



PRO SE / SELF-REPRESENTED GUIDE

Property Tax Appeal Exhibit Guide

Organize comparable sales, property condition evidence, and appraisal data for tax board hearings

Property tax appeals challenge the assessed value of your property — not the tax rate. The 14th Amendment's Equal Protection Clause requires assessment uniformity, meaning your property should be assessed consistently with similar properties. Most appeals succeed by showing comparable sales data proving your assessed value exceeds fair market value. Filing deadlines are strict: New Jersey gives 45 days from tax list finalization (N.J.S.A. 54:3-21), Texas allows protests until May 15 or within 30 days of the notice (Property Tax Code § 41.41). Miss the window and you wait another year. This guide helps you organize the evidence tax boards actually want to see.

Assessment Documents

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Comparable Sales Evidence

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Property Condition Documentation

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Professional Opinions

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COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

1. Using comparables from different neighborhoods or school districts
2. Arguing about the tax rate instead of the assessed value — tax boards only control assessments
3. Missing the filing deadline, which is often 30-45 days from the assessment notice
4. Comparing your property to listings (asking prices) instead of actual closed sales
5. Not adjusting comparables for differences in size, condition, or features

ORGANIZATION TIPS

- Lead with your strongest comparable sale — the one most similar to your property that sold for less than your assessment
- Create a one-page comparison chart: your property vs. each comparable (size, lot, age, condition, sale price)
- Include a map showing where each comparable is relative to your property
- Put photos side by side: your property's condition issues vs. the comparables' condition
- If you have an appraisal, put it first — it carries the most weight with most tax boards
- Include the property record card from the assessor's office. It sometimes contains errors in square footage or room count that inflate your assessment.

COURTROOM PREPARATION

- Tax board hearings are typically 15-20 minutes. Get to your best evidence fast.
- Know your assessed value and be able to explain specifically why it exceeds fair market value
- The board will compare your property to their own comparables — be ready to explain why yours are better matches
- If the assessor made a factual error (wrong square footage, missing condition issue), lead with that
- Be polite and factual. Tax board members hear hundreds of appeals — organized evidence stands out.
- Some jurisdictions allow you to submit evidence in advance. If yours does, do it — the board members review it beforehand.
- If you lose, most states allow a second appeal to a tax court. Keep your exhibits organized for that possibility.

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