



CITY OF ST. ALBERT

C-FS-15

Property Tax Relief

Overview of Requests

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Background – Tax Relief Requests

- Taxation Dept. has many requests for tax relief each year, due primarily to the imposition of tax penalties for late payment.
- Administration can only cancel or reduce tax penalties if the City has administratively made an error, omission, or misrepresentation.

Background - MGA 347

- Section 347 of the *Municipal Government Act* allows only Council to cancel, reduce, refund, or defer all or part of a tax.
- Section 203 of the *Municipal Government Act* prohibits Council from delegating its power with respect to taxes under section 347.
- Thus, only Council has the ability to provide leniency, in instances where the City has not erred.

Purpose of Policy

- To provide Council with a framework to guide how it will respond to requests for property tax relief.
- To allow Council to have a set of “goalposts”, but still allow Council to exercise its own discretion.
- To bring clarity to property owners on what types of requests for tax relief are deemed acceptable.



Example of Typical Penalties

- Incurring a tax penalty can result from a myriad of underlying reasons. Penalty amounts vary, due to underlying assessed value:

House assessed at \$450,000 in 2022	Tax Details	Condo assessed at \$275,000 in 2022	Tax Details
Original Taxes	\$4,996	Original Taxes	\$3053
July 1 Penalty @ 4%	\$200	July 1 Penalty @ 4%	\$122
Aug 1 Penalty @ 6%	\$300	Aug 1 Penalty @ 6%	\$183
Oct 1 Penalty @ 6%	\$300	Oct 1 Penalty @ 6%	\$183
Total Penalties	\$800	Total Penalties	\$488

Request Form Process

- Standardized Request Form
- Administered by Tax Dept.
- Consistency of process



The image shows a 'Property Tax Relief Request Form' from the City of St. Albert. The form is titled 'Property Tax Relief Request Form' and includes a logo for the City of St. Albert. It contains several sections for providing information:

- Important Information:** A paragraph explaining the purpose of the form and the legal basis for the request.
- Section A: Information about whom is making the tax relief request**
 - 1. Is the requestor the: ☐ Property Owner or, ☐ Agent
 - 2. Requestor Name: _____
 - 4. Requestor Address: _____
 - 3. Requestor Phone: _____
 - 5. Requestor E-mail: _____
- Section B: Property Information (from your property tax notice)**
 - 6. Assessment Roll Number(s): _____
 - 7. Property Address(es): _____
- Section C: Type of property tax relief being requested (Please check ONE of the below boxes)**
 - ☐ Property Tax Cancellation
 - ☐ Tax Penalty Cancellation
 - ☐ Property Tax Reduction
 - ☐ Property Tax Refund
 - ☐ Property Tax Deferral
- Section D: \$ Amount of property tax relief being requested (Enter dollar amount)**
 - \$ _____
- Section E: Reason(s) for Property Tax Relief Request (Please articulate the reasons, circumstances for your request)**
 - (Please attach additional information to this form if you require more space)
 - _____

At the bottom right, there is a 'Property Tax Verification' section with a table for recording tax amounts:

Property Tax Verification:	
Present Year Tax Levy:	\$ _____
or Year Tax Arrears:	\$ _____
or Year Tax Delinquent:	\$ _____
Penalty Totals:	\$ _____
Net:	\$ _____
TOTAL Outstanding:	\$ _____

Tax Relief Principles

When considering requests, Council would take into consideration the following principles:

- a. Fairness & equity to all taxpayers;
- b. Sustainability of municipal revenues;
- c. Simplicity, transparency, and efficiency of the tax levy process;
- d. Predictability and stability.



Tax Relief Categories

Permissible

Compassionate Grounds

Prior-Year Exemption Eligibility under COPTER
(no applications for 2022)

Prior-Year Substantive Assessment "Error"
(no applications for 2022)

Non-Permissible

Failure to Receive Notice

Payment Errors or Delays

Natural Disasters

Non-Tax Related Charges

Demolitions

Structural Fires

Compassionate Grounds- Sample



- Council may provide tax relief for extenuating circumstances that merit compassion.
- Example: The property owner was in hospital with a critical illness and could not attend to payment of taxes prior to the deadline.
- Response: The tax penalty incurred could be cancelled.

Suggested Process

- Requests for tax relief would be received intermittently throughout the year by Tax Dept.
- Those that remained unresolved would be “bundled”, and presented to Council via the agenda report process, typically in Q4.
- Individual requests are typically ***in camera*** to protect the privacy of applicants.

Suggested Process cont.

- The requestor (the property owner) is given the opportunity to present their request in writing, or in person if requested.
- Council would deliberate each request and make a tax relief decision.
- Decision results would be forwarded to property owner.
- Decision would be considered final.

Questions?

