ad Valorem Fire Assessment Frequently Asked Questions**

QUESTION: What is a non-ad valorem assessment?

ANSWER: A non-ad valorem assessment is a special assessment levied on real property, but which is not based on the value of your property. Non-ad valorem assessments are charged to cover the cost associated with a specific benefit to property. In this case, it is Fire Rescue services.

QUESTION: Why did the City implement the assessment?

ANSWER: The City used to charge a Fire User Fee that was billed on the municipal services bill. The City discontinued collecting that fee in July 2020 due to a legal challenge and implemented the assessment beginning in February 2021. The Fire Assessment revenue is needed to supplement the ad valorem property tax revenue used to fund the rest of Fire Rescue's budget.

QUESTION: How much revenue will the City generate from the assessment?

ANSWER: The City expects to generate \$9.2 million from the assessment for the upcoming fiscal year. Ocala Fire Rescue's budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022, which is October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022 is roughly \$20.7 million.

QUESTION: Is there another way to generate the revenue needed?

ANSWER: Another option to generate the revenue is through an increase in ad valorem property taxes. However, the advantage of generating the revenue by the Fire Assessment, rather than a property tax increase, is that properties which may be exempt from paying property taxes but benefit from fire protection are still subject to paying the assessment. Therefore, the costs are more equitably spread to all who benefit from Ocala Fire Rescue services. The Fire Assessment will also be a more stable revenue source as it will not fluctuate with property values.

QUESTION: Who is responsible for paying the Fire Assessment?

ANSWER: Assessments are the responsibility of the owner(s) of the property subject to the assessment. So, each property owner will pay the assessment in a fashion like paying their property taxes. The City does not charge Fire Assessments to renters, lessees, or other non-owners of the property.

QUESTION: If I do not pay taxes now due to the homestead exemption or other exemptions, will I have to pay the special assessment?

ANSWER: Yes. Special assessments are legally different than taxes. The Fire Assessment applies to all residential and all non-residential property uses, regardless of homestead or other exemption status. It also applies to vacant land.

QUESTION: Why am I being charged again on my tax bill when I paid a fire assessment earlier this year?

ANSWER: The bills sent earlier this year were for February 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021. The assessment on the tax bill is for October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022.

QUESTION: Why are there two assessments on my tax bill?

ANSWER: According to our records, the assessment billed in March 2021 that covered from February 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021 was not paid. This is identified with the code "D90?" on the second line of the Non-Ad Valorem Assessments section. The first line identified with code "X90?" is for the period of October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022.

QUESTION: How was my rate determined?

ANSWER: The City used an outside consultant, Tindale-Oliver & Associates, to conduct a Fire Assessment study to determine eligible costs that could be recovered through a fire assessment. The study findings were updated in June 2021. Residential and non-residential property rates are tiered based on square footage while vacant parcel rates are flat.

QUESTION: Why is my rate different from last year?

ANSWER: The method used to calculate the rates is different than last year. This year's rates include tiering based on square footage for residential and more categories (i.e. commercial, industrial, and institutional) for non-residential properties.

QUESTION: How was my property information (square footage, mailing address, owner name, etc.) obtained?

ANSWER: This information was obtained from the Marion County Property Appraiser's database. Any corrections to this information should be directed to that office at 352-368-8300.

QUESTION: What if my mortgage company pays my taxes?

ANSWER: The Fire Assessment will be on the same bill as the property taxes and should be sent to and paid by the mortgage company if the property owner(s) pays property taxes through escrow. But you are still responsible for paying the Fire Assessment if your mortgage company does not pay.

QUESTION: When do taxes become delinquent?

ANSWER: Taxes and assessment become delinquent on April 1. On or after April 1, the amount due is determined by the date your payment is **RECEIVED** by the Tax Collector's Office, not the postmark date.

QUESTION: What happens if I don't pay the Fire Assessment?

ANSWER: Florida law requires that ad valorem taxes and assessments on the tax bill be paid at the same time. Failure to pay your full tax bill will result in additional fees, interest, and penalties and the Tax Collector issuing a tax certificate against your property which can result in loss of title to the affected property.

QUESTION: What is the mailing address for payments?

ANSWER: The remittance address for payments is as follows:  
George Albright  
503 SE 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Ocala, FL 34471

QUESTION: What if I never received a tax bill?

ANSWER: If you do not receive a tax bill in November, contact the Marion County Tax Collector's Office at 352-368-8200. It is the responsibility of each taxpayer to ensure that taxes are paid, regardless of whether a tax notice is received or not.

Additional resources:

Current Tax Questions: <https://www.mariontax.com/current-tax-questions>

Delinquent Tax Questions: <https://www.mariontax.com/delinquent-tax-questions>

# FIRE ASSESSMENT

## RATES FOR FY 2021-2022

<b>Residential</b>	
<b>Square Footage Tier</b>	<b>Rate Per Dwelling Unit</b>
<b>Single Family/Mobile Home/Duplex Tiering</b>	
1 - 1,000 sf	\$152.47
1,001 - 1,600 sf	\$175.16
1,601 - 2,500 sf	\$203.97
> 2,500 sf	\$255.48
<b>Multi-Family Tiering</b>	
1 - 1,000 sf	\$137.08
1,001 - 1,200 sf	\$144.55
> 1,200 sf	\$153.37

<b>Vacant Land</b>	
<b>Land Use Category</b>	<b>Rate per Unit</b>
Vacant Land	\$28.35

<b>Non-Residential</b>			
<b>Square Footage Range</b>	<b>Commercial Rate per Parcel</b>	<b>Industrial/Warehouse Rate per Parcel</b>	<b>Institutional Rate per Parcel</b>
0 - 2,000 sf	\$145.00	\$79.00	\$97.00
2,001 - 3,000 sf	\$362.50	\$197.50	\$242.50
3,001 - 4,000 sf	\$507.50	\$276.50	\$339.50
4,001 - 5,000 sf	\$652.50	\$355.50	\$436.50
5,001 - 6,000 sf	\$797.50	\$434.50	\$533.50
6,001 - 7,000 sf	\$942.50	\$513.50	\$630.50
7,001 - 8,000 sf	\$1,087.50	\$592.50	\$727.50
8,001 - 10,000 sf	\$1,305.00	\$711.00	\$873.00
10,001 - 12,000 sf	\$1,595.00	\$869.00	\$1,067.00
12,001 - 14,000 sf	\$1,885.00	\$1,027.00	\$1,261.00
14,001 - 16,000 sf	\$2,175.00	\$1,185.00	\$1,455.00
16,001 - 18,000 sf	\$2,465.00	\$1,343.00	\$1,649.00
18,001 - 20,000 sf	\$2,755.00	\$1,501.00	\$1,843.00
20,001 - 25,000 sf	\$3,262.50	\$1,777.50	\$2,182.50
25,001 - 30,000 sf	\$3,987.50	\$2,172.50	\$2,667.50
30,001 - 35,000 sf	\$4,712.50	\$2,567.50	\$3,152.50
35,001 - 40,000 sf	\$5,437.50	\$2,962.50	\$3,637.50
40,001 - 45,000 sf	\$6,162.50	\$3,357.50	\$4,122.50
45,001 - 50,000 sf	\$6,887.50	\$3,752.50	\$4,607.50
50,001 - 60,000 sf	\$7,975.00	\$4,345.00	\$5,335.00
60,001 - 70,000 sf	\$9,425.00	\$5,135.00	\$6,305.00
70,001 - 80,000 sf	\$10,875.00	\$5,925.00	\$7,275.00
80,001 - 90,000 sf	\$12,325.00	\$6,715.00	\$8,245.00
90,001 - 100,000 sf	\$13,775.00	\$7,505.00	\$9,215.00
100,001 - 120,000 sf	\$15,950.00	\$8,690.00	\$10,670.00
120,001 - 140,000 sf	\$18,850.00	\$10,270.00	\$12,610.00
140,001 - 160,000 sf	\$21,750.00	\$11,850.00	\$14,550.00
160,001 - 180,000 sf	\$24,650.00	\$13,430.00	\$16,490.00
180,001 - 200,000 sf	\$27,550.00	\$15,010.00	\$18,430.00
200,001 - 250,000 sf	\$32,625.00	\$17,775.00	\$21,825.00
250,001 - 300,000 sf	\$39,875.00	\$21,725.00	\$26,675.00
300,001 or more sf	\$43,500.00	\$23,700.00	\$29,100.00