

701—18.45(422,423) Sale or rental of computers, industrial machinery and equipment; refund of and exemption from tax paid for periods prior to July 1, 1997. The sale or rental of computers, industrial machinery and equipment, including pollution control equipment, used in manufacturing, in research and development, or in the processing or storage of data or information by an insurance company, financial institution, or commercial enterprise is, under certain circumstances, exempt from tax and, under other circumstances, is subject to refund of sales or use tax paid. The sale or rental of machinery, equipment, or computers directly and primarily used in the recycling or reprocessing of waste products is also exempt from tax; see subrule 18.45(8). For purposes of the organization of this rule, items that may be exempt or subject to refund of tax are referred to as specified property unless the context of the rule indicates otherwise. See subrule 18.45(1) for definition of what constitutes specified property. See rule 18.58(422,423) for the manner in which the sale or rental of machinery, equipment, and computers to manufacturers and the sale or rental of computers to commercial enterprises are treated on and after July 1, 1997.

18.45(1) Definitions. The following words are defined for the purposes of this rule in the manner set out below.

“Commercial enterprise” includes businesses and manufacturers conducted for profit and includes centers for data processing services to insurance companies, financial institutions, businesses, and manufacturers, but excludes professions and occupations and nonprofit organizations. A hospital that is a not-for-profit organization would not be a “commercial enterprise.” The term “professions” means a vocation or employment requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive academic preparation. The term “occupations” means the principal business of an individual. Included within the meaning of “occupations” is the business of farming. A professional corporation which carries on any business which is a “profession” or “occupation” is not a commercial enterprise.

“Directly used.” Property is “directly used” only if it is used to initiate, sustain, or terminate the transformation of any activity. In determining whether any property is “directly used,” consideration should be given to the following factors:

1. The physical proximity of the property in question to the activity in which it is used;
2. The proximity of the time of use of the property in question to the time of use of other property used before and after it in the activity involved; and
3. The active causal relationship between the use of the property in question and the activity involved. The fact that a particular piece of property may be essential to the conduct of the activity because its use is required either by law or practical necessity does not, of itself, mean that the property is directly used.

“Financial institution” is a bank incorporated under Iowa Code chapter 524 or federal law; a savings and loan association incorporated under Iowa Code chapter 534 or federal law; a credit union organized under Iowa Code chapter 533 or federal law; or any corporation licensed as an industrial loan company under Iowa Code chapter 536A. Excluded from the meaning of the term are loan brokers governed by Iowa Code chapter 535C and production credit associations.

“Industrial machinery and equipment” means machinery and equipment used by a manufacturer in a manufacturing establishment. Machinery is any mechanical, electrical or electronic device designed and used to perform some function and to produce a certain effect or result. The word includes not only the basic unit of the machinery but also any adjunct or attachment necessary for the basic unit to accomplish its intended function. The word also includes all devices used or required to control, regulate or operate a piece of machinery, provided such devices are directly connected with or are an integral part of the machinery and are used primarily for control, regulation or operation of machinery. Jigs, dies, tools, and other devices necessary to the operation of or used in conjunction with the operation of what would be ordinarily thought of as machinery are also considered to be “machinery.” See *Deere Manufacturing Co. v. Zeiner*, 247 Iowa 1264 78 N.W.2d 527 (1956). Machinery does not include buildings designed specifically to house or support machinery. Equipment is any tangible personal property used in an operation or activity. Nonexclusive examples of equipment are: tables on which property is assembled on an assembly line and chairs used by assembly line workers.

“Insurance company” means an insurer organized or operating under Iowa Code chapter 508, 514, 515, 518, 519, or 520 or authorized to do business in Iowa as an insurer. An insurance company must have 50 or more persons employed in Iowa, excluding licensed insurance agents. Effective April 8, 1996, an insurance company means an insurer organized or operating under Iowa Code chapter 508, 514, 515, 518, 518A, 519, or 520 or authorized to do business in this state as an insurer or licensed insurance agent under Iowa Code chapter 522. Excluded from the definition of “insurance company” are fraternal and beneficial societies governed by Iowa Code chapter 512 and health maintenance organizations governed by Iowa Code chapter 514B. This list of exclusions is not intended to be exclusive.

“Manufacturer” means any person, firm, or corporation who purchases, receives, or holds personal property for the purpose of adding to its value by any process of manufacturing, refining, purifying, combining of different materials, or by packing of meats with an intent to sell at a gain or profit. Those who are in the business of printing, newspaper publication, bookbinding, lumber milling, and production of drugs and agricultural supplies are illustrative, nonexclusive examples of manufacturers. Construction contracting; quarrying; remanufacture or rebuilding of tangible personal property (such as automobile engines); provision of health care; farming; transportation for hire; mining; and the activities of restaurateurs, hospitals, and medical doctors are illustrative, nonexclusive examples of businesses which are not manufacturers. See *Associated General Contractors of Iowa v. State Tax Commission*, 255 Iowa 673, 123 N.W.2d 922 (1963) and *River Products Co. v. Board of Review of Washington County*, 332 N.W.2d 116 (Iowa Ct. App. 1982).

“Pollution control equipment” means any disposal system or apparatus used or placed in operation primarily for the purpose of reducing, controlling or eliminating air or water pollution. The term does not include any apparatus used to eliminate “noise pollution.” Liquid, solid, and gaseous wastes are included within the meaning of the word “pollution.”

“Processing” means an operation or series of operations whereby tangible personal property is subjected to some special treatment by artificial or natural means which changes its form, context, or condition, and results in marketable tangible personal property. See rule 18.29(422,423).

“Processing or storage of data or information.” Not only a computer, but machinery or equipment may be used in the processing or storage of data or information. All computers store and process information. However, only if the “final output” for a user or consumer is stored or processed data will the computer be subject to refund or exemption of tax.

“Recycling” means any process by which waste, or materials which would otherwise become waste, are collected, separated, or processed and revised or returned for use in the form of raw materials or products. The term includes, but is not limited to, the composting of yard waste which has been previously separated from other waste. “Recycling” does not include any form of energy recovery.

“Replacement parts.” Replacement parts which are depreciable for state and federal income tax purposes include only those replacement parts which either materially add to the value of industrial machinery, equipment, or computers or appreciably prolong their lives. Replacement parts which only keep machinery, equipment, or computers in their ordinarily efficient operating condition are not eligible for exemption. Included within the meaning of replacement parts is any part the cost of which is depreciable for state and federal income tax purposes but which may also be deducted as a current expense. So long as the cost is depreciable the sale or lease of the replacement part is eligible for exemption from tax. However, the person claiming the exemption must show that the replacement part which was deducted as an expense could have been depreciated under state and federal income tax law.

“Research and development” means experimental or laboratory activity which has as its ultimate goal the development of new products, processes of manufacturing, refining, purifying, combining of different materials, or meat packing. The ultimate goal of research and development must be that of adding value to products. The term “research and development” does not include testing or inspection for quality control purposes, efficiency surveys, management studies, consumer surveys, advertising, promotions, or research in connection with literary, historical, or similar projects. Machinery, equipment, and computers are used “directly” in research and development only if they are used in actual experimental or laboratory activity that qualifies as research and development under this subrule.

“*Specified property*” means property that is a computer or industrial machinery and equipment including pollution control equipment and depreciable replacement parts for that property.

18.45(2) Requirements. The sale or rental of specified property is exempt from tax if:

a. The property is real property within the scope of Iowa Code section 427A.1(1) “e” or “j.” For sales occurring after January 1, 1994, the property is not required to be subject to taxation as real property (however, see subrules 18.45(4) and 18.45(8)); and

b. The property is directly and primarily used in one of the following:

1. By a manufacturer in processing tangible personal property; or
2. In research and development of new products or processes of manufacturing, refining, purifying, combining of different materials or packing of meats to be used for the purposes of adding value to products; or

3. In processing or storage of data or information by an insurance company, financial institution, or commercial enterprise.

c. To qualify for refund or exemption, a computer may be taxable as either commercial or industrial real estate. Machinery and equipment must be taxable as industrial real estate only to be similarly qualified. Research and development machinery and equipment that is not taxable as industrial real estate does not qualify for refund or exemption. See 701—subrules 71.1(5) and 71.1(6) for characterizations of “commercial” and “industrial” real estate. However, see subrule 18.45(4) for an exception to the requirement that certain property be taxable as real property.

d. The following are examples of machinery which is not directly used in manufacturing:

1. Machinery used exclusively for the efficient use of other machinery. Examples are: air cooling, air conditioning, and exhaust systems.

2. Machinery used in support operations, such as a machine shop, in which production machinery is assembled, maintained or repaired.

3. Machinery used by administrative, accounting, and personnel departments.

4. Machinery used by plant security, fire prevention, first aid, and hospital stations.

5. Machinery used in plant cleaning, disposal of scrap and waste, plant communications, lighting, safety, or heating.

e. The following is an example of property directly used in research and development: Frontier Hybrid, Inc. maintains a research and development laboratory for use in developing a corn plant which is a perennial. It purchases the following items for use in its research and development laboratory: a computer which will process data relating to the genetic structure of the various corn plants which Frontier Hybrid is testing, an electron microscope for examining the structure of corn plant genes, a “steam cleaner” for cleaning rugs in the laboratory offices, and a typewriter for use by the laboratory director’s secretary. The computer and the microscope are “directly” used in the research in which the laboratory is engaged; the steam cleaner and the typewriter only indirectly used. Therefore, purchase of the computer and microscope would be exempt from tax; purchase of the steam cleaner and typewriter would be subject to tax.

f. The following is an example of property used in processing or storage of information or data: A health insurance company has three computers. Computer A is used to monitor the temperature within the insurance company’s building. The computer transmits messages to the building’s heating and cooling systems telling them when to raise or lower the level of heating or air conditioning as needed. Computer B is used to store patient records and will recall those records on demand. Computer C is used to tabulate statistics regarding the amount of premiums paid in and the amount of benefit paid out for various classes of insured. The “final output” of Computer A is neither stored nor processed information. The final output of Computer B is stored information. The final output of Computer C is processed information. The sale, lease, or use of Computers B and C would qualify for exemption or refund.

g. The following is an example of property not used in manufacturing: A manufacturing plant located in Warren County which manufactures widgets fabricates its own patterns used in manufacturing the widgets on a metal press machine in its machine shop located in Story County. The machine shop does not sell the patterns and the metal press machine is used for no other purpose than to fabricate the

patterns. The metal press machine is not used in manufacturing because there is no intent to sell the patterns used by the machine shop at a gain or profit.

18.45(3) Exceptions. The following specified property is not exempt:

a. Property assessed by the department of revenue pursuant to Iowa Code chapters 428, 433, 434 and 436 to 438, inclusive. For electric, gas, water, and other companies assessed under Iowa Code chapter 428, only property owned by the company is assessed by the department. For railroad, telephone, pipeline, and electric transmission lines companies, property leased to as well as owned by the company is assessed by the department. See 701—Chapters 71 and 77.

b. Hand tools.

c. Point-of-sale equipment. See 701—subrule 71.1(7).

18.45(4) Inclusions. Property exempt from taxation for property tax purposes under the provisions of Iowa Code chapters 404 and 427B relating to urban revitalization property and industrial machinery receiving partial exemption by ordinance is also eligible for exemption from sales and use taxes even though the property is not subject to taxation as real property. Urban revitalization property and industrial machinery receiving partial exemption by ordinance are discussed in rules 701—80.8(404) and 80.6(427B), respectively. This property must meet the other requirements in subrule 18.45(2) in order to be exempt from sales and use taxes.

18.45(5) Lessor purchases of specified property. The analysis contained in rule 18.44(422,423) regarding lessor purchases of farm machinery and equipment is applicable to explain that same problem regarding specified property. See subrule 18.44(3) for analysis.

18.45(6) Rights of refund and exemption. Rescinded IAB 10/13/93, effective 11/17/93.

18.45(7) Designing or installing new industrial machinery or equipment. On and after July 1, 1985, the gross receipts from the services of designing or installing new industrial machinery or equipment shall be exempt from tax. The enumerated services of electrical or electronic installation are included in this exemption. To qualify for the exemption, the sale or rental of the machinery or equipment must be subject to refund or exemption under this rule. In addition, the machinery or equipment must be “new.” For purposes of this subrule, “new” means never having been used or consumed by anyone. The exemption is not applicable to reconstructed, rebuilt or repaired or previously owned machinery or equipment. The exemption is applicable to new machinery and equipment designed or installed for rental as well as for sale. The gross receipts from design or installation must be separately identified, charged separately, and reasonable in amount for the exemption to apply. A “computer” is not considered to be machinery or equipment, and its installation or design is not eligible for this exemption.

18.45(8) Property used in recycling or reprocessing of waste products. On and after July 1, 1989, the gross receipts from the sale or rental of machinery, equipment, or computers directly and primarily used in the recycling or reprocessing of waste products shall be exempt from tax. Machinery or equipment used in the recycling or reprocessing of waste products includes, but is not limited to, compactors, balers, crushers, grinders, cutters, or shears directly and primarily used for this purpose. The sale of an endloader, forklift, truck, or other moving device is exempt from tax if the device is directly and primarily used in the movement of property which is an integral part of recycling or reprocessing. See 18.45(8) “c.” The sale of a bin for storage ordinarily would not be exempt from tax, storage without more not being a part of recycling or reprocessing. Certain limits for exemption placed upon industrial machinery and equipment are not applicable to machinery and equipment used in recycling or reprocessing.

For example, machinery, equipment or a computer need not meet the requirements of 18.45(2) “a” concerning specified property being real property for the exemption to apply. Furthermore, the exemption will apply even if the machinery, equipment or computer is purchased by a person other than an insurance company, financial institution or commercial enterprise. For instance, a person engaged in a profession or occupation could purchase property for direct and primary use in recycling or reprocessing of waste products and the exemption would apply.

a. By way of nonexclusive examples, recycling or reprocessing can begin when waste or material which would otherwise become waste is collected or separated. A vehicle used directly and primarily for collecting waste which will be recycled or reprocessed could be a vehicle used for an exempt purpose under this rule. Thus, the purchaser of a garbage truck could claim this exemption if the truck were

directly and primarily used in recycling and not, for instance, in hauling garbage to a landfill. Machinery or equipment used to segregate waste from material to be recycled or reprocessed or used to separate various forms of materials which will be reprocessed (e.g., glass and aluminum) can also be used at the beginning of recycling or reprocessing.

b. Machinery and equipment directly and primarily used in recycling or reprocessing. See subrule 18.45(1) for the definition of “directly used” which is applicable to this subrule. The examples of machinery not directly used in manufacturing set out in 18.45(2) “*d*” should be studied for guidance in determining whether similar machinery is or is not used in recycling or reprocessing; e.g., machinery used in plant security (see 18.45(2) “*d*” “4”) is not machinery directly used in recycling or reprocessing.

c. Integral use in recycling or reprocessing. Ordinarily, any operation or series of operations which does not transform waste or material which would otherwise become waste into new raw materials or products would not be a part of recycling or reprocessing. However, activities which do not do this, but are an “integral part” of recycling or reprocessing, are themselves recycling or reprocessing. For example, an endless belt which moves aluminum cans from a machine where they are shredded to a machine where the shredded aluminum is crushed into blocks would be an endless belt used in recycling or reprocessing and the exemption applies. See subrule 18.29(5) for a discussion of when an activity is an integral part of “processing.” Some of that discussion is applicable to this subrule.

d. The end of recycling or reprocessing. Recycling or reprocessing ends when waste or a material which would otherwise become waste is in the form of raw material in which it will be used in manufacturing or in the form of a product which will be sold for use other than as a raw material in manufacturing. For instance, a corporation purchases a machine which grinds logs, stumps, pallets, and crates and other waste wood into wood chips. After grinding, the wood chips are sold and transported to purchasers to various sites where the chips are dumped on and spread out over the ground for use in erosion control. The machine which grinds the wood chips is a machine used in recycling. The truck which transports the wood chips from the machine to the sites is not used in reprocessing because, at the time the chips are placed in the truck, they are in the form in which they will be sold for use other than as a raw material in manufacturing.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 422.45(26), Iowa Code section 422.45(27) as amended by 1996 Iowa Acts, chapter 1049, and Iowa Code section 422.45(29).

[see Rescission note at end of chapter]