



MATAGORDA COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT

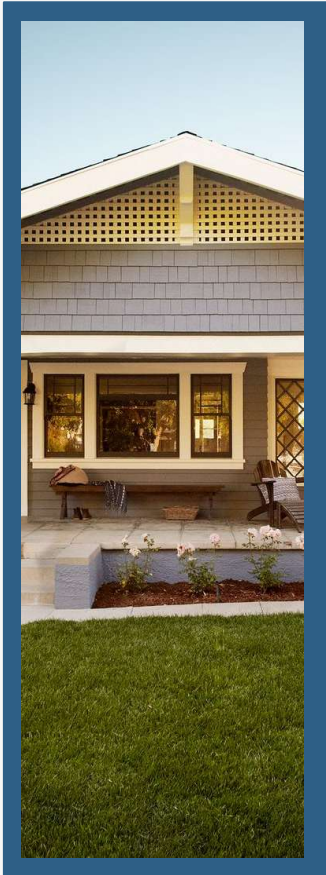
# Let's Talk Appraisal

## Appraisal 101

*A taxpayer guide to property appraisal, exemptions, and the protest process*

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Prepared for public outreach and taxpayer education

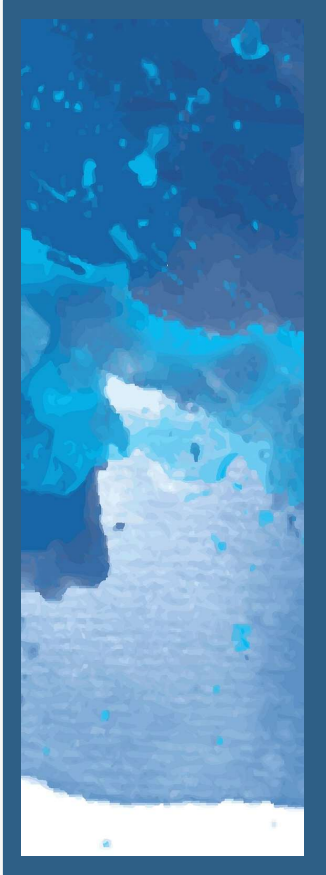


## INTRODUCTION

### Overview

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- The property appraisal process helps determine market value for local property taxation.
- This presentation explains basic terms, the appraisal process, deadlines, exemptions, and protest rights.
- Understanding the process can help property owners make informed decisions about their property.



#### INTRODUCTION

## What Is Property Appraisal?

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- Property appraisal is the systematic evaluation of property to estimate its market value as of January 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Appraisers use accepted appraisal methods, property characteristics, and available market evidence to set the market value.
- The market value is used to support fair and consistent property taxation.

KEY TERMS

## Property Tax Lingo

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### **Real Property**

Land, buildings, minerals, timber, and other matters capable of private ownership.

### **Improvement**

A building, structure, fixture, fence, or qualifying transportable structure affixed to or used with land. This is something that did not grow out of the land and was placed or built on the property.

### **Personal Property**

Tangible property that is real and can be seen, weighed, measured, or otherwise perceived by the senses.

### **Taxing Unit**

A county, city, school district, or special district that adopts a tax rate and imposes property taxes.

## Market Value, Appraised Value, and Assessed Value

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### Market Value

What the property would sell for under normal open-market conditions.

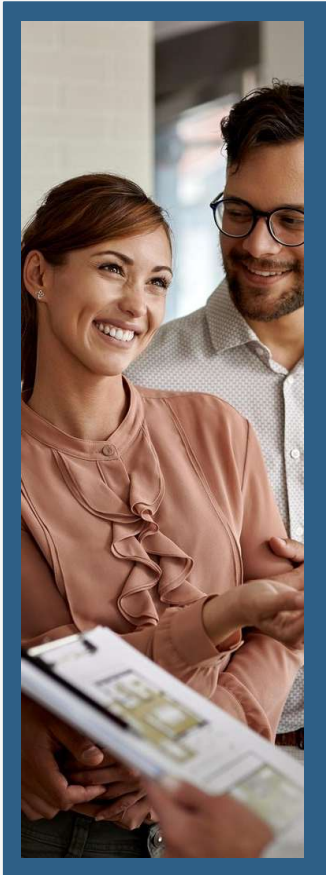
### Appraised Value

The value determined by the appraisal district using accepted appraisal methods and property-specific evidence.

### Assessed / Taxable Value

The taxable value after applicable limitations and exemptions are applied for tax purposes.

**Market Value - Value Limitation / Cap - Exemptions = Taxable Value**



#### EXEMPTIONS

## Property Exemptions

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**Homestead** Reduces taxable value on a property owner's principal residence.

**Over 65** Provides additional benefits for qualifying homeowners age 65 or older.

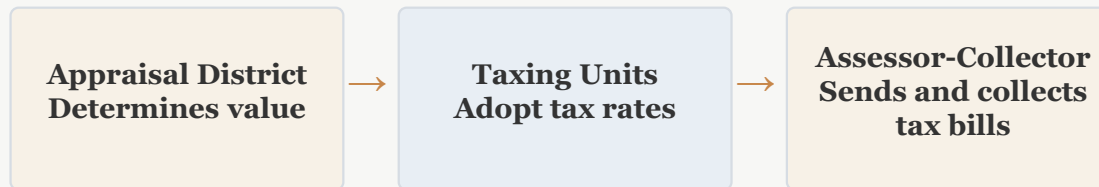
**Disability** Available for homeowners who qualify under state law.

**Disabled Veteran** May provide partial or substantial exemption based on veteran disability percentage as determined by the VA.

TAX PROCESS

## Who Sets Your Property Taxes?

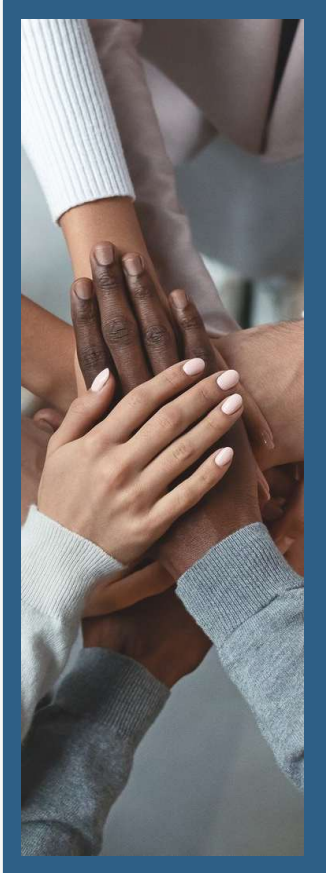
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***The appraisal district does not set tax rates and does not collect taxes.***

$$\text{Appraised Value} \times \text{Tax Rate} = \text{Taxes Due}$$





#### PURPOSE

## Why Property Appraisal Matters

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- Helps ensure property taxes are based on a consistent valuation process.
- Supports funding for schools, counties, cities, and special districts.
- Promotes fairness by applying appraisal methods across all taxable property.
- Maintains current property records and market-based values.

PROCESS

## Texas Property Appraisal Process - Key Players

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**Appraisal District**

Maintains records and appraises property in the county.

**Appraisers**

Analyze property characteristics, market data, cost, and income information.

**Property Owners**

May review their notice, apply for exemptions, and file protests.

**Appraisal Review Board (ARB)**

Independent body of Matagorda County citizens that hears protests and issues decisions.

## Three Approaches to Value

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### Cost Approach

What would it cost to replace the improvements, minus depreciation, plus land value?

### Sales Comparison

What have similar properties recently sold for in the market?

### Income Approach

What value is supported by the property's income potential?

#### VALUATION METHODS

### Cost Approach

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- Estimates value by analyzing the cost to replace or reproduce improvements, minus depreciation, plus land value.
- Often useful for new construction or properties with limited comparable sales.
- Land value is generally supported by land sales and market analysis.



VALUATION METHODS

## Sales Comparison/Market Approach

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- Estimates value by comparing the property with similar properties that have sold recently.
- Adjustments may be made for differences in size, age, condition, location, and features.
- This is commonly used for many residential properties.



VALUATION METHODS

## **Income Approach**

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- Estimates value based on income a property can generate.
- Often used for commercial or income-producing property.
- Typical factors include income, expenses, occupancy, and capitalization rates.

#### VALUATION METHODS

### Approach Summary

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- Cost approach is often useful for new or unique properties.
- Sales comparison/market approach is commonly used for residential property.
- Income approach is important for income-producing property.



DEADLINES

## Key Deadlines for Property Owners

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**Jan. 1**

Property is appraised as of this date.

**Apr. 1**

Notices of appraised value are mailed or sent as required.

**Apr. 30 /  
May 15**

Typical deadline period for many exemption and protest filings.

**May 15**

General protest deadline, or 30 days after the notice was mailed, whichever is later.

**July 20**

Target date for many appraisal review board actions and certified values.

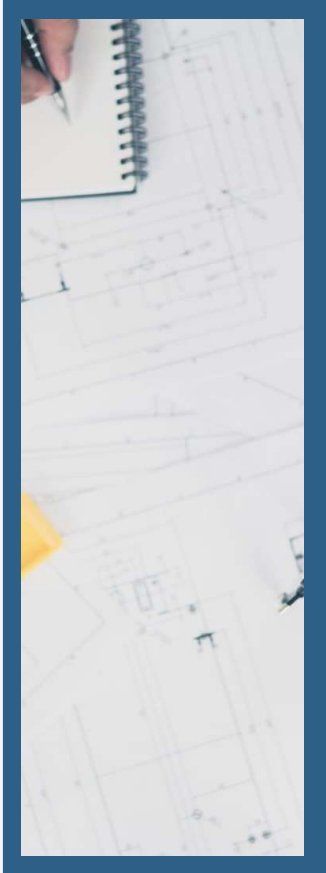


DEADLINES

## Key Deadlines for Business Personal Property

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- January 1<sup>st</sup> - Assessment date for business personal property owned on that date.
- April 15<sup>th</sup> - Rendition deadline for most business personal property accounts.
- May 15<sup>th</sup> - Common deadline for approved filing extensions requested in writing by April 15<sup>th</sup>.
- May 30<sup>th</sup> – Second extension deadline if good cause is submitted to the chief appraiser in writing by May 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Late filing may result in penalties under state law.



#### EXEMPTIONS

### How to Apply for Exemptions

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- Obtain the correct application from the appraisal district office or website.
- Complete the form fully and sign where required.
- Provide supporting documentation such as proof of residency, age, disability status, or veteran status when applicable.
- Submit the application by the applicable deadline for the current tax year.

CONTACT OPTIONS

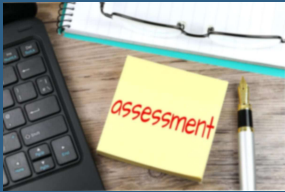
## Forms and Applications

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**In Person** Visit the MCAD office to pick up forms or ask questions.

**Online** MCAD's main website: <https://matagorda-cad.org/>  
MCAD's online taxpayer portal: <https://portal.matagorda-cad.org/>

**Email** Submit questions and/or request forms through the district's email address:  
[mcad@matagorda-cad.org](mailto:mcad@matagorda-cad.org)



PROTEST RIGHTS

## Protesting Your Appraised Value

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*A property owner may generally protest by May 15<sup>th</sup> or within 30 days after the notice of appraised value is mailed, whichever is later. Notice of Appraised Value will be sent if the ownership was transferred or if the value increased by at least \$1,000. For properties that did not receive a notice, the deadline is May 15<sup>th</sup>.*



#### PROTEST RIGHTS

### Understanding the Notice of Appraised Value

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- Review the market value shown for your property and compare it with your records.
- Improvement value refers to structures and other improvements on the property, not routine repairs.
- Taxable value may differ from market value because of limitations or exemptions.
- Check the mailing date because your protest deadline is tied to the date the notice was sent.

PROTEST RIGHTS

## Gathering Evidence for a Protest

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- Photos showing condition issues or needed repairs as of January 1<sup>st</sup> can be helpful.
- Repair estimates from the current appraisal year are often strong supporting evidence.
- Comparable sales or comparable appraised values may support a market value or unequal appraisal protest.
- Try to use properties that are similar in size, age, condition, and location.

**PROTEST RIGHTS**

## **How to File a Protest**

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- File by May 15<sup>th</sup> or within 30 days after the notice of appraised value is mailed, whichever is later.
- A protest may usually be submitted in person, online, by mail, or by email.
- Keep a copy of what you file and note the date it was delivered or postmarked.

**In Person**

**Online**

**Mail / USPS**

**Email**

## Types of Evidence

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### **Repair Estimates**

Use current, professional estimates and show the condition existed as of January 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Comparable Sales**

Use similar nearby properties whenever possible and note key differences.

### **Photos**

Take clear photos showing damage, deferred maintenance, or condition issues.

### **Property Records**

Bring documents that show incorrect square footage, features, or classifications.

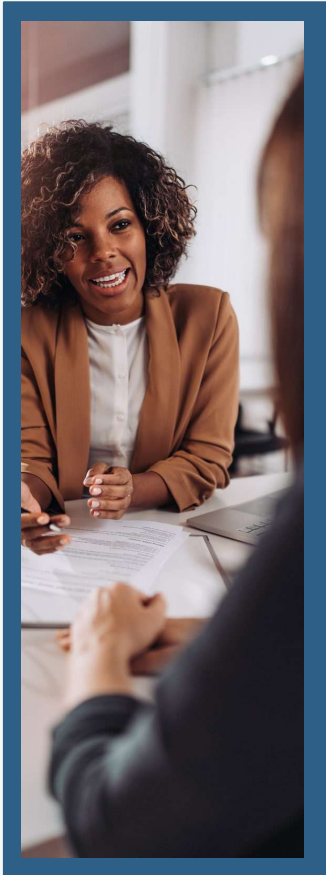


COMMERCIAL PROTESTS

## **Commercial Property Evidence**

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- Income and expense statements may support an income approach protest for commercial property.
- Independent appraisal reports can provide an additional professional opinion of value.
- Lease agreements and occupancy information may help explain actual income or vacancy levels.
- Income information submitted for a protest is generally treated as confidential within the protest process.

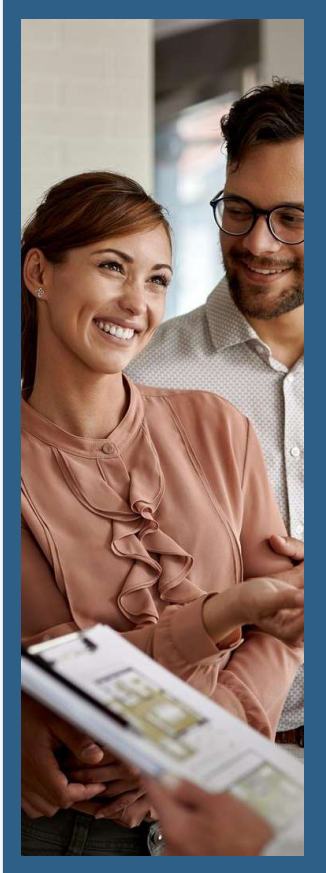


#### HEARING PROCESS

### **Attending the Informal Meeting and ARB Hearing**

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- Many protests are first reviewed informally with an appraiser.
- If the matter is not resolved, the property owner may present the case to the ARB.
- Bring organized evidence and be prepared to explain the value you believe is correct.
- Provide enough copies for the ARB panel, the appraiser, and yourself when required.



#### HEARING PROCESS

### What Is the Appraisal Review Board (ARB)?

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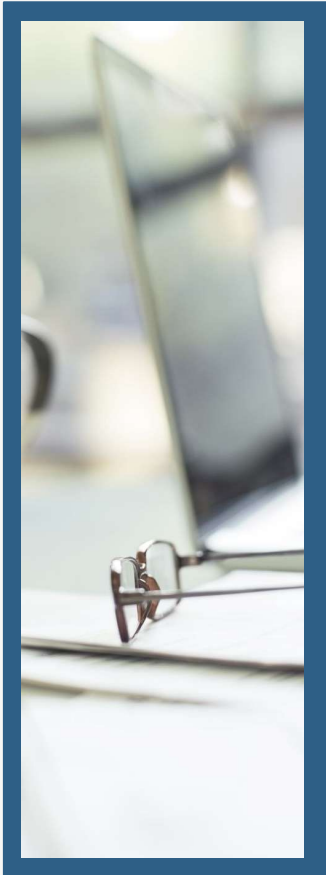
- The ARB is independent from the appraisal district.
- The ARB hears protests from property owners and considers the evidence presented.
- The ARB makes the final decision on most appraisal disputes at the local level.
- The appraisal district does not control the ARB's decision.

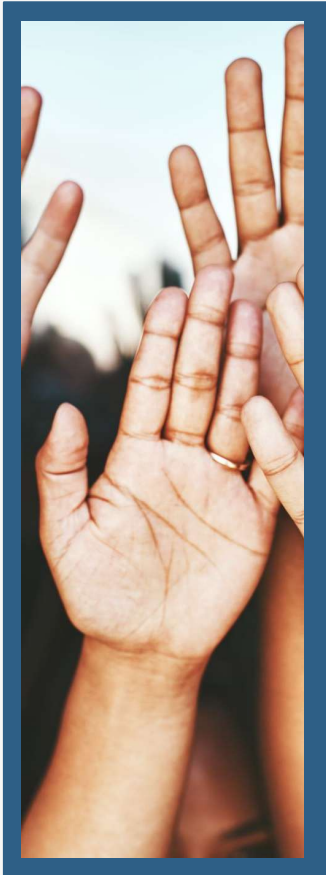
#### HEARING PROCESS

### **After the Protest**

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- If a value is agreed to informally, the property owner may receive a written agreement or waiver.
- If the protest goes to a hearing, the ARB issues a written order with its decision.
- The order will explain the determined value and the next level of appeal rights when applicable.





#### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### **What if I miss an exemption deadline?**

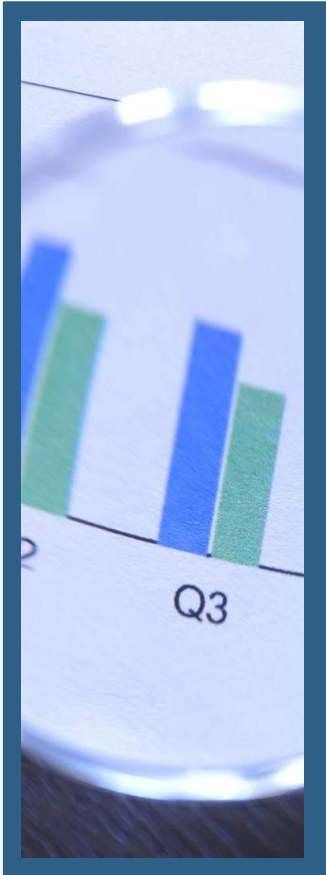
Some late applications may still be accepted under state law for certain exemptions, but property owners should file as early as possible.

### **How often are properties appraised?**

Most taxable property is appraised each year to reflect market conditions and property changes.

### **Can I appeal if I disagree with the ARB?**

Yes. Depending on the property and circumstances, additional appeal rights may include arbitration, district court, or other statutory remedies.



#### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### **When should I apply for an over-65 exemption?**

A property owner may generally apply in the year he or she qualifies. Contact the district to confirm the documentation needed.

### **Why did my value change after I turned 65?**

The market value may still change. Any applicable tax ceiling or limitation depends on the taxing unit and the law that applies.

### **Why are there two different values on my account?**

Market value reflects estimated sale value, while taxable value may reflect exemptions and limitations.



#### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### **Are there fees to file a protest?**

No fee is required to file a protest with the ARB.

### **How long does the protest process take?**

Timing varies by county and workload. Hearing notices are mailed no less than 15 days before the scheduled hearing date.

### **When can I apply for a homestead exemption after buying a home?**

Once the property qualifies as your principal residence and other requirements are met, you may file the application with the district.



#### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Can I use my phone or computer during the hearing?**

If electronic evidence is used, make sure required copies or files are also provided prior to your hearing. Evidence cannot be used to make a value decision by the ARB unless the evidence is provided to the ARB prior to the scheduled hearing. **USB drives must be submitted to MCAD for cybersecurity scanning no less than 2 business days before the scheduled hearing.**

### **How many copies of evidence should I bring?**

Bring enough copies for the ARB members, the appraiser, and yourself. Evidence that is submitted will be kept and put into the official record.

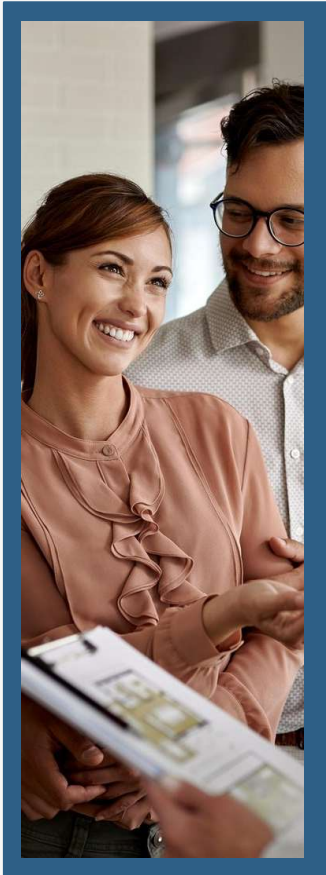
### **What happens if my value is reduced?**

The ARB or agreement value applies only for the tax year that was protested. Future values may still change if supported by market evidence.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### **What counts as an informal review?**

An informal review is a discussion or review process with the appraisal district before the ARB hearing.

### **Is an informal meeting required?**

The informal meeting is not required and if you want to go straight to the formal hearing let us know on your protest form or when you arrive at the Appraisal District.

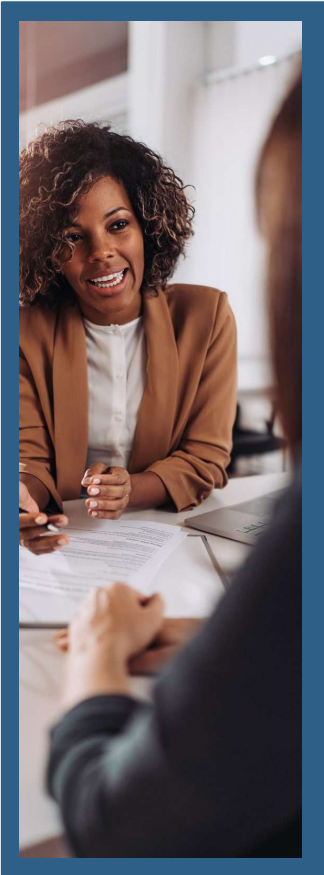
### **What if I do not agree with the appraiser?**

You may continue to the ARB hearing if the matter is not resolved informally.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Frequently Asked Questions

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**Can I request the evidence the district plans to use?**

Yes. A property owner may request the evidence packet in accordance with the Tax Code and local procedures.

**When will I receive the evidence packet?**

Timing depends on when the request is made and the scheduled hearing date.

**How long do I have to file arbitration or a lawsuit?**

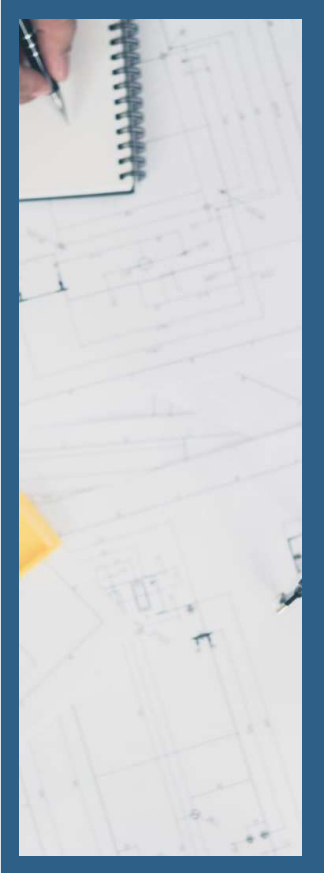
Appeal deadlines are set by statute and should be reviewed carefully as soon as the ARB order is received.

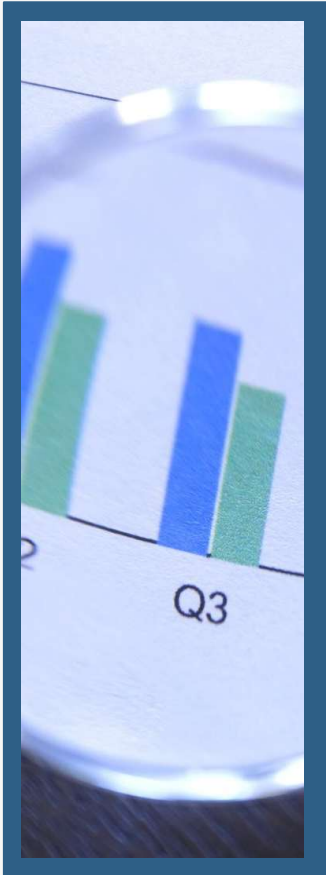
#### APPRAISAL DATE

## Why January 1 Is Important

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- Texas law requires property to be appraised as of January 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Condition as of January 1<sup>st</sup> can affect the value considered for the current year.
- Market data from before January 1<sup>st</sup> helps support the current year value.
- Repairs made after January 1<sup>st</sup> may not affect the current year appraisal.



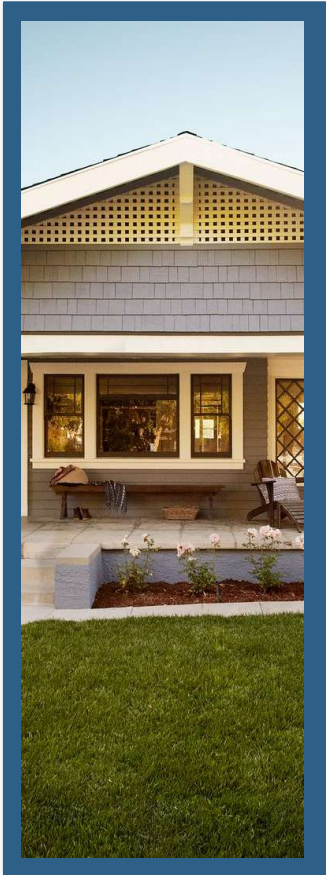


#### COMMON QUESTIONS

### Why Did My Property Value Change?

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- Sales prices may have increased in your neighborhood or market area.
- Construction costs may have changed.
- New improvements or additions may have been added to the property.
- Commercial values may be affected by income changes and market conditions.

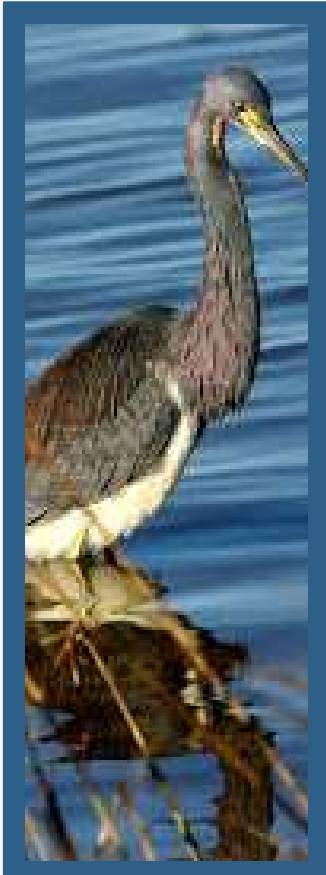


#### COMMON QUESTIONS

### Why Is My Neighbor's Value Different?

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- Properties may differ in size, age, condition, location, and improvements.
- Exemptions and value limitations may also change taxable value from one property to another.
- Sales history and land characteristics can also affect value.
- Each property is appraised individually based on its own characteristics.



#### Statistics

## Matagorda County

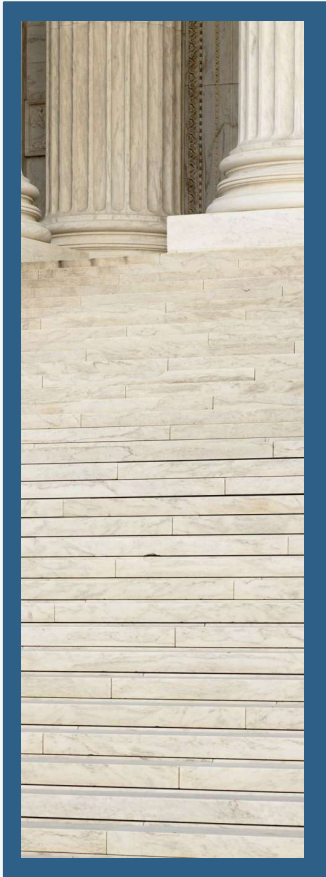
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- Matagorda County has over 700,000 acres of land and over 300,000 acres of water.
- There are 8,639 properties with a homestead exemption.
- There are 126 properties owned by churches.
- There are 51,603 total accounts.
- Matagorda County has over 55 miles of coastline.
- Matagorda County is known for its diverse bird species with 232 species recorded.

## Recent changes to the Legislation

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- SB 4 - Constitutional Amendment that increased the residence homestead exemption for school districts from \$100,000 to \$140,000.
- SB 23 - Constitutional Amendment that increased the residence exemption for school districts for individuals who are over 65 or disabled. The exemption amount was raised to \$60,000.
- HB 9 - Constitutional Amendment that increased the exemption for tangible business personal property from \$2,500 to \$125,000 for related business entity.



CLOSING

## **Important Information**

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- This presentation is for general information only.
- It does not replace the Texas Property Tax Code or formal legal advice.
- Deadlines and procedures are set by state law and may vary by situation.
- Please contact the appraisal district if you have questions about your specific property.

