

423.45 Refunds — exemption certificates.

1. If an amount of tax represented by a retailer to a consumer or user as constituting tax due is computed upon a sales price that is not taxable or the amount represented is in excess of the actual taxable amount and the amount represented is actually paid by the consumer or user to the retailer, the excess amount of tax paid shall be returned to the consumer or user upon notification to the retailer by the department that an excess payment exists.

2. If an amount of tax represented by a retailer to a consumer or user as constituting tax due is computed upon a sales price that is not taxable or the amount represented is in excess of the actual taxable amount and the amount represented is actually paid by the consumer or user to the retailer, the excess amount of tax paid shall be returned to the consumer or user upon proper notification to the retailer by the consumer or user that an excess payment exists. “*Proper*” notification is written notification which allows a retailer at least sixty days to respond and which contains enough information to allow a retailer to determine the validity of a consumer’s or user’s claim that an excess amount of tax has been paid. No cause of action shall accrue against a retailer for excess tax paid until sixty days after proper notice has been given the retailer by the consumer or user.

3. In the circumstances described in [subsections 1 and 2](#), a retailer has the option to either return any excess amount of tax paid to a consumer or user, or to remit the amount which a consumer or user has paid to the retailer to the department.

4. *a.* The department shall issue or the seller may separately provide exemption certificates in the form prescribed by the director, including certificates not made of paper, which conform to the requirements of paragraph “*c*”, to assist retailers in properly accounting for nontaxable sales of tangible personal property, specified digital products, or services to purchasers for a nontaxable purpose. The department shall also allow the use of exemption certificates for those circumstances in which a sale is taxable but the seller is not obligated to collect tax from the buyer.

b. The sales tax liability for all sales of tangible personal property and specified digital products and all sales of services is upon the seller and the purchaser unless the seller takes from the purchaser a valid exemption certificate stating under penalty of perjury that the purchase is for a nontaxable purpose and is not a retail sale as defined in [section 423.1](#), or the seller is not obligated to collect tax due, or unless the seller takes a fuel exemption certificate pursuant to [subsection 5](#). If the tangible personal property, specified digital products, or services are purchased tax free pursuant to a valid exemption certificate and the tangible personal property, specified digital products, or services are used or disposed of by the purchaser in a nonexempt manner, the purchaser is solely liable for the taxes and shall remit the taxes directly to the department and [sections 423.31, 423.37, 423.39, 423.40, 423.41, and 423.42](#) shall apply to the purchaser.

c. A valid exemption certificate is an exemption certificate which is complete and correct according to the requirements of the director.

d. The protection afforded a seller by paragraph “*b*” does not apply to a seller who fraudulently fails to collect tax or to a seller who solicits purchasers to participate in the unlawful claim of an exemption.

e. If the circumstances change and as a result the tangible personal property, specified digital products, or services are used or disposed of by the purchaser in a nonexempt manner or the purchaser becomes obligated to pay the tax, the purchaser is liable solely for the taxes and shall remit the taxes directly to the department in accordance with [this subsection](#).

5. *a.* The department shall issue or the seller may separately provide fuel exemption certificates in the form prescribed by the director.

b. For purposes of [this subsection](#):

(1) “*Fuel*” includes gas, electricity, water, heat, steam, and any other tangible personal property consumed in creating heat, power, or steam.

(2) “*Fuel consumed in processing*” means fuel used or consumed for processing including grain drying, for providing heat or cooling for livestock buildings or for greenhouses or buildings or parts of buildings dedicated to the production of flowering, ornamental, or vegetable plants intended for sale in the ordinary course of business, for use in aquaculture

production, or for generating electric current, or in implements of husbandry engaged in agricultural production.

(3) “*Fuel exemption certificate*” means an exemption certificate given by the purchaser under penalty of perjury to assist retailers in properly accounting for nontaxable sales of fuel consumed in processing.

(4) “*Substantial change*” means a change in the use or disposition of tangible personal property and services by the purchaser such that the purchaser pays less than ninety percent of the purchaser’s actual sales tax liability. A change includes a misstatement of facts in an application made pursuant to paragraph “d” or in a fuel exemption certificate.

c. The seller may accept a completed fuel exemption certificate, as prepared by the purchaser, for three years unless the purchaser files a new completed exemption certificate. If the fuel is purchased tax free pursuant to a fuel exemption certificate which is taken by the seller, and the fuel is used or disposed of by the purchaser in a nonexempt manner, the purchaser is solely liable for the taxes, and shall remit the taxes directly to the department and [sections 423.31, 423.37, 423.39, 423.40, 423.41, and 423.42](#) shall apply to the purchaser.

d. The purchaser may apply to the department for its review of the fuel exemption certificate. In this event, the department shall review the fuel exemption certificate within twelve months from the date of application and determine the correct amount of the exemption. If the amount determined by the department is different than the amount that the purchaser claims is exempt, the department shall promptly notify the purchaser of the determination. Failure of the department to make a determination within twelve months from the date of application shall constitute a determination that the fuel exemption certificate is correct as submitted. A determination of exemption by the department is final unless the purchaser appeals to the director for a revision of the determination within sixty days after the date of the notice of determination. The director shall grant a hearing, and upon the hearing, the director shall determine the correct exemption and notify the purchaser of the decision by mail. The decision of the director is final unless the purchaser seeks judicial review of the director’s decision under [section 422.29](#) within sixty days after the date of the notice of the director’s decision. Unless there is a substantial change, the department shall not impose penalties pursuant to [section 423.40](#) both retroactively to purchases made after the date of application and prospectively until the department gives notice to the purchaser that a tax or additional tax is due, for failure to remit any tax due which is in excess of a determination made under [this section](#). A determination made by the department pursuant to [this subsection](#) does not constitute an audit for purposes of [section 423.37](#).

e. If the circumstances change and the fuel is used or disposed of by the purchaser in a nonexempt manner, the purchaser is solely liable for the taxes and shall remit the taxes directly to the department in accordance with paragraph “c”.

f. The purchaser shall attach documentation to the fuel exemption certificate which is reasonably necessary to support the exemption for fuel consumed in processing. If the purchaser files a new exemption certificate with the seller, documentation shall not be required if the purchaser previously furnished the seller with this documentation and substantial change has not occurred since that documentation was furnished or if fuel consumed in processing is separately metered and billed by the seller.

6. Nothing in [this section](#) authorizes any cause of action by any person to recover sales or use taxes directly from the state or extends any person’s time to seek a refund of sales or use taxes which have been collected and remitted to the state.

[2003 Acts, 1st Ex, ch 2, §138, 205; 2006 Acts, ch 1158, §75, 76, 80; 2018 Acts, ch 1161, §222, 229; 2022 Acts, ch 1138, §22, 23; 2023 Acts, ch 115, §32, 33, 40](#)

Referred to in [§321.105A, 423.33, 423.57, 423C.4](#)