

**701—203.3(423) Retailers' discounts, trade discounts, rebates and coupons.**

**203.3(1) Retailers' discounts.** A retailer's discount reduces the retailer's price of a property or service with the remainder being the actual sales price of the goods charged in the account. The purchaser entitled to the discount will never owe the retailer's price as a debt, the debt being the sales price after the agreed discount has been deducted. The word "discount" means "to buy at a reduction." *Benner Tea Company v. Iowa State Tax Commission*, 252 Iowa 843, 109 N.W.2d 39 (1961).

Any discount a retailer allows that reduces a retailer's price to a sales price is a proper deduction when collecting and reporting tax. This is not the case when the retailer offers a discount to a purchaser but bills and collects tax on the retailer's price rather than on the sales price. The customer must receive the benefit of the discount, for sales tax purposes, in order for the retailer to exclude the discount from the sales price when collecting and reporting tax.

Certain retailers bill their customers on a gross and net basis, with the difference considered to be a discount for payment purposes. When a customer does not resolve the bill within the net payment period, tax shall apply on the gross charge shown on the billing, the gross charge having become the taxable sales price by virtue of the customer's failure to take the action which allows the discount to be taken.

**203.3(2) Rebates.** A "rebate" is a return of part of an amount paid for a product. Manufacturers' rebates are not discounts and cannot be used to reduce the sales price received from a sale or to reduce the purchase price of a product. This subrule applies even though the rebate is used by the retailer to reduce the retailer's price to a sales price or is used by the purchaser as a down payment. The rebate is considered a transaction between the manufacturer and the purchaser. See 1972 O.A.G. 332.

**203.3(3) Coupons.** Coupons issued by the producer of a product are not discounts and cannot be used as an abatement from the retailer's price of the product. Coupons issued by the retailer which actually reduce the price of the product to the purchaser are treated as a discount as provided in subrule 203.3(1). *Saxon-Western Corporation v. Mahin*, 369 N.E.2d 1185 (Ill. 1979).

EXAMPLE 1. C acquires a 30¢ off coupon issued by manufacturer of A-B Band-aids for A-B Band-aids. The coupon can be redeemed at a store which sells the product. C goes to store D and purchases a box of A-B Band-aids which shows a price of \$1.50. C pays \$1.20 plus the 30¢ coupon. D is reimbursed the 30¢ for the coupon by the manufacturer. Tax is due on the \$1.50 because D's total sales price is \$1.50. The coupon is not used as a discount in this situation.

EXAMPLE 2. E offers a two-for-the-price-of-one coupon for its super hamburger. Each hamburger normally sells for \$2. The coupon can only be redeemed at E's retail store. F acquires the coupon and redeems it at E's store. The purchase price for F was \$2 for both hamburgers. The tax is due on the \$2 because this amount is the sales price for E, even though the value of the two hamburgers would normally be \$4. In this situation, the sales price for the two hamburgers is \$2.

**203.3(4) Trade discounts.** A "trade discount" is a discount from a seller's list price which is offered to a class or category of customer, e.g., retailers or wholesalers. Trade discounts given or allowed by manufacturers, distributors, or wholesalers to retailers or by manufacturers or distributors to wholesalers and payments made by manufacturers, distributors, or wholesalers directly to retailers or by manufacturers or distributors to wholesalers to reduce the sales price of a manufacturer's, distributor's, or wholesaler's product (e.g., cigarettes) or to promote the sale or recognition of the manufacturer's, distributor's, or wholesaler's product are not to be included in any taxable sales price. This subrule does not apply to coupons issued by manufacturers, distributors, or wholesalers to consumers; see subrule 203.3(3).

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 423.1(47) "b"(1).  
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