



City of Caribou, Maine

Municipal Building
25 High Street
Caribou, ME 04736
Telephone: (207) 493-3324
Fax: (207) 498-3954
www.cariboumaine.org

LOOKING TO SAVE MONEY ON YOUR 2019 PROPERTY TAXES?

The Maine State Legislature has enacted legislation giving Veterans property tax relief. The amount of this reduction is based on the total value of the exemption granted by the Maine State Legislature (currently \$6,000) and the City of Caribou's annual certified ratio (currently 100%). In 2018, a typical eligible Veteran saved **\$142.20**. To qualify an individual must meet the qualification on the attached flow chart. NOTE: The exemption would apply to land or personal property if the Veteran lives in the community (example: rents an apartment or lives at the nursing home or MVH).

A change this year: 36 MRSA §653 (Veteran's exemption) was amended to eliminate the requirement that Vietnam-era Veterans serve on active duty for 180 days during the federally recognized war period of February 27, 1961 and May 8, 1975. If you were denied in the past for this exemption – please reapply before April 1, 2019!

The attached "Application for Maine Veteran Property Tax Exemption" must be completed and returned to the City of Caribou Assessor's office by **April 1, 2019** to be eligible for the 2019 tax year. If a property owner moves to a new permanent residence, it is the property owner's responsibility to submit a new application for exemption.

Send completed forms to: City of Caribou
Assessor's Office
25 High Street
Caribou, Maine 04736

You may also fax to: (207) 498 – 3954

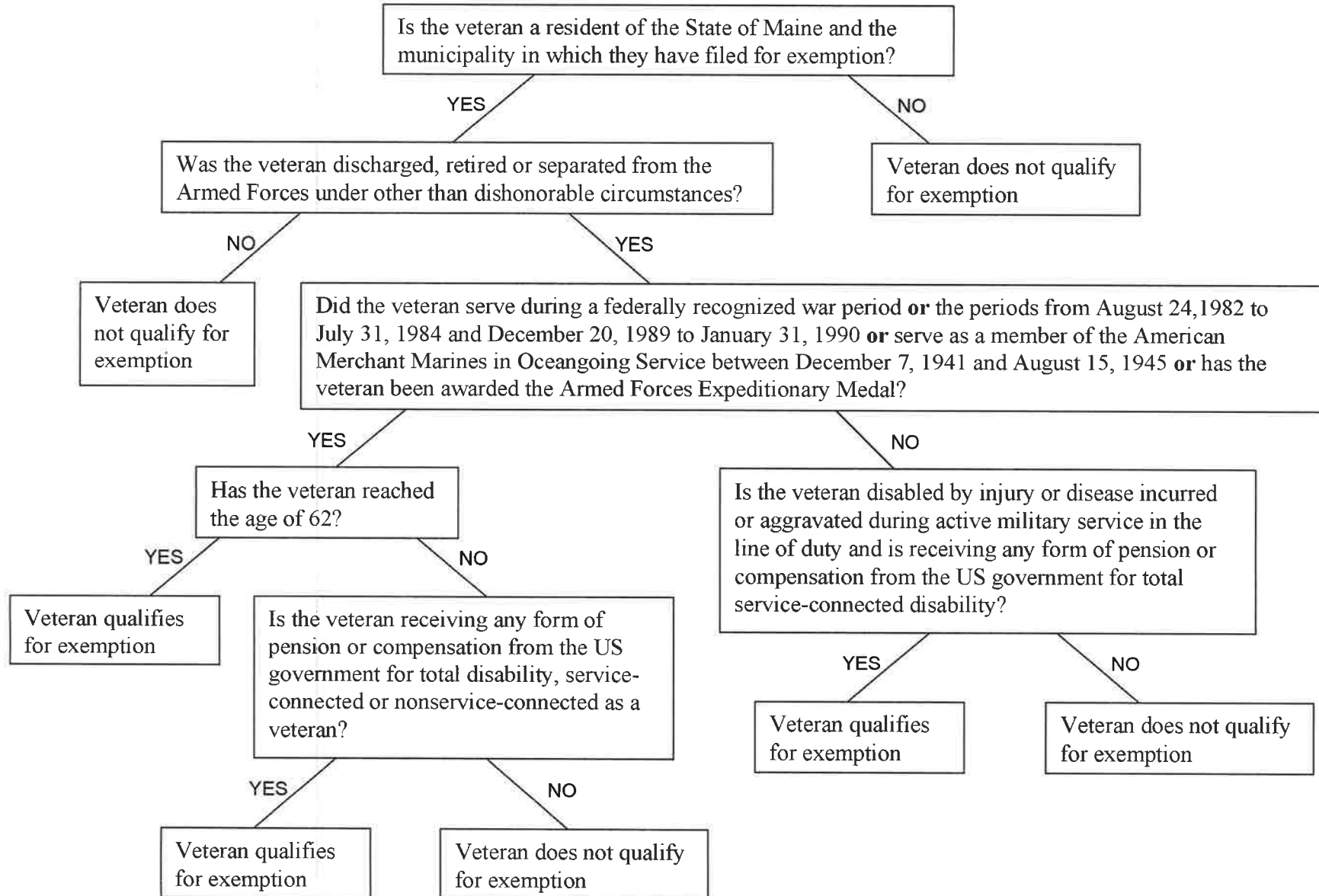
Or e-mail to: pthompson@cariboumaine.org

**IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE, WE MUST RECEIVE YOUR COMPLETED FORM
BEFORE **APRIL 1, 2019**
TO QUALIFY FOR A REDUCTION IN YOUR 2019 PROPERTY TAXES**

Other partial exemptions allowed by the State of Maine: if you have owned your principal residence for 12 months prior to April 1, 2019, you may qualify for a Homestead Exemption. The Exemption for Blind Persons is offered on the residence of property owners who are certified legally blind. Please ask for more details and the required forms!



Veteran Exemption Qualifications



APPLICATION FOR MAINE VETERAN PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

36 M.R.S. § 653

Please refer to Bulletin #7 for additional information – this application is confidential.

File this application, including all required attachments with your town by April 1.

1. Name: _____ 2. Telephone: _____

3. Mailing Address: _____

4. Legal Residence: _____ 5. Date of Birth: _____

6. Date of Entry into Armed Forces: _____ 7. Service Number/SSN: _____

8. Legal Residence on Date of Entry into Armed Forces: _____

9. Date of Discharge or Separation from Armed Forces: _____

10. Check the box that applies:

- I am 62 or older (or receiving a non service-connected total disability pension) and served in the U.S. Armed Forces during an accepted war period.
- I am 62 or older (or receiving a non service-connected total disability pension) and received an Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.

I receive a service-related total disability pension from the U.S. Government for:

- Service in the U.S. Armed Forces during any Federally recognized War Period.
- Injury or disease incurred in the line of duty during active military service.

VA disability pension Claim Number: C- _____

11. Did you receive a grant from the U.S. Government for specially adapted housing as a paraplegic?

- Yes No

12. Is the property you are requesting an exemption for in a revocable living trust with you as the beneficial owner of that trust? Yes No

13. Enter a description of the property (map, lot, location, etc.): _____

I hereby apply for an exemption from property tax in accordance with 36 M.R.S. § 653. No property on which I claim tax exemption as a veteran was conveyed to me for the purpose of obtaining exemption other than from my spouse. The answers to the above questions are correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

If you are a Maine resident and a veteran who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, you may be eligible for a limited exemption from property tax on real estate or personal property. You qualify for an exemption if:

- 1) You served in the U.S. Armed Forces during a recognized war period or other recognized service period or you received an Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; and
- 2) You will be at least 62 years old on April 1 or you are receiving a total disability pension from the U.S. Government.

Proof of eligibility is generally covered by a copy of your Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD Form 214 or similar form issued by the Department of Defense) or the benefit summary letter issued by the Department of Veterans Affairs ("VA"). A copy of VA Form 20-5455 may be used if you do not have a benefit summary letter.

RECOGNIZED WAR PERIODS

- World War I - April 6, 1917 through November 11, 1918;
- World War I - (service in Russia) - April 6, 1917 through March 31, 1920;
- World War II - December 7, 1941 through December 31, 1946;
- Korean Conflict - June 27, 1950 through January 31, 1955;
- Vietnam Era – February 28, 1961 through May 7, 1975. For the period, February 28, 1961 through August 4, 1964, federal law restricts the definition of the Vietnam Era war period to relating only to veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam. .
- Persian Gulf War – August 2, 1990 to the date that the U.S. Government recognizes as the end of the Persian Gulf War. This period also includes Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn.

OTHER RECOGNIZED SERVICE PERIODS

- February 28, 1961 through August 4, 1964 (Maine property tax exemption applies to all veterans who served during February 28, 1961 through May 7, 1975, regardless of where they served);
- August 24, 1982 through July 31, 1984; and
- December 20, 1989 through January 31, 1990.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

Line 4. Legal Residence. Enter the municipality where your primary home is. You can have only one legal residence.

Line 7. Service Number/SSN. If you were issued a service number, enter that number. Otherwise, enter your Social Security Number ("SSN").

FOR ASSESSOR USE ONLY - CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL OF APPLICANT'S EXEMPT STATUS

The applicant has applied for the following exemption amount:

- \$6,000 Post W.W.I
- \$7,000 W.W.I
- \$50,000 Paraplegic

In determining the local assessed value of the exemption, the assessor shall multiply the amount of the exemption by the ratio of current just value upon which the assessment is based.

Date Approved: _____ Effective Date: _____

Approved by: _____ Title: _____



MAINE REVENUE SERVICES PROPERTY TAX DIVISION PROPERTY TAX BULLETIN NO. 7

TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR VETERANS

REFERENCE: 36 M.R.S. § 653
December 8, 2017; replaces January 22, 2016 revision

This bulletin outlines the provisions relating to property tax exemptions for veterans.

1. Definitions:

- A. Cooperative Housing Corporation. “Cooperative housing corporation” means an entity organized for the purpose of owning residential real estate in which residents own shares that entitle them to inhabit a designated space within a residential dwelling.
- B. Federally Recognized War Period. “Federally recognized war period” means:
- (1) World War I – April 6, 1917 through November 11, 1918;
 - (2) World War I (service in Russia) – April 6, 1917 through March 31, 1920;
 - (3) World War II – December 7, 1941 through December 31, 1946;
 - (4) Korean Conflict – June 27, 1950 through January 31, 1955;
 - (5) Vietnam Era – February 28, 1961 through May 7, 1975. For the period February 28, 1961 through August 4, 1964, federal law restricts the definition of the Vietnam Era war period to relating only to veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam; and
 - (6) Persian Gulf War – beginning August 2, 1990 and ending on the date that the United States Government recognizes as the end of the Persian Gulf War. The Persian Gulf War includes, but is not limited to, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn.
 - (7) Other Recognized Service Periods:
 - a. February 28, 1961 through August 4, 1964 (Maine property tax exemption applies to all veterans who served during the period February 28, 1961 through May 7, 1975, regardless of where they served);

b. August 24, 1982 through July 31, 1984; and

c. December 20, 1989 through January 31, 1990.

C. Legal Resident. “Legal resident” means an individual who is a resident of Maine and whose permanent residence is in the municipality in which a veteran exemption is claimed. A legal resident of a municipality may be receiving a homestead exemption from that municipality.

D. Property. “Property” means real estate and personal property, including property held in joint tenancy by a qualifying veteran and the qualifying veteran's spouse and property held in a revocable living trust for the benefit of the qualifying veteran, qualifying spouse, qualifying child, or qualifying parent.

E. Qualifying Child. “Qualifying child” means a minor child of a qualifying veteran who:

(1) Is a legal resident of Maine;

(2) Claims an exemption, in writing, with the assessor of the municipality in which the child resides; and

(3) Is under the age of 18.

F. Qualifying Parent. “Qualifying parent” means a widow or widower parent of a qualifying veteran who:

(1) Is a legal resident of Maine;

(2) Claims an exemption, in writing, with the assessor of the municipality in which the parent resides;

(3) Has not remarried;

(4) Is at least 62 years old; and

(5) Receives a pension or compensation from the federal government based on the service-connected death of the qualifying veteran as the qualifying veteran’s parent.

A divorced or remarried parent of a veteran is not eligible for exemption.

G. Qualifying Shareholder. “Qualifying shareholder” means a person who is a shareholder in a cooperative housing corporation and who would qualify for a veteran exemption if that person were the owner of the property.

H. Qualifying Spouse. “Qualifying spouse” means the widow or widower of a qualifying veteran who:

(1) Is a legal resident of Maine;

(2) Claims an exemption, in writing, with the assessors of the municipality in which the widow or widower resides;

- (3) Was married to the qualifying veteran at the time of the veteran's death and has not remarried; and
- (4) Receives a pension or compensation from the federal government as the widow or widower of a qualifying veteran or whose veteran spouse would have been eligible to an exemption under § 653, if alive.

I. Qualifying Veteran. “Qualifying veteran” means any person who served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States and who was discharged, retired, or separated under other than dishonorable conditions. In most cases, the Department of Veterans Affairs considers the categories of “honorable discharge” and “discharge under honorable conditions” (or “general discharge”) as qualifying for discharge under other than dishonorable conditions. A qualifying veteran must have:

- (1) Served during any federally recognized war period (including other recognized service periods – see Section 1(B));
- (2) Been awarded the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal;
- (3) Served as a member of the American Merchant Marine in Oceangoing Service between December 7, 1941 and August 15, 1945; or
- (4) Become totally disabled from an injury or disease incurred or aggravated during active military service in the line of duty and be receiving any form of pension or compensation from the United State Government for total, service-connected disability.

In addition, a qualifying veteran must:

- (1) Be a resident of Maine;
- (2) Claim an exemption, in writing, with the assessor of the municipality in which the veteran resides; and
- (3) Meet one of the following:
 - a. Be at least 62 years old by April 1 of the year for which exemption is requested;
 - b. Receive a pension or compensation from the federal government for total disability, either service- or non-service-connected, as a veteran; or
 - c. Receive a pension or compensation from the federal government for total disability because of injury or disease incurred or aggravated during active military service in the line of duty.

2. Exemption for a Qualifying Veteran:

A. In General. Property owned by a qualifying veteran is exempt from municipal property tax for up to \$6,000 of just value, in the municipality where the veteran is a legal resident.

B. Paraplegic Veteran. If a qualifying veteran is paraplegic, that veteran is eligible for an exemption from municipal property tax for up to \$50,000 of just valuation for a specially adapted housing unit in the municipality where the veteran is a legal resident. To qualify for this larger exemption, the veteran must be a paraplegic veteran, within the meaning of 38 United States Code, Chapter 21, section 2101, and have received a grant from the Department of Veterans Affairs for specially adapted housing.

3. Exemption for a Qualifying Spouse:

A. In General. Property owned by a qualifying spouse is exempt from municipal property tax for up to \$6,000 of just value in the municipality where the qualifying spouse is a legal resident. The exemption increases to \$7,000 for the qualifying spouse of a deceased veteran who served during a war period during or before World War I.

B. Qualifying Spouse of a Paraplegic Veteran. If an individual is the qualifying spouse of a paraplegic veteran, that qualifying spouse is eligible for an exemption from municipal property tax for up to \$50,000 of just value in the municipality where the qualifying spouse is a legal resident. To qualify for the larger exemption, the spouse must, except for the requirement under Section 1(H)(4) above, meet the requirements of a qualifying spouse and be the widow or widower of a paraplegic veteran within the meaning of 38 United States Code, Chapter 21, section 2101, who received a grant from the Department of Veterans Affairs for specially adapted housing.

4. Exemption for a Qualifying Child:

Property owned by a qualifying child of a deceased veteran is exempt from municipal property tax for up to \$6,000 of just value in the municipality where the child is a legal resident.

5. Exemption for a Qualifying Parent:

Property owned by a qualifying parent of a deceased veteran is exempt from municipal property tax for up to \$6,000 of just value in the municipality where the parent is a legal resident.

6. Exemption for a Cooperative Housing Corporation:

A cooperative housing corporation is entitled to an exemption against the valuation of property of the corporation occupied by qualifying shareholders. A qualifying shareholder must make application to the cooperative housing corporation and the corporation must make application to the assessor of the municipality on behalf of all qualifying shareholders. The corporation's application for exemption must include a list of all qualifying shareholders, any information required by the municipality to verify eligibility of qualifying shareholders and the applicable exemption amount. Notwithstanding the application process in Section 7, a cooperative housing corporation must update its application annually to reflect changes in eligibility. The exemption is equal to the total amount that the qualifying shareholders would have claimed if they were owners of the property.

A cooperative housing corporation that receives an exemption pursuant to this section must apportion the property tax reduction resulting from the exemption among the qualifying shareholders according to the proportion of the total exemption that each qualifying shareholder would be entitled to if the qualifying

shareholder were the owner of property. Any supplemental assessment resulting from disqualification for exemption must be applied in the same manner against the qualifying shareholders for whom the disqualification applies.

7. Application:

An applicant for the veteran exemption must claim an exemption, in writing, with the assessor of the municipality in which the applicant resides. The applicant must furnish proof of entitlement for the exemption by April 1 of the year the applicant first requests an exemption. Once the veteran or other qualifying individual receives an exemption, an annual application for exemption is not necessary.

Another person, such as a parent or guardian, may make a claim on behalf of a qualifying child.

The municipal assessors may make an abatement of taxes, on written application within one year of commitment, if a qualifying spouse or a qualifying child has not made a claim by the April 1 deadline, provided the related veteran died during the 12-month period preceding April 1 for which the tax was committed. 36 M.R.S. § 841(4).

An application for the veteran exemption, including proof of entitlement, is confidential and will not be available to the public. 36 M.R.S. § 653(1)(G).

8. Proof of Entitlement:

The following items are generally sufficient proof of entitlement:

- A. A copy of the applicant's birth certificate if the claim is based on age.
- B. A copy of the veteran's Report of Separation (usually DD Form 214, Certificate of Release, or Discharge from Active Duty).
- C. A copy of the certificate or letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs or other federal agency stating that the applicant receives compensation or a pension from the federal government as a veteran or widow/widower of a veteran. For explanation of the certificate furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs (formerly VA Form 20-5455 or 20-5455a), see Section 9 below. If this certificate or letter is not available, the applicant may provide other proof of payment for total disability or service-connected disability.
- C. A copy of a letter from the appropriate federal agency stating that a qualifying spouse, qualifying child or qualifying parent receives a pension from the federal government based on the death of a qualifying veteran.
- D. A copy of the letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs or other federal agency verifying the paraplegic veteran applicant received a grant from the federal government for specially adapted housing.

In certain cases the assessor may ask for additional documentation.

9. Department of Veterans Affairs (“VA”) Statement from Benefit Payment Records:

A. Explanation of Codes:

Assessors should be concerned with the code number used by the VA. The code number will be either 1, 2 or 3.

Code #1 indicates that the veteran receives compensation for a 10% to 90% service-connected disability. The veteran in this case is **not** entitled to tax exemption because of disability.

Code #2 indicates that the veteran (or qualifying spouse) receives compensation for total service-connected disability. The veteran in this case meets the service-related pension or compensation requirement.

Code #3 indicates that the veteran (or qualifying spouse) receives a non-service-connected pension due to total disability. The veteran in this case meets the non-service-connected pension or compensation requirement.

Questions about the coding on this form may be answered by contacting:

**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Togus Regional Benefit Office
Attn: Jaime Robichaud
1 VA Center
Augusta, Maine 04330
(207) 623-8411 ext. 5228
jaime.robichaud@va.gov**

10. Amount of Exempt Valuation:

In determining the municipal value of the exemption, the assessor must multiply the total amount of the allowable exemption by the declared ratio as entered on the assessor's annual municipal valuation return. In some cases, where a municipality's declared ratio is higher or lower than 100%, the municipal value of an exemption may be higher or lower than the limits stated above.

When a qualifying veteran dies without a will and leaves property, and a surviving spouse and a minor child or children, the spouse and minor children are jointly entitled to only a single exemption of up to the appropriate exemption amount, but no more than the just value of property.

11. Exemption Limitations:

An individual is not entitled to a benefit under more than one of the exemptions covered in this bulletin.

Exemptions apply only to property, or the interest in property, taxable in the place of the applicant's legal residence. Property must be owned by an applicant, by an applicant and the applicant's spouse in joint tenancy, or held in a revocable living trust for the benefit of the applicant.

Property conveyed to another person to obtain a veteran exemption will not qualify for a veteran

exemption, unless the property is conveyed between husband and wife.

A person who fraudulently obtains a veteran exemption under 36 M.R.S. § 653 will be subject to a fine of up to \$100 or twice the amount of taxes evaded, whichever is greater.

NOTE: This bulletin is intended solely as advice to assist persons in determining, exercising or complying with their legal rights, duties or privileges. If further information is needed, contact the Property Tax Division of Maine Revenue Services.

MAINE REVENUE SERVICES
PROPERTY TAX DIVISION
PO BOX 9106
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04332-9106
TEL: (207) 624-5600
EMAIL: prop.tax@maine.gov
www.maine.gov/revenue/propertytax

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