



## Rethinking How You Process Abatements and Exemptions



The issuance of tax bills heralds the coming deluge of requests for abatements and exemptions. Traditionally, wading through the hundreds or even thousands of applications is a taxing chore as it can mean manually calculating and keying all associated information.

If you are still hand processing abatements and exemptions, it is time to rethink how you approach that workflow. By applying forward-thinking concepts blended with the right technology, you can simplify and expedite those processes.

Dozens of Point customers have transformed abatement and exemption handling into an efficient, almost effortless task by implementing our abatement/exemption software. This streamlining stems from a number of features.

### System Tables

You can insert rather than type standard text such as com-

ments and application reasons simply by entering the appropriate table code. This feature not only saves you time but also allows the system to group accounts for reporting.

Table codes are defined by you, the user, for maximum flexibility. The software permits definition of an unlimited number of codes.

### Versatile Tax Adjustments

Point's abatement/exemption software gives you the option to adjust the tax amounts using defaulted values, a valuation adjustment or direct entry of the credits to the original tax amounts. The system will automatically and accurately calculate the new tax amount.

### Recurring Exemptions

The vast majority of property tax exemptions issued in your municipality recur year after year. We saw no reason, therefore, why you should have to

reenter the exemption information on an annual basis. In that vein, we developed exemption utilities to clone the existing exemption records then roll over the pertinent ones to a new fiscal year and post them.

### BOA to Collector Transfer

In geometry and in the workplace, the quickest route is always the most direct one. Point's abatement/exemption software allows the assessors' office to enter the abatements and exemptions instead of the collector, thus eliminating the need for the collector to contact the BOA to verify each request has been approved. We put control at the point of authority.

All that information still needs to get into the collection system, however. To enable that to happen, we created an export/import process to transfer the information as well as a batch posting mechanism to automate the posting to the relevant accounts. Control totals and error checking help ensure that the transfer occurs in a seamless fashion.

### Document Management

With the technology available today, paper records have reached a state of obsolescence. Yes, they contain all the essential information but that information is static. Our abatement/exemption adds a new dimension to that same data by allowing it to be

stored, searched on, recalled and compiled into report, granted/denial notice or certificate format at any time.

Retaining the information in electronic form also enables the data to be bridged into Point's DocumentLink™ document management solution for enhanced accessibility. Any documents related to abatements and exemptions can then be shared with all departments in your municipality for anytime, anywhere lookup.

### Automated Applications

In the near future, we will further extend DocumentLink to allow the taxpayer to submit an abatement or exemption application online and then to record that application directly into the abatement/exemption software. Coupled to an approval mechanism, our document management product would bring workflow intelligence to the abatement/exemption process.

### The Final Thought

Over the past six years, we have been moving toward technologies that offer a global view of municipal government. We firmly believe a model that promotes integration and collaboration will yield great benefits for all that embrace it.

*To learn more about Point's abatement/exemption software or about DocumentLink, give us a call at 1.800.368.9538.*



## Calendar of Events

Date(s)	Event	Location
Dec. 12, 2007	MCTA Holiday Meeting	Hogan Campus Center College of the Holy Cross 1 College Street Worcester, MA
Jan. 10, 2008	IAAO Forum 937: House Construction, Design and Systems <i>Sponsored by the Massachusetts Chapter of IAAO</i>	Wellesley Free Library 53 Washington Street Wellesley, MA
Jan. 16, 2008	MAAO Winter Meeting	Lombardo's 6 Billings Street Randolph, MA

### Coordination Key to a Timely Tax Billing Conversion

Producing property tax bills is ultimately the responsibility of the tax collector's office, but that process also requires the input and work of the assessors' office and of Point Software. An orchestration of efforts, therefore, is key to a timely tax billing conversion.

Point asks tax collectors to keep in mind the following in order to effectively coordinate tax billing tasks for conversion:

- Point must receive all tax billing conversion items by **December 17, 2007**. We encourage you to submit your tax billing conversion package as early as possible since we queue the packages for processing based on arrival of the *complete* information. The contents of a complete package are detailed in the [October 2007 issue](#) of the newsletter.
- You have the option of "pre-submitting" your tax billing conversion package if the only pending item is an approved tax rate. Pre-submission allows us to complete the validation stage of the conversion process, which involves quality assurance procedures such as checking the to-

tals and verifying that the parcel IDs correspond between record sets. With that "heavy lifting" out of the way, you can get your data back in little time once the tax rate is approved.

- Customers who have switched to GoToMyPC for remote connectivity can get their data back faster due to the software's speed and accessibility. Consider adopting GoToMyPC to expedite the arrival of your converted data. Contact our customer service department at **1.800.368.9538** if you are interested in subscribing.
- Remind everyone responsible for contributing, verifying or approving tax billing information about the importance of producing the tax bills in a timely manner. They should give the highest priority to this process both in terms of their work and their availability. Until tax bill printing commences, it would be prudent for those involved to remain on hand to respond to any questions or concerns we might have regarding their data.

## Tech Tips

The winter weather is here and along with it comes that perennial pest known as static electricity. The wool clothing and the dry air that come with the cold offer a prime environment for static electricity to thrive in.

Static electricity is not only a nuisance to us humans, it is harmful to electronics as well. It has been known to burn out motors, damage circuits, disrupt data and reboot computers.

So how can you stop static electricity in its tracks? There are a few things you can do.

One fairly effective weapon in the war on static electricity is an antistatic mat that you can place under your chair. This is especially important if you work in a carpeted office, as static electricity tends to build up in carpeting.

In addition to taking the charge out of static electricity, the antistatic mat also has the benefit of allowing you to roll your office chair easily across the carpeted surface. You can pick up an antistatic mat at any office supply store.

As an added precaution, be sure to discharge yourself of static electricity before you touch your computer. You can do this by touching any metal object beforehand, such as a doorknob or the screws on a light switch. It is important to do this not only before turning your machine on in the morning, but also before returning to your desk. Every time you walk across the room you can build up a static electric charge.

Take the zap out of static electricity by following these few simple guidelines. Doing so will make winter a safer time of year for your PC.