

**701—15.3 (422,423) Exemption certificates, direct pay permits, fuel used in processing, and beer and wine wholesalers.**

**15.3(1) General provision.** The gross receipts from the sale of tangible personal property to a purchaser for any exempt purpose are not subject to tax as provided by the Iowa sales and use tax statutes. In addition, a seller of tangible personal property need not collect Iowa sales or use tax from a purchaser that possesses a valid direct pay permit issued by the department of revenue. However, the following are requirements for the exemption and noncollection of tax by a seller when a direct pay permit is involved:

*a.* Prior to July 1, 2004, the sales tax liability for all sales of tangible personal property was upon the seller unless the seller took in good faith from the purchaser a valid exemption certificate stating that the purchase was for an exempt purpose or the tax would be remitted directly to the department by the purchaser under a valid direct pay permit issued by the department. In addition to the provisions and requirements set forth in subrule 15.3(2), to be valid an exemption certificate issued by a purchaser to a seller in good faith under a direct pay permit must have included the purchaser's name, direct pay permit number, and date the direct pay permit was issued by the department. A seller who has taken a valid exemption certificate under a direct pay permit must keep records of sales made in accordance with rule 701—11.4(422,423). For more information regarding direct pay permits, see rule 701—12.3(422). Where tangible personal property or services have been purchased tax-free pursuant to a valid exemption certificate which was taken in good faith by the seller, and the tangible personal property or services were used or disposed of by the purchaser in a nonexempt manner, or the purchaser failed to pay tax to the department under a direct pay permit issued by the department, the purchaser was solely liable for the taxes and must remit the taxes directly to the department.

When a processor or fabricator purchases tangible personal property exempt from the sales or use tax and subsequently withdraws the tangible personal property from inventory for its own taxable use or consumption, the tax shall be reported in the period when the tangible personal property was withdrawn from inventory.

*b.* As of July 1, 2004, the requirement of “good faith” on the part of a seller is replaced by a different standard. For sales occurring on and after that date, the sales tax liability for all sales of tangible personal property 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, or the seller is not obligated to collect tax due, or unless the seller takes a fuel exemption certificate. If the tangible personal property or services are purchased tax-free pursuant to a valid exemption certificate and the tangible personal property 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. The protection afforded a seller by this paragraph does not apply to a seller who fraudulently fails to collect tax or to a seller who solicits purchasers to participate in the unlawful claiming of an exemption.

*c.* The director is required to provide exemption certificates to assist retailers in properly accounting for nontaxable sales of tangible personal property or services to buyers for exempt purposes. These exemption certificates must be completed as to the information required on the form in order to be valid.

**15.3(2) Retailer-provided exemption certificates.** Retailers may provide their own exemption certificates. Those exemption certificates must contain information required by the department, including, but not limited to: the seller's name, the buyer's name and address, the buyer's nature of business (wholesaler, retailer, manufacturer, lessor, other), the reason for purchasing tax-exempt (e.g., resale or processing), the general description of the products purchased, and state sales tax or I.D. registration number. The certificate must be signed and dated by the buyer.

*a.* An exemption certificate or blanket exemption certificate as referred to in paragraph “b” cannot be used to make a tax-free purchase of any tangible personal property or service not covered by the certificate. For example, the certificate used to purchase a chemical consumed in processing cannot be

used to purchase a generator which is going to become an integral part of other tangible personal property which will be ultimately sold at retail.

*b.* Any person repeatedly selling the same type of property or service to the same purchaser for resale, processing, or for any other exempt purpose may accept a blanket certificate covering more than one transaction. A seller who accepts a blanket certificate is required periodically to inquire of the purchaser to determine if the information on the blanket certificate is accurate and complete. Such an inquiry by the seller shall be deemed evidence of good faith on the part of the seller.

*c.* When due to extraordinary circumstances in the nature of fire, flood, or other cases of destruction beyond the taxpayer's control, a seller does not have an exemption certificate on file, the seller may show by other evidence, such as a signed affidavit by the purchaser, that the property or service was purchased for an exempt purpose.

*d.* The liability for the tax does not shift from the seller to the purchaser if the seller has not accepted a valid exemption certificate in good faith. If the seller has actual knowledge of information or circumstances indicating that it is unlikely that the property or services will be used by the purchaser in an exempt manner, then in order to act in good faith the seller must make further inquiry to determine the facts supporting the exemption certificate. In addition, if the nature of the business of the purchaser, as shown by the exemption certificate, indicates that it is unlikely that the property or services will be used in an exempt manner, then in order to act in good faith the seller must make further inquiry to determine the facts supporting the exemption certificate.

EXAMPLE 1. A seller is expected to inquire to discover the facts supporting the claimed exemption if the seller knows that the property or services will not be, or it is unlikely that the property or services will be, resold or used in processing by that purchaser. This further inquiry is expected even when there is nothing in the nature of the business as shown on the valid exemption certificate to cause the seller to make further inquiry.

EXAMPLE 2. A seller is expected to inquire to discover the facts supporting the claimed exemption of the sale of sawdust or a tool chest purchased by a gas station since such items are rarely resold by a gas station.

EXAMPLE 3. A seller is not expected to make further inquiry, in the absence of actual knowledge, to determine which light bulbs bought by a hardware store are for use in the store or those purchased for resale.

If the seller has met the requirements set forth above in accepting a valid exemption certificate, the seller shall be deemed to have acted in good faith and the liability for the tax shifts to the purchaser who becomes solely liable for the taxes.

*e.* A seller is relieved from liability for sales tax if (1) a purchaser deletes the tax reimbursement from the payment to the seller or if the purchaser makes a notation on an invoice such as "not subject to tax" or "resale" and (2) if the seller can produce written evidence to show that an attempt was made to obtain an exemption certificate to show that the transaction was exempt from tax but was unable to obtain said certificate from the purchaser.

*f.* The failure of a permit holder to act in good faith while giving or receiving exemption certificates may result in the revocation of the sales tax permit. Revocation is authorized under the provisions of Iowa Code section 422.53(5).

*g.* The purchase of tangible personal property or services which are specifically exempt from tax under the Iowa Code need not be evidenced by an exemption certificate. However, if certificates are given to support these transactions, they do not relieve the seller of the responsibility for tax if at some later time the transaction is determined to be taxable.

*h.* A person who is selling tangible personal property or services, but who is not making taxable sales at retail, shall not be required to hold a permit. When this person purchases tangible personal property or services for resale, the person shall furnish a certificate in accordance with these rules to the supplier stating that the property or services was purchased for the purpose of resale.

*i.* For information regarding the use of exemption certificates for contractors, see 701—Chapter 19.

**15.3(3) Fuel exemption certificates.****a. Definitions.**

“Fuel” includes, but is not limited to, heat, steam, electricity, gas, water, or any other tangible personal property consumed in creating heat, power, or steam.

“Fuel consumed in processing” includes fuel used in grain drying or providing heat or cooling for livestock buildings, fuel used for generating electric current, fuel consumed in implements of husbandry engaged in agricultural production, as well as fuel used in “processing” as defined in rules 701—18.29(422,423), 701—18.58(422,423), and 701—230.15(423). See rule 701—17.2(422) for a detailed description of “fuel used in processing.” See rule 701—17.3(422,423) for extensive discussion regarding electricity and steam used in processing.

“Fuel exemption certificate” is a certificate given by a purchaser and signed under penalty of perjury to assist a seller in properly accounting for nontaxable sales of fuel consumed in processing. The fuel exemption certificate must contain information required by the department, including, but not limited to: the seller’s name and address; the purchaser’s name and address; the type of fuel purchased, e.g., electricity, propane; a description of the purchaser’s business, e.g., farmer, manufacturer of steel products, food processor; a general description of the type of processing in which the fuel is consumed, e.g., grain drying, raising livestock, generating electricity, or manufacture of tangible personal property; and the percentage exemption claimed. The fuel exemption certificate must be signed under penalty of perjury by the purchaser and dated. The seller may demand from the purchaser additional documentation attached to the fuel exemption certificate which is reasonably necessary to support the claim of exemption for fuel consumed in processing. In the absence of separate metering, documentation reasonably necessary to support a claim for exemption will consist of either an electrical consultant’s survey or of a document prepared by the purchaser in accordance with the requirements of subrule 15.3(4). Attachment of documentation is not necessary if the purchaser has furnished the seller with documentation when filing an earlier exemption certificate and a substantial change in the purchaser’s operation had not occurred since the documentation was furnished or if fuel consumed by the purchaser in processing is separately metered and billed by the seller.

“Substantial change” means a change in the purchaser’s use or disposition of tangible personal property and services such that the purchaser pays less than 90 percent of the purchaser’s actual sales tax liability.

**b.** If fuel is purchased tax-free pursuant to a fuel exemption certificate which has been accepted by the seller and the purchaser uses or disposes of the fuel in a nonexempt manner, the purchaser is solely liable for sales tax and shall remit that tax directly to the department. A seller can, however, rely upon a fuel exemption certificate for sales occurring within five years subsequent to the date of the certificate only. For later sales, the seller must secure a new certificate of exemption from the purchaser.

**c.** A purchaser may apply to the department for review of any fuel exemption certificate. The department shall review the certificate and determine the correct amount of exemption within 12 months from the date of application. The department shall notify a purchaser of any determination that is different from the purchaser’s claim of exemption. Failure to determine the correct amount of exemption within 12 months from the date of application shall constitute a determination on the department’s part that the claim of exemption on the fuel certificate is correct as submitted. A determination regarding an exemption certificate is final unless the purchaser appeals to the director for a revision of the determination within 60 days from 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 is final unless the purchaser seeks judicial review of the director’s decision under Iowa Code section 422.55 within 60 days from the date of the notice of the director’s decision. The purchaser must notify the seller of any change in percentage.

*d.* The effective date of the legislation allowing use of an exemption certificate for fuel used in processing is January 1, 1988. However, a certificate which is complete and correct according to subrule 15.3(3), paragraph “a,” and any other requirement of the director, which is signed and dated prior to January 1, 1988, shall, if accepted by a seller in good faith, protect the seller to the extent described in subrule 15.3(3), paragraph “b,” for energy consumed on or after January 1, 1988. Exemption certificates filed with the seller prior to January 1, 1988, also expire five years from date of acceptance.

**15.3(4) *Determining percentage of electricity used in processing.*** When electricity is purchased for consumption both for processing and for taxable uses, and the use of the electricity is recorded on a single meter, the purchaser must allocate the use of the electricity according to taxable and nontaxable consumption if an exemption for nontaxable use is to be claimed. The calculations which support the allocation, if properly performed, can serve as the documentation reasonably necessary to support a claim of exemption for fuel used in processing. The following method with its alternative table may be used to determine the percentage of electricity used on the farm or in a factory which is exempt by virtue of its being used in processing. See subrule 15.3(4), paragraph “e,” for alternative methods of computing exempt use, including exempt use by a new business. First, the base period for the calculations must be selected.

*a.* Ordinarily, the 12 months previous to the date upon which the exemption is calculated are used as the base period for determining the percentage of electricity exempt as used in processing. This immediately previous 12-month period is used because it is a span of time which is (1) recent enough to accurately reflect future electric usage; (2) extended enough to take into account variations in electrical usage resulting from changes in temperature occurring with the seasons; and (3) is not so long as to require unduly burdensome calculations. However, individual circumstances can dictate that a shorter or longer period than 12 months will be used or that some 12-month period other than that immediately previous to the date upon which the exemption certificate is filed, will be used.

EXAMPLE: Mr. Wilson is a farmer. He files an exemption certificate for the period beginning January 1, 1990. The year 1989 is one with a very mild winter, a relatively cool summer, and a very dry autumn. Mr. Wilson uses no electricity for grain drying and substantially less electricity than usual for heating and cooling his livestock buildings. Mr. Wilson must use a 12-month period which is more representative of his usual exempt electrical consumption than that of January through December 1989.

EXAMPLE: Mr. Jackson is also a farmer. He files an exemption certificate for the period beginning January 1, 1991. The year 1990 is one in which the summer is extraordinarily hot, the winter exceedingly cold, and the autumn very wet. Mr. Jackson uses far more electricity than normal to dry his grain and heat and cool his livestock buildings. He should use a 12-month period more representative of his customary exempt use of electricity than the period January through December 1990.

EXAMPLE: Company A manufactures its product in a factory which has no windows and is heavily insulated. The factory always runs 40 hours per week, 52 weeks per year. Because of these and other circumstances, Company A’s electrical usage does not vary significantly from month to month, and it is easy enough to document this. Company A can calculate its percentage of exempt use of electricity based on a one-month, rather than a 12-month, period.

EXAMPLE: Company B manufactures widgets. The “economic cycle” for widget production is, on the average, 36 months long. During this economic cycle, there are times when, for months at a time, the factory will operate three shifts. At other times, for weeks at a time, the entire factory will be shut down and its personnel laid off. The only accurate way to determine exempt percentage of electricity used is to calculate electrical use over the entire economic cycle. Therefore, 36 months, rather than 12 months, would be the base period.

*b.* Calculating kilowatts used per hour by various electrical devices. The first step in computing percentage of exemption is to determine the number of kilowatts used per hour for each device in farm or factory. If kilowatts consumed per hour of a device’s use is not listed on the device or otherwise readily obtainable, formulas can be used to determine this information.

Lights

For incandescent bulbs, add rated wattages and divide by 1,000. For fluorescent lights, add rated wattages plus an additional 20 percent of rated wattages, then divide by 1,000.

Incandescent Lights:

$$\frac{\text{Watts}}{1,000} = \text{Kilowatts Per Hour}$$

Fluorescent and Other High Intensity Lights:

$$\frac{\text{Watts} + .20 (\text{Watts})}{1,000} = \text{Kilowatts Per Hour}$$

Devices Other Than Lights

For these devices, use the wattage rating given by the manufacturer and divide by 1,000 to obtain approximate kilowatts used per hour of operation.

$$\frac{\text{Watts}}{1,000} = \text{Kilowatts Per Hour}$$

If an appliance does not list a watt rating, tables provided by Iowa State University Cooperative Extension Service can be used especially by farmers who are attempting to compute their exempt percentage of electricity used. Persons using a table are reminded to convert watts to kilowatts before proceeding to further calculations.

c. The average number of kilowatts consumed per hour of operation for any one device must next be multiplied by the total number of hours which the device is operated during the base period. A person may use intermediate calculations. For example, assume that a machine used in processing consumes 20 kilowatts per hour of operation. The machine is operated, during a 12-month base period, 40 hours per week during 50 weeks. The machine is not placed in operation when the factory is closed for two weeks vacation. Exempt use is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Kilowatts Per Hour}}{20} \times \frac{\text{Hours Operated Per Week}}{40} \times \frac{\text{Weeks Operated in 12-Month Period Equals Number of Exempt Kilowatt Hours}}{50} = 40000$$

Assume that a grain dryer uses 30 kilowatts per hour of operation. During a 12-month base period, the grain dryer is used in processing 200 hours per month, for 3 months. The calculation for total number of kilowatt hours of exempt use for the 12-month period is as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Kilowatts Per Hour}}{30} \times \frac{\text{Hours of Exempt Use Per Month}}{200} \times \frac{\text{Number of Months of Exempt Use Equals Total Number of Exempt Kilowatt Hours}}{3 = 18000}$$

d. The following is a very simplified example of a worksheet for determining the percentage of electricity qualifying for exemption when a single meter records both exempt and taxable use.

|                            | Kilowatts Per Hour of Operation | Average Hours of Operation Per 12-Month Base Period | Average Kilowatt Hours Per 12-Month Base Period | Total            |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|------------------|
| <b>All Exempt Usage</b>    |                                 |   |   |                  |
| Production Machine #1      | 10                              | 1000  | 10000   |                  |
| Production Machine #2      | 10                              | 1000  | 10000   |                  |
| Other                      | 10                              | 1000  | 10000   |                  |
| <b>Total Exempt Usage</b>  |                                 |   |   | <b>30000(A)</b>  |
| <b>All Taxable Usage</b>   |                                 |   |   |                  |
| Air Conditioners           | 10                              | 3000  | 30000   |                  |
| General Lighting           | 10                              | 3000  | 30000   |                  |
| Office Equipment           | 10                              | 3000  | 30000   |                  |
| Space Heaters              | 10                              | 3000  | 30000   |                  |
| Other                      | 10                              | 3000  | 30000   |                  |
| <b>Total Taxable Usage</b> |                                 |   |   | <b>150000(B)</b> |
| <b>Total—All Usages</b>    |                                 |   |   | <b>180000(C)</b> |

$$\frac{30000}{180000} \text{ or } \frac{A}{C} = \text{Percentage of Electricity Purchase Qualifying for Exemption} = 16.60\%$$

The number actually used in the base period can be determined by reference to billings for the base period. If the number of kilowatt hours calculated to have been used does not approximate the number actually used in the base period, the calculations are deficient and should be performed again. Once the precise percentage of exemption has been calculated, that percentage must be applied during any period for which a purchaser is requesting exemption. Any substantial and permanent change in the amount of

electricity consumed or in the proportion of exempt and nonexempt use of electricity is an occasion for recomputing the exempt percentage and for filing a new exemption certificate.

e. The following are nonexclusive alternatives to the above method of determining the percentage of electricity which is exempt because it is used in processing. First, if currently only one meter exists to measure both exempt and nonexempt use of electricity, the most accurate method of determining exempt and nonexempt use may be separate metering of these two uses. This possibility is especially practical if all exempt use results from the activities of one machine, however large. If separate metering is impossible or impractical, it may be useful to employ the services of an energy consultant. If using energy consultant's service is impractical, it may be possible to secure, from the manufacturer of a machine used in processing, the number of kilowatts which a machine uses per hour of operation. Often, these manufacturer's studies give a more accurate measure of a machine's use of electricity than the formulas set out in paragraph 15.3(4) "b" above. This circumstance is especially true with regard to large electric motors.

If a business is new, and no historical data exists for use in calculating exempt and nonexempt percentages of electricity or other fuel consumed, any person calculating future exempt use must make the best projections possible. If calculating future exempt use with no past historical data to serve as a basis for the calculations, it is suggested that conservative estimates of exempt use be made. Using these conservative estimates can avoid future liability for sales tax on the part of the purchaser of the electricity. Possibly, in calculating exempt use of fuel for a new business, historical data from existing similar businesses can be used if available from persons not in direct competition to the person claiming the exemption.

Ordinarily any method of determining the percentage of electricity used in processing will involve calculating both exempt and nonexempt usage. However, in certain instances it is acceptable to calculate only exempt or nonexempt usage in one column and to list separately the equipment or devices making the exempt or nonexempt use of the electricity separate. This practice can normally be followed where electrical usage does not fluctuate dramatically and where usage is either predominantly exempt or predominantly not exempt.

**15.3(5) *Applicability.*** The provisions of subrule 15.3(4) explaining the determination of the percentage exemption for electricity also apply to other types of fuel such as natural gas, LP, etc., when used for exempt purposes.

**15.3(6) *Special certificates of beer and wine wholesalers.*** Beer or wine purchased from a wholesaler holding a Class A or F permit has been purchased for resale if the purchaser provides the wholesaler with a retail beer or wine permit or liquor license number. A wholesaler's record of account with an individual retailer is a complete and correct exemption certificate for the purposes of beer or wine sales and provides all the protection which the usual exemption certificate (see subrule 15.3(2)) provides if the record of account contains the retailer's beer or wine permit or liquor license number and all other information concerning the account is taken in good faith by the wholesaler. The words "beer," "permit," "retailer," "wholesaler," and "wine" have the same definitions for the purposes of this rule as the definitions given them in Iowa Code section 123.3.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 422.42(3), 422.42(13), 422.42(16), 422.47, 422.53 as amended by 1997 Iowa Acts, House File 266, and 423.1(1).