

**701—225.5(423) The sales price from the leasing of all tangible personal property subject to tax.**

**225.5(1) Leases.** The rental of tangible personal property is treated as the sale of that property for the purposes of Iowa sales and use tax law because “leases” and “rentals” of tangible personal property are taxable retail “sales” of that property. The rental of tangible personal property is not a taxable enumerated service. The resale exemption in favor of sales for resale of tangible personal property is applicable to sales and leases of tangible personal property for subsequent rental or lease.

EXAMPLE A: ABC buys blowers, hand tools, ladders, plumbers’ snakes, sanders, and tillers for subsequent short-term rental to various customers. ABC’s purchases of these items of equipment are purchases for resale and are exempt from tax.

EXAMPLE B: In addition to its purchases of equipment for subsequent rental, ABC leases from retailers, long-term, items of heavier equipment, such as backhoes, forklifts, manlifts, tractors, and trenchers, again for subsequent leasing to various customers. Since the leasing of tangible personal property is now a purchase of that property, ABC’s leasing for later sublease is a purchase of tangible personal property and is exempt from tax at the time of purchase as the purchase of tangible personal property for subsequent resale.

**225.5(2) Distinguishing leases and rentals of tangible personal property from the furnishing of nontaxable services.** In order to determine whether a particular fee is charged for the rental of tangible personal property or for the furnishing of a nontaxable service, the department looks at the substance, rather than the form, of the transaction. When the possession and use of tangible personal property by the recipient is merely incidental as compared to the nontaxable service performed, all of the sales price is derived from the furnishing of such nontaxable service and, unless a separate fee or charge is made for the possession and use of tangible personal property, no sales price is derived from the rental of tangible personal property. When the nontaxable service is merely incidental to the possession and use of the tangible personal property by the recipient, all of the sales price is derived from the furnishing of tangible personal property rental and, unless a separate fee or charge is made for the nontaxable service, no sales price is derived from the nontaxable service. When a tangible personal property rental agreement contains separate fee schedules for rent and for nontaxable service, only the sales price derived from the tangible personal property rental is subject to tax. This rule is not to be so construed as to be at variance with Iowa Code sections 423.2(6) “bf” and 423.2(8) concerning transportation services and bundled service contracts, respectively.

**225.5(3) Rental of real property distinguished from rental of tangible personal property.**

a. If a rental contract allows the renter exclusive possession or use of a defined area of real property and, incident to that contract, tangible personal property is provided that allows the renter to utilize the real property, if there is no separate charge for rental of tangible personal property, the sales price is for the rental of real property and is not subject to tax, unless taxable room rental is involved.

b. If a person rents tangible personal property and, incidental to the rental of the property, space is provided for the property’s use, the sales price from the rental shall be subject to tax. It may at times be difficult to determine whether a particular transaction involves the rental of real property with an incidental use of tangible personal property or the rental of tangible personal property with an incidental use of real property.

**225.5(4) Rental of tangible personal property and rental of fixtures.** The rental of tangible personal property that shall, prior to its use by the renter under the rental contract, become a fixture shall not be subject to tax. Such a rental is the rental of real property rather than tangible personal property. In general, any tangible personal property that is connected to real property in a way that it cannot be removed without damage to itself or to the real property is a fixture. The rental of a mobile home or manufactured housing, not sufficiently attached to realty to constitute a fixture, is room rental rather than tangible personal property rental and subject to tax on that basis.

**225.5(5) Rental of tangible personal property embodying intangible personal property rights—transactions taxable and exempt.** Under the law, the sales price from rental of tangible personal property includes royalties and copyright and license fees. The rental of all property that is a tangible medium of expression for the intangible rights of royalties and copyright and license fees is subject to tax. Therefore, the sales price from the rental of films, videodiscs, videocassettes, and computer software that are the

tangible means of expression of intangible property rights is subject to tax. The rental of such tangible personal property is subject to tax whether the property is held for rental to the general public or for rental to one or a few persons. More information is contained in rule 701—221.5(423) for an exemption from the requirements of this subrule for rental of films, videotapes and other media to lessees imposing a taxable charge for viewing or rental of the media or to lessees that broadcast the contents of these media for public viewing or listening.

**225.5(6)** *Deposits and additional fees.*

*a.* Taxability of a deposit required by an owner of rental property as a condition of the rental depends upon the type of deposit required. A deposit subject to forfeiture for the lessee's failure to comply with the rental agreement is not subject to tax. This type of deposit is separate from the rental payments and therefore is not taxable as part of the rental. Such deposits may include those for reservation, late return of the rental property or damage to the rental property. Deposits not subject to forfeiture which represent part of the rental receipts are considered part of the taxable rental and are subject to tax. Such deposits may include a deposit of the first rental payment that is applied to the rental receipts.

*b.* When tangible personal property is rented for a flat fee per month, per year, or for other designated periods, plus an additional fee based on quantity and capacity of production or use, the entire charge is taxable.

**225.5(7)** *Leasing of tangible personal property moving in interstate commerce.*

*a.* In the case of a lease or rental that requires recurring periodic payments, the first periodic payment is taxed to Iowa if the property was delivered to the lessee in Iowa. Periodic payments made subsequent to the first payment may be taxed only by the state in which the property is primarily located for the period covered by the payment. The primary property location shall be as indicated by an address for the property provided by the lessee that is available to the lessor from its records maintained in the ordinary course of business, when use of this address does not constitute bad faith. The property location shall not be altered by intermittent use at different locations, such as use of business property that accompanies employees on business trips and service calls.

*b.* Where a nonresident lessor leases tangible personal property to a resident or nonresident lessee and the lessee uses the property in Iowa, the nonresident lessor has the responsibility of collecting Iowa use tax on the lease payments if Iowa is the primary location of the property, provided the lessor is a retailer maintaining a place of business in this state as defined in Iowa Code section 423.1(48). Whether the lease agreement is executed in Iowa or not is irrelevant.

*c.* Where a lessee rents equipment sourced to Iowa and no tax has been collected from such lessee by the lessor, the lessee should remit Iowa use tax to the department of revenue. In the event no tax is remitted, the department, in its discretion, may seek to collect the tax from the lessor or lessee. In the event that the lessee rents tangible personal property, and the lessor does not maintain a place of business in Iowa and does not collect use tax pursuant to Iowa Code section 423.14, such lessee shall remit tax on its rental payments to the department.

*d.* Where a resident lessor leases equipment to a nonresident lessee outside Iowa and the equipment is delivered to the lessee outside Iowa, the act of leasing is exempt from the Iowa sales tax on the rental payments. However, in the event the lessee brings the equipment into Iowa, uses it in Iowa, and Iowa becomes the primary location of the property, Iowa use tax applies to subsequent rental payments.

*e.* If sales or use tax has already been paid to another state on the sales price of tangible personal property prior to the use of that property in Iowa, a tax credit against the Iowa use tax on the purchase price will be given. After the equipment is brought into Iowa, if sales or use tax is properly payable and is paid to another state on the rental payments of equipment, for the same time the Iowa tax is imposed on such rentals, a tax credit against the Iowa use tax on such rental payments will be given.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 423.1(24), 423.1(43), 423.1(46), 423.1(54), 423.2(1), and 423.15(2).

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