

Questions and Answers About the New 100% Disabled Veteran's Homestead Exemption

The Texas Legislature recently passed HB 3613. This bill provides for a 100% exemption for the residence homestead of qualified disabled veterans. The bill also increases the amount of the regular disabled veteran's exemption for the veterans who have a disability rating of 30%, 50%, or 70%. Below are some commonly asked questions and answers about the new 100% disability homestead exemption.

Q. What are the qualifications for the new exemption?

You qualify for the new 100% homestead exemption if you meet these requirements:

- You own a home and occupy it as your residence.
- You are receiving 100% disability compensation from the US Department of Veterans Affairs for a service-connected disability.
- You have a disability rating of 100% disabled or of individual unemployability.

To get this exemption, you must fill out and return **Form 11.131 Disabled Veteran's Homestead Exemption Application**. You must attach documentation as well. You may attach a copy of your **current** award letter, a **current** "VA tax letter," or another document from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs showing you are **currently** receiving 100% compensation due to a service-connected disability rating of 100% disability or of individual unemployability.

Q. How much of my home's value will it exempt?

If you qualify, your home will be totally exempt from property taxes in all jurisdictions, regardless of the home's value. If you co-own the home with someone other than your spouse, your share of the home's value will be exempted.

Q. I already have a homestead exemption. Do I need to apply for the new exemption?

Yes. The new exemption is not given automatically.

Q. I just qualified for the disabled veteran's exemption. Why do I need to send you my documentation for the new exemption?

Qualifications for the new homestead exemption differ from those for the prior disabled veteran's exemption. In particular, you show that you actually receive 100% disability compensation for a service-connected disability, and have a rating of 100% disability or individual unemployability for the **current** year.

Q. When is the new homestead exemption effective?

It is retroactive to January 1, 2009. If you owned your home and qualified on that date, you'll receive the exemption for 2009.

Q. I bought my home after January 1, 2009. Will I get the new exemption for part of 2009?

No. The exemption will take effect for 2010 year if you didn't own your home on January 1, 2009.

Q. My disability rating is actually 50%, but because I am over 65, I receive the maximum disability exemption. Do I qualify for the new homestead exemption?

No. You must be 100% disabled or have a rating of individual unemployability to qualify for the new exemption. You must also be receiving 100% disability compensation from the VA. **If the VA reduces or changes either of these ratings, it is your responsibility to notify the appraisal district in writing.**

Q. If something happens to me, will the new homestead exemption pass to my spouse or children?

No. Only the disabled veteran can claim the new 100% homestead exemption.

Q. I owe delinquent taxes on my home for years before 2009. Will the new exemption affect those?

No. The exemption will apply for 2009 forward. It does not affect prior years.

Q. I am in a hospital or nursing home. Can I still get the new exemption?

Yes, as long as you intend to return to the home when you are able.

Q. My spouse and I own our home together. How is the new homestead exemption calculated?

If the home is community property, it is calculated as if you owned 100% of the home. If the home is not community property, the exemption is prorated in proportion to the value of your interest.

Q. I have a mortgage on the home. Can I still get the new homestead exemption?

Yes.

Q. I don't currently have a homestead exemption. Do I need to apply for the regular homestead in addition to this new one?

You should also apply for the regular homestead exemption. This will ensure that you receive the maximum benefits of the regular exemption should your qualification for the new exemption change.

Q. I have recently turned 65. Should I apply for the over-65 homestead exemption in addition to the new exemption?

Yes, for the same reasons given above.

Q. How much of my home's value will the new exemption exempt?

Your home will be totally exempt from property taxes.

Q. I meet all of the qualifications for the new exemption. I currently apply the \$12,000 regular disabled veteran's exemption to my home. When I get the new disability homestead exemption, what happens to the other exemption?

The new exemption will exempt all of the homesteaded value of your home. Consequently, the \$12,000 disabled veteran's exemption will have no effect, unless you have non-homesteaded value on your property. If you own other taxable property, you should file a new standard disabled veteran's application with the appraisal district and designate the exemption as applying to the other property.

Q. Will I have to reapply every year for the new disability homestead exemption?

No. Once your exemption is granted, you will not have to reapply unless the chief appraiser requires you to do so in writing. However, you may be asked to reapply to show continued eligibility.

Q. I already have a disability homestead exemption on my home. What is the difference between that and this one?

The existing disability homestead exemption has different requirements and benefits. For that exemption, you must meet the Social Security Administration's definition of disabled, which is not necessarily the same as that used by the VA or your branch of the military. The benefits are also different. Only school districts are required to provide a disability homestead exemption, though many other taxing entities do. The new exemption will apply to all taxing units and will exempt the total value of your home.

Q. Can I apply the new exemption to my main home and get the general homestead exemption on my vacation home?

No. Both exemptions apply only to the home that is your principal residence.

Q. How do I get an application and where do I mail it?

You may obtain the exemption form from our website, www.wcad.org, **Forms**, called “Disabled Veterans Homestead Exemption” or contact or come by our office to obtain a form.

Applications and evidence can be mailed to the following address:

Williamson Central Appraisal District
625 FM 1460
Georgetown, TX 78626-8050

Q. How do I get the disability award letter?

Veterans should contact the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to request the most current award letter at www.va.gov or 1-800-827-1000. You may also contact the County Veterans Services office at 512-238-2151.