

STARLAND COUNTY

TAXATION MILL RATES FOR 2019

The Council of Starland County has finalized the Municipal Budget for 2019.

The following table outlines the individual total mill rates approved for 2019 as compared to the previous year's total mill rate:

Assessment Class	2018 Tax Rate	2019 Tax Rate	% Increase (Decrease)
Class 1 Residential	6.8338	8.0518	17.82%
Class 2 Non Residential	21.1216	23.3835	10.71%
Class 3 Farmland	14.3888	16.2112	12.67%
Class 4 Machinery & Equipment	17.4422	18.8349	7.98%
Class 5 Designated Industrial Property (DIP)	21.1558	23.4621	10.90%
Class 6 Non Residential DIP	21.1558	23.4621	10.90%

Council has worked hard to try and keep the taxation rates in Starland County as stable as possible, and certainly keep any increases well below the standard cost of living. Unfortunately, with the bankruptcy of one of our largest taxpayers, it has left a severe mismatch in the budget, therefore Council approved an increase to the mill rates. The actual increases above have been greatly affected by the non-collection allowance portion, which is set at 0.95 Mills, compared to 2018 where it was 0.03. Additionally, some assessment classes have increased in overall assessment and you may see tax increases proportional to the increase in assessed value.

Please remember that residential properties, even on farms, are assessed annually at their market value. Market value is defined as the price a property might reasonably sell for after adequate time and exposure to an open market. The assessment for many residences has increased over the last year, so it's important to review your assessment information carefully. As farmland is assessed at a regulated rate, there are no major fluctuations in assessed values.

It is very important that every landowner carefully review the combined Assessment and Taxation Notice. If you have a complaint or inquiry regarding your assessment, it is very important that you first talk with the assessor. Some matters or information may be corrected by contacting the assessor prior to filing a formal complaint. Please contact our office, and we'll provide you with the contact information for the appropriate assessor that deals with your property class.

Please note that for linear and designated industrial properties (DIP), the enclosed is a Tax Notice only. The linear and DIP assessment notices are sent out by the provincial assessor and the complaint dates are on that notice.

Starland County's minimum tax rate has increased to \$50.00 per taxable property. This minimum tax covers the cost of generating, mailing and collecting individual property taxes.

In all cases, you should carefully review the information on the notice to ensure that you understand and agree with the assessment information. If you have any questions on the assessment of property, it is important that you address these concerns in the first 60 days after receiving your combined tax and assessment notice, and on or before **SEPTEMBER 3, 2019**. After the appeal period has expired, any assessment changes will not be incorporated until the following year. This year, the last day for payment without penalties falls on **MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2019**. Penalties for non-payment will be applied on **OCTOBER 1, 2019**. In fairness to all taxpayers, there will be no exceptions.

If you have specific questions about the Education tax, we would encourage you to contact Alberta Municipal Affairs Education Taxation Team at (780-422-7125). This number can be reached toll free by contacting 310-0000 and then entering the above noted number.

Seniors Property Tax Deferral Program

The Province of Alberta offers the Seniors Property Tax Deferral Program. Under this program, senior homeowners can defer all or part of their residential property taxes through a low-interest home equity loan with the Alberta Government. Under this program, you would repay the loan, with interest, when you sell the home, or sooner if you wish. Additional information on this program is available at the Starland County office or at the following website: <http://www.seniors-housing.alberta.ca/seniors/property-tax-deferral.html>

Assessment Information

If you have any questions about your property assessment, we encourage you to contact our office. If we can't provide the information required, we will provide you with the contact information for our Municipal Assessors, and they will ensure that you understand your property assessment.

We have also added a number of documents to our website (www.starlandcounty.com), and these are also available upon request to our office. These documents will help to explain the property and assessment process:

1. Guide to Property Assessment and Taxation in Alberta
2. Access to Property Assessment Information
3. Is Your Property Assessment Fair and Accurate?
4. Filing a Property Assessment Complaint and Preparing For Your Hearing
5. Assessment Review Board Complaint Form
6. Assessment Complaints Agent Authorization Form

Your assessment notice will show

1. The same information that is required to be shown on our assessment roll
2. The date the assessment notice is sent to the assessed person
3. The date by which a complaint must be made. This date must be at least 60 days after the assessment notice is sent.
4. The name and address to whom the complaint must be filed.

Should you wish to appeal your assessment, you must do so on or before **SEPTEMBER 3, 2019**. Of course, we would encourage you to contact our office and/or assessor if you have any questions.

Bylaws to be aware of:

The Municipal Government Act gives Starland County the authority to pass local bylaws. Bylaws often deal with issues like the safety, health and welfare of people and the protection of people and property. It is important to note that bylaw violations can lead to fines, enforcement actions and even imprisonment.

The County has several important bylaws we want to make you aware of:

Land Use Bylaw

The purpose of a Land Use Bylaw is to control and regulate the use and development of land and buildings within the County. It is the responsibility of the property owner to ensure that their property and uses conforms to the Land Use Bylaw prior to the commencement of any development. The Land Use Bylaw has many regulations controlling the kinds of developments as outlined in the Municipal Government Act. We strongly recommend that you contact our office for further information on the required permits, prior to any development or changes to your property. Failure to obtain the required permits will result in enforcement actions.

Fire Bylaw

Starland County Council has passed Bylaw 1042 which requires residents to obtain fire permits on a year-round basis. During extremely dry conditions, Council can extend a fire ban on all fires if they feel that conditions are unsuitable for burning. Fire permits can be obtained free of charge at the County Office. Failure to obtain one can result in charges or being charged with the cost of a fire truck visiting the scene of a fire where no permit was issued.

Traffic Bylaw

Our Traffic Bylaw contains several rules and regulations surrounding the use of local roads and road allowances. It is very important to note that all road allowances are the property of the County, and activity on road allowances is regulated by the Bylaw. For example, unauthorized development like cultivation of an undeveloped road allowance is a contravention of the Bylaw. If you are planning any development or use of a road allowance, please check with our Administration Office to ensure you have the authorization to proceed. The County has provided lots of notice on the application of this Bylaw, and we are now issuing fines to those that do work on County road allowances without authorization.

Nuisance Abatement Bylaw

Bylaw 1092 increases the County's control, supervision and regulation of unsightly properties. The Bylaw includes restrictions on the accumulation of refuse, uncut grass or weeds, abandoned vehicles, and the lack of repair or maintenance of buildings, structures or premises. Under the Bylaw, you will be issued an order to clean up property, and as a final measure, the County can carry out the corrective measures, and add related costs to the property tax roll. Our Bylaw Services will work with you to try and resolve clean-up issues.

Payment Options

For your convenience, you can pay your property taxes and other Starland County invoices online or through telephone banking at the following financial institutions: ATB Financial, Credit Union, CIBC, BMO-Bank of Montreal, and Scotiabank. We also accept interac payments. Credit card payments are accepted, however, there is a 3% service fee to yourself. Postdated cheques can also be submitted to our office, and we will ensure they are processed prior to the tax deadlines. Please remember that the regular payment deadlines still apply, and that penalties will be applied on all late payments.



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