

AIRCRAFT EXCISE TAX
Chapter 82.48 RCW

Tax Base Aircraft used within the state. Because of the exemption of interstate commercial aircraft, the tax applies mainly to private owners of small planes used for personal or business purposes.

Tax Rate The tax consists of an annual fee based on the type of aircraft:

Single engine, fixed wing.....	\$ 50
Small multi-engine, fixed wing	65
Large multi-engine, fixed wing.....	80
Turboprop multi-engine, fixed wing.....	100
Turbojet multi-engine, fixed wing	125
Helicopters.....	75
Sailplanes, lighter-than-air, home-built	20

Levied by State

Recent Collections (\$000)

<u>Calendar Year</u>	<u>Collections</u>	<u>% Change</u>	<u>% of All State Taxes</u>
2009	\$285	(0.2)%	0.0%
2008	286	0.7	0.0
2007	284	0.5	0.0
2006	282	0.9	0.0
2005	280	(0.1)	0.0
2004	280	1.1	0.0
2003	277	23.8	0.0
2002	223	(0.4)	0.0
2001	224	(1.2)	0.0
2000	227	(1.3)	0.0

Distribution of Receipts

- 90% state general fund
- 10% aeronautics account

Administration

Department of Transportation. Every aircraft must be registered for each calendar year in which it is operated within the state. The tax is collected by the Aviation Division of DOT when the aircraft is first registered and is subsequently paid annually during January of each year. Possession of the appropriate effective federal certificate, permit, rating, or license relating to the ownership and airworthiness of the aircraft are requisites for registration of an aircraft. The Department of Revenue is authorized to collect unpaid aircraft excise tax per RCW 82.48.020.

Exemptions

- aircraft owned and used exclusively by any governmental entity;
- aircraft registered in other countries;
- aircraft owned by nonresidents, if located in Washington for less than 90 days;
- commercial aircraft principally used in interstate or foreign commerce;
- aircraft used by the manufacturer for testing, experimental, and training purposes;
- aircraft held for sale by dealers;
- aircraft that are not in an airworthy and flyable condition;
- refund for any excessive tax paid;
- aircraft owned by nonresidents kept at a Washington airport that is jointly owned by governmental entities from this state and other states, and the owner or operator has paid all taxes, licenses, and registration fees required by the state in which the owner or operator resides.

History

The tax was established in 1949 with a rate of 1 percent of fair market value. Previously, aircraft were subject to personal property tax. In 1967, the tax was changed from a percentage of fair market value to a flat fee of \$15 for single engine planes and \$25 for multi-engine planes. In 1983, the current schedule of rates was adopted.

Discussion/Major Issues

Approximately 5,950 aircraft are currently registered and pay the annual excise tax.

The tax is levied in lieu of personal property tax. Thus, there is greater uniformity of tax burden for owners throughout the state than might be the case under the property tax. However, the receipts of the tax are not distributed to local taxing districts, and the amount of tax paid does not equal the amount that would be due under the property tax, if aircraft were assessed on the basis of fair market value.