

Amendment 7
Permanently Disable Veteran' Discount on Homestead Ad Valorem Tax

This Constitutional Provision was approved by voters in the November 2006 general election, created an amendment to the section 6 of Article VII of the State Constitution, relating to the Homestead Exemption for Disabled Veterans. The provision took effect December 7, 2006, is self-executing, and did not require implementing legislation.

In spite of the fact that voters approved the constitutional amendment in November 2006 in the general election, Alvin Mazourek, the Hernando County Property Appraiser is concerned that many disabled Veterans may not be aware of the additional Ad Valorem Tax Discount or the requirements. To date, only four (4) applications have been submitted to the Hernando County Property Appraiser's Office for the 2007 Tax Year. Three (3) were approved for 2007 and one for 2008 since the applicant was not 65 years of age prior to January 1st, 2007.

The amendment provides a property tax discount on the Homestead property of veterans who **meet the following criteria with documented proof:**

- ✓ Have an honorable discharge from military service;
- ✓ Are at least 65 years old prior to January 1st of the year filing;
- ✓ Are partially disabled with a permanent service-connected disability. All or a portion of such disability must be combat related;
- ✓ Were a resident of Florida at the time they entered the military.

Veterans who qualify may receive a percentage discount on Homestead property taxes equal to the percentage of the veteran's permanent service connected disability as determined by the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs.

For example: If a qualified Veteran has a 60% overall combined disability rating as determined by the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs, a percent of which is combat related;
 The property has a \$25,000 Homestead and a \$5,000 service connected disability totaling \$30,000;
 Based on the 2007 proposed mill of 17.8504 (CRSH)

100% Ownership		
Market Value	\$232,783	Comparable Sales for the Prior Year
Assessed Value	\$135,839	Amount capped by Save Our Homes
\$25,000 + \$5,000	\$30,000	Exemption amount
\$135,839 - \$30,000	\$105,839	Taxable amount
\$105,839 x 60%	\$63,503	Discount amount
\$105,839 - \$63,503	\$42,336	Taxable amount after discount
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\$42,336 x 17.8504 mills	\$755.71	Ad Valorem taxes after 60% Taxable Value Discount
\$105,839 x 17.8504 mills	\$1,889.27	Ad Valorem taxes without 60% Taxable Value
Discount		

Total Savings of \$1,133.56 Tax Dollars the first year

Documentation that the applicant will need to submit to the Property Appraiser's Office prior to March 1st of the year applying:

- ✓ **Application** for Homestead Property Tax Discount For Veterans Age 65 and Older With a Combat Related Disability
- ✓ **DD Form 214- Certificate of Release or Discharge From Active Duty or Notice of Separation** (Other types of discharge papers for veterans discharged prior to 1950)
This alone may satisfy the following requirements:
 1. Date of Birth (Birth Certificate, Driver License or ID card is also acceptable)
 2. Florida was Home of Record at Time of Entering Military Service
 3. Honorable Discharge, If the DD Form 214 is issued without Discharge Notice, a copy of the Veterans " Certificate of Honorable Discharge" is acceptable
 4. All or a portion of the Veterans Disability is Combat Related i.e. Purple Heart, Decorations, Medals, etc.
- ✓ **Disability Rating Letter from United States Department Of Veterans Affairs**
This will satisfy the requirement of:
 1. Official letter from the USDVA stating the percentage of the veteran's service-connected disability (10%-90%)
 2. All or a portion of the disability was combat related under the headings of Evidence, Reasons for Decision, and/or Associated Claims. **The overall or combined rating percentage of total service-connected disability is used to determine the discount. The VA uses a combined rating table that considers the effect from most serious to the least serious conditions.**
- ✓ Additional proof of Combat Related disability may include but is not limited to:
 1. Documentation from the Department of Defense for **CRSC (Combat Related Special Compensation) for retirees such as an approved DD Form 2860** (Claim for Combat- Related Special Compensation);
 2. Other citations documenting disability as:
 1. Purple Heart (PH)
 2. Armed Conflict (AC)
 3. Hazardous Service (HS)
 4. Simulating war (SW)
 5. Instrumentality of War (IN)
 6. Agent Orange (OA)
 7. Radiation Exposure (RE)
 8. Gulf War (GW)
 9. Mustard Gas (MG)

As indicated on the Department of Defense Form 2860

Key Points

- ✓ Although the amendment requires the veterans disability to be combat related in order to qualify, **the total service-connected rating percentage is required to determine the discount** (even though one or more combat related disabilities may be only part of their compensable disabilities)
- ✓ The Disabled Vets Tax Discount is **not transferable and does not carry over to the surviving spouse**
- ✓ Once all other applicable exemptions have been ascertained, the exemptions will be **deducted from the property's Assessed Value (The discount does not affect any existing exemptions such as Homestead, Disability or Widows/Widowers)**
- ✓ The Property Appraiser's Office shall apply the discount by **reducing the Taxable Value before certifying the Tax Roll to the Tax Collector's office**
- ✓ **The resulting Taxable Value shall be included in the certification for the use by Taxing Authorities in setting Millage**
- ✓ **Does not affect any Non Ad Valorem assessments such as Fire, Solid Waste, CDDs, etc.**
- ✓ **Does not affect the current 688 Totally and Permanently Disabled Veterans that are already totally exempt from Ad Valorem tax**
- ✓ **Currently there are 1,558 Disabled Veterans in Hernando County receiving the \$5,000 Disabled Veterans exemption that may be eligible**
- ✓ **At the present time, the Property Appraiser's Office computer system does not provide us with a means to determine whether it's the Veteran or the Veteran's spouse that is 65 years of age or older**
- ✓ **An annual application is required.** If the governing body, by majority vote waives the requirement that an annual application be made, **the veteran must notify the Property Appraiser's Office of any changes in the use of the property or in his/her degree of disability.**
- ✓ If Property Appraiser denies the request for a discount, the applicant will be **notified in writing on or before July 1 of the year the application was filed.** The application may appeal to the **Value Adjustment Board and reapply for the discount in subsequent years.**
- ✓ **It is the duty of the disabled veteran receiving the discount to promptly notify the Property Appraiser's Office whenever the use of the property or the percentage of disability changes. If a disabled veteran fails to notify the Property Appraiser's Office and the Property Appraiser determines that for any year within the prior 10 years the veteran was not entitled to receive all or a portion of such discount, the property is subject to the taxes exempted as a result of such failure plus 15% interest per annum and a penalty of 50% of the taxes exempted.**