

701—80.1 (425) Homestead tax credit.**80.1(1) *Application for credit.***

a. No homestead tax credit shall be allowed unless the first application for homestead tax credit is signed by the owner of the property or the owner's qualified designee and filed with the city or county assessor on or before July 1 of the current assessment year. (1946 O.A.G. 37) Once filed, the claim for credit is applicable to subsequent years and no further filing shall be required provided the homestead is owned and occupied by the claimant or the claimant's spouse on July 1 of each year and, in addition, the claimant or the claimant's spouse occupies the homestead for at least six months during each calendar year in which the fiscal year for which the credit is claimed begins. It is not a requirement that the six-month period of time be consecutive. If the credit is disallowed and the claimant failed to give written notice to the assessor that the claimant ceased to use the property as a homestead, a civil penalty equal to 5 percent of the amount of the disallowed credit shall be assessed against the claimant in addition to the amount of credit allowed. The assessor, county auditor, and county board of supervisors shall act on the claim in accordance with Iowa Code section 425.3. A claim filed after July 1 of any calendar year applies to the following assessment year.

b. In the event July 1 falls on either a Saturday or Sunday, applications for the homestead tax credit may be filed the following Monday.

c. In the event July 1 falls on either a Saturday or Sunday, applications submitted by mail shall be accepted if postmarked on the following Monday.

d. An assessor may not refuse to accept an application for homestead tax credit. If it is the opinion of the assessor that a homestead tax credit should not be allowed, the assessor shall accept the application for credit and recommend disallowance.

e. If the owner of the homestead is on active duty in the armed forces of this state or of the United States, or is 65 years of age or older or is disabled, the application for homestead tax credit may be signed and delivered by a member of the owner's family or the owner's guardian, conservator or designated attorney-in-fact. For purposes of this rule, any person related to the owner by blood, marriage or adoption shall be considered a member of the owner's family.

f. If a person makes a false application for credit with fraudulent intent to obtain the credit, the person is guilty of a fraudulent practice and the claim shall be disallowed. If the credit has been paid, the amount of the credit plus a penalty equal to 25 percent of the amount of the disallowed credit and interest shall be collected by the county treasurer.

g. For purposes of the homestead tax credit statute, the occupancy of the homestead may constitute actual occupancy or constructive occupancy. However, more than one homestead cannot be simultaneously occupied by the claimant and multiple simultaneous homestead tax credits are not allowable. (Op. St. Bd. Tax Rev. No. 212, February 29, 1980.) Generally, a homestead is occupied by the claimant if the premises constitute the claimant's usual place of abode. Once the claimant's occupancy of the homestead is established, such occupancy is not lost merely because the claimant, for some valid reason, is temporarily absent from the homestead premises with an intention of returning thereto (1952 O.A.G. 78).

80.1(2) *Eligibility for credit.*

a. If homestead property is owned jointly by persons who are not related or formerly related by blood, marriage or adoption, no homestead tax credit shall be allowed unless all the owners actually occupy the homestead property on July 1 of each year. (1944 O.A.G. 26; Letter O.A.G. October 18, 1941)

b. No homestead tax credit shall be allowed if the homestead property is owned or listed and assessed to a corporation, other than a family farm corporation, partnership, company or any other business or nonbusiness organization. (1938 O.A.G. 441; *Verne Deskin v. Briggs*, State Board of Tax Review, No. 24, February 1, 1972)

c. A person acquiring homestead property under a contract of purchase remains eligible for a homestead tax credit even though such person has assigned his or her equity in the homestead property as security for a loan. (1960 O.A.G. 263)

d. A person occupying homestead property pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 499A or 499B is eligible for a homestead tax credit. (1978 O.A.G. 78-2-5; 1979 O.A.G. 79-12-2)

e. A person who has a life estate interest in homestead property shall be eligible for a homestead tax credit, provided the remainderman is related or formerly related to the life estate holder by blood, marriage or adoption or the reversionary interest is held by a nonprofit corporation organized under Iowa Code chapter 504A. (1938 O.A.G. 193)

f. A homestead tax credit may not be allowed upon a mobile home which is not assessed as real estate. (1962 O.A.G. 450)

g. A person occupying homestead property under a trust agreement is considered the owner of the property for purposes of the homestead tax credit. (1962 O.A.G. 434)

h. A remainder is not eligible to receive a homestead tax credit until expiration of the life estate to which such person has the remainder interest. (1938 O.A.G. 305)

i. In order for a person occupying homestead property under a contract of purchase to be eligible for a homestead tax credit, the contract of purchase must be recorded in the office of the county recorder where the property is located. A recorded memorandum or summary of the actual contract of purchase is not sufficient evidence of ownership to qualify a person for a homestead tax credit.

j. An owner of homestead property who is in the military service or confined in a nursing home, extended-care facility or hospital shall be considered as occupying the property during the period of service or confinement. The fact that the owner rents the property during the period of military service is immaterial to the granting of the homestead tax credit. (1942 O.A.G. 45) However, no homestead tax credit shall be allowed if the owner received a profit for the use of the property from another person while such owner is confined in a nursing home, extended-care facility or hospital.

k. A person owning a homestead dwelling located upon land owned by another person or entity is not eligible for a homestead tax credit. (1942 O.A.G. 160, O.A.G. 82-4-9) This rule is not applicable to a person owning a homestead dwelling pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 499B or a person owning a homestead dwelling on land owned by a community land trust pursuant to 42 U.S.C. Section 12773.

l. An heir occupying homestead property that is part of an estate in the process of administration is considered an owner of the property and is eligible for the homestead credit. (1938 O.A.G. 272)

80.1(3) *Disabled veteran's homestead tax credit.* The disabled veteran's homestead tax credit may be claimed by any person who acquired homestead property under 38 U.S.C. Sections 21.801 and 21.802 or Sections 2101 and 2102 provided the veteran's annual income and that of the veteran's spouse do not exceed \$35,000. The amount of the credit is equal to the entire amount of tax payable on the homestead. Even though this financial assistance is available to disabled veterans on only one homestead during their lifetime, the credit may be claimed upon the acquisition of other homesteads for which no financial assistance is available providing all qualifications have been met.

80.1(4) *Application of credit.*

a. Except as provided in 80.1(1) "a," if the homestead property is conveyed to another person prior to July 1 of any year, the new owner must file a claim for credit on or before July 1 to obtain the credit for that year. If the property is conveyed on or after July 1, the credit shall remain with the property for that year provided the previous owner was entitled to the credit. However, when the property is transferred as part of a distribution made pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 598 (Dissolution of Marriage) the transferee spouse retaining ownership and occupancy of the homestead is not required to refile for the credit.

b. A homestead tax credit may be allowed even though the property taxes levied against the homestead property have been suspended by the board of supervisors. (1938 O.A.G. 288)

c. A homestead tax credit shall not be allowed if the property taxes levied against the homestead property have been canceled or remitted by the board of supervisors. (1956 O.A.G. 78)

d. Only one homestead tax credit can be allowed per legally described tract of land. For purposes of this rule, a legally described tract of land shall mean all land contained in a single legal description. (1962 O.A.G. 435)

e. If the owner of homestead property is also eligible for a military service tax exemption and claims the exemption on the homestead property, the military service tax exemption shall be applied

prior to the homestead tax credit when computing net property tax. (*Ryan v. State Tax Commission*, 235 Iowa 222, 16 N.W.2d 215)

f. If the homestead property contains two dwelling houses and one of the dwelling houses and a portion of the land is sold after a valid application for homestead tax credit has been filed, the assessor shall prorate the assessment so as to allow the seller a homestead tax credit on that portion of the property which is retained and also allow the purchaser a homestead tax credit on that portion of the property which is purchased, provided the purchaser files a valid application for homestead tax credit by July 1 of the claim year.

g. A homestead tax credit shall be allowed against the assessed value of the land on which a dwelling house did not exist as of January 1 of the year in which the credit is claimed provided a dwelling house is owned and occupied by the claimant on July 1 of that year.

h. The county treasurer shall, pursuant to Iowa Code section 25B.7, be required to extend to the claimant only that portion of the credit estimated by the department to be funded by the state appropriation.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code chapter 425 as amended by 2006 Iowa Acts, House File 2794.