

**701—285.55(422,423) Drop shipment sales.** A “drop shipment” generally involves two sales transactions and three parties. The first party is a consumer located inside Iowa. The second party is a retailer located outside the state. The third party is a supplier who may be located inside or outside of Iowa. The two sales transactions in question are the sale of property from the supplier to the out-of-state retailer, and the further sale of that property from the out-of-state retailer to the consumer in Iowa.

A “drop shipment sale” occurs when the consumer places an order for the purchase of tangible personal property with the out-of-state retailer. The retailer does not own the property ordered at the same time the consumer’s order is placed. The retailer then purchases the property from the supplier. The supplier in turn ships the property directly to the consumer in Iowa. Under Iowa law the supplier in a drop shipment sale cannot be required to collect tax (either sales or use) from the consumer, even if the requisite “nexus” to require collection exists. See the next to last paragraph of this rule for a characterization of “nexus.” The supplier transfers possession of the goods to the consumer; however, transfer of possession alone has never been held to be a “sale” for the purposes of Iowa sales and use tax law. *Sturtz v. Iowa Department of Revenue*, 373 N.W.2d 131 (Iowa 1985) and *Cedar Valley Leasing v. Iowa Department of Revenue*, 274 N.W.2d 357 (Iowa 1979).

With reference to drop shipment sales: If delivery of the goods under the contract for sale has occurred outside of Iowa, sale of the goods has occurred outside of Iowa. If delivery of the goods under the contract for sale has occurred within Iowa, the sale has occurred here. See *Sturtz* above for more information regarding sales and delivery. If the sale has occurred in Iowa and the retailer possesses the requisite nexus to require it to collect Iowa tax, the retailer is obligated to collect Iowa sales tax upon the “gross receipts” from its sale of the goods to the consumer. If the sale has occurred outside this state, and the retailer possesses the nexus to require it to collect Iowa tax, the retailer is obligated to collect Iowa retailer’s use tax upon the purchase price of the goods. If the retailer does not have nexus sufficient to require it to collect either Iowa sales or Iowa use tax, or if the retailer fails to collect either tax, the consumer is obligated to pay a consumer use tax directly to the department upon the purchase price of the goods. These rules are illustrated in the following examples.

**EXAMPLE A:** A consumer in Des Moines, Iowa, purchases goods from a retailer in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The Minneapolis retailer contracts with a supplier in Iowa to manufacture and ship the goods to the consumer. The retailer has nexus with Iowa, and delivery under the contract for sale has occurred in this state. In this case, the consumer is obligated to pay and the retailer is obligated to collect Iowa sales tax. The supplier is not obligated to collect any Iowa tax.

**EXAMPLE B:** A consumer in Des Moines, Iowa, purchases goods from a retailer in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The Minnesota retailer contracts with a supplier in Iowa to manufacture and ship the goods to the consumer. The retailer has no nexus with Iowa. Delivery under the contract of sale is in Iowa. Under these circumstances, the consumer is obligated to pay consumer’s use tax directly to the department. Neither the retailer nor the supplier is obligated to collect any Iowa tax.

**EXAMPLE C:** A consumer in Des Moines, Iowa, purchases goods from a retailer in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The retailer contracts with a supplier in Minneapolis to manufacture and ship the goods to the consumer in Des Moines. The retailer has nexus with Iowa, and delivery under the contract for sale occurs in Iowa. Under these circumstances, the consumer is obligated to pay and the retailer is obligated to collect Iowa sales tax. The supplier is not obligated to collect any Iowa tax.

**EXAMPLE D:** A consumer in Des Moines, Iowa, purchases goods from a retailer in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The retailer contracts with a supplier in Minneapolis to manufacture and ship the goods to the consumer in Des Moines. The retailer has nexus with this state; delivery under the contract for sale is in Minnesota. Under the circumstances, the consumer is obligated to pay and the retailer is obligated to collect Iowa retailer’s use tax. The supplier is not obligated to collect or pay any Iowa tax.

**EXAMPLE E:** A consumer in Des Moines, Iowa, purchases goods from a retailer in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The retailer contracts with a supplier in Minneapolis to manufacture and ship the goods to the consumer in Des Moines. The retailer has no nexus with this state. Delivery can occur in either Minnesota or Iowa. In this example, the consumer is obligated to pay Iowa consumer’s use tax directly to the department. Neither the retailer nor the supplier is obligated to collect any Iowa tax.

EXAMPLE F: A consumer in Des Moines, Iowa, purchases goods from a retailer in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The retailer contracts with a supplier located in Madison, Wisconsin, to ship the goods to the consumer in Des Moines. The retailer has nexus with Iowa, and delivery under the contract for sale is in Iowa. Under these circumstances, the retailer is obligated to collect and the consumer obligated to pay Iowa sales tax. The supplier is not obligated to collect any Iowa tax.

EXAMPLE G: A consumer in Des Moines, Iowa, purchases goods from a retailer in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The retailer contracts with a supplier located in Madison, Wisconsin, to ship the goods to the consumer in Des Moines. The retailer has nexus with Iowa with delivery in Madison, Wisconsin. Under these circumstances, the retailer is obligated to collect and the consumer obligated to pay Iowa retailer's use tax. The supplier is not obligated to collect any Iowa tax.

EXAMPLE H: A consumer in Des Moines, Iowa, purchases goods from a retailer in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The retailer contracts with a supplier located in Madison, Wisconsin, to ship the goods to the consumer in Des Moines. The retailer has no nexus with Iowa. Delivery under the contract for sale may be in Iowa or Wisconsin. Under these circumstances, the consumer is obligated to pay Iowa consumer's use tax directly to the department. Neither the retailer nor the supplier is obligated to collect any Iowa tax.

As used in these examples, the requirement of "nexus" is discussed in *Good's Furniture House Inc. v. Iowa State Bd. of Tax Review*, 382 N.W.2d 145 (Iowa 1986); cert. den. 479 U.S. 817; *State Tax Commission v. General Trading Co.*, 10 N.W.2d 659, 233 Iowa 877 (1943) affd. 64 S.Ct. 1028, 322 U.S. 335, 88 L.Ed. 1309; and *Nelson v. Sears, Roebuck & Co.*, 292 N.W. 130, 228 Iowa 1273 (1940) reversed 61 S.Ct. 586, 312 U.S. 359, 85 L.Ed. 522, as well as other judicial decisions, and Iowa Code section 422.43(12).

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code subsections 422.42(2) and 422.42(5).

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