

Vessels

General

For purposes of property taxation, vessels are considered to be personal property, in which taxes are a personal liability of the assessee. The appraisal and assessment of vessels present challenges due to the transitory nature of vessels, the various configurations and applications of use of vessels, the great diversity of builders and manufacturers of vessels, and the many types of vessels in use.

[Section 130\(a\)](#) provides that "vessel" includes every description of watercraft used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on water, but does not include aircraft. [Section 130\(b\)](#) defines a "documented vessel" as any vessel which is required to have and does have a valid marine document issued by the U.S. Coast Guard (except documented yachts of the United States) or that is registered or licensed by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). A documented vessel does not include any vessel exempt from taxation pursuant to [article XIII, section 3\(l\)](#) of the California Constitution.

Vessels are included on the local unsecured roll as personal property. Whether trailered or kept in the water, vessels are moved so frequently that it is difficult to determine if they are actually located upon a specific parcel of real property on the lien date. Therefore, it is reasonable that a vessel be enrolled on the unsecured roll, so that it is not a lien on real property. Special assessments are not levied against vessels, since vessels are classified as personal property.

For additional information regarding vessels, refer to [Assessors' Handbook Section 576, Assessment of Vessels \(AH576\)](#).

Scope of Review

The BOE's assessment practices survey team evaluates the assessor's practices and procedures regarding vessels.

The specific areas of review may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **General Program Elements**
- **Forms**
- **Valuation**
- **Documented Vessels**
- **Low-Value Vessels**