

# Ask Technical Terry: Taxed by RMLSweb Tax Data?



*Ask Technical Terry is a series RMLS™ aims to offer once a month. RMLS™ subscribers will drive the content—submit any question about RMLS™ to Technical Terry in the comments or by emailing [communications@rmls.com](mailto:communications@rmls.com). Don't be shy—we won't identify you by name.*

**Hello Technical Terry:**

**A RMLS™ trainer recently advised me to confirm the tax data on my listing before publishing the listing on RMLSweb. It's a good thing I did...the tax data that came up on RMLSweb was out of date compared to what I found on the county website! Why is that?**

**Elizabeth P. Unum**

Great question, Elizabeth. Of course the county is going to have the most up-to-date data—they're the source!

Tax data on RMLSweb covers the entire state of Oregon as well as part of southern Washington—a one-stop shop. In order to provide that much data, we work with four intermediate data providers, and in a few cases the county itself. In nearly all those cases, the data still comes initially from the county.

RMLS™ will always have less up-to-date data than the county assessor.

When you enter in a listing on RMLSweb with a Tax ID, the system fills in some values for you. Confirm these values and if they're not 100% accurate, you may edit them before the listing goes live. After the listing is live, you'll need to contact RMLS™ to make changes.

One last note: RMLS™ updates different counties on a schedule. Tax data for some counties is updated once a year (like those in southeastern Oregon), and some (like Multnomah and Clark County) are done weekly.

**Technical Terry–**

**I'm not finding my client's property in the tax system on RMLSweb. How can I enter the listing?**

**Penny Gerettet**

Through the front door?

But seriously. A property tax ID (APN) is required to enter a listing into RMLSweb.

If you're not finding the correct Tax ID, skip it. The system will enter Not Found into the Tax ID field. Every week, the RMLSweb servers find listings without Tax IDs and tries to match them up with tax data using several components of the property address.

If the property has been subdivided, added, or reassessed within the past year, RMLS™ will likely not have updates until the next yearly update—late fall for Oregon and early spring for Washington.

**Dear Technical Terry,**

**The tax information on my client's property is *just flat wrong*. How did this happen?**

**Sincerely,**

**Ron R. Ronger**

When you enter in a listing on RMLSweb with a Tax ID, the

system fills in some values for you. Confirm these values and if they're not 100% accurate, you may edit them before the listing goes live.

If tax information is incorrect on your published listing on RMLSweb, the first thing to do is note the incorrect data in the private remarks so that other agents will know there's a potential issue. Next, email RMLS™ tax staff and describe the problem, making sure to identify the county, Tax ID, and MLS number (if appropriate). Attach any relevant documents.

When RMLS™ receives this information, tax guru Kim Hutchinson will attempt to verify the data with the county. (If the county's data is incorrect, contact them directly to resolve the issue.) If the county verifies RMLS™ data is incorrect, Kim will update the data on RMLSweb and work with the data provider for a long-term solution, emailing you about the outcome.

After all, we wouldn't want you to be taxed by the details.

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## **The Property Tax Appeals Process (Portland)**

Steve Anderson has seven years of experience working in the property tax system. In The Property Tax Appeals Process, he will share insights and specific knowledge about this often misunderstood process, using lessons from the thousands of cases he has heard during his career. Topics will include timelines for the tax appeal process in Oregon, evidentiary rules for BOPTA, who has the right to appeal, who can represent the petitioner, and the hearing process.

Learn more and register for The Property Tax Appeals Process on December 10, 2015 in Portland.

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## **The Property Tax Appeal Process (Florence)**

Steve Anderson has seven years of experience working in the property tax system, and will share insights regarding this often misunderstood process. Specific topics for the class will include timelines for the tax appeal process in Oregon, evidentiary rules, who can appeal, and more.

Two sessions (morning and afternoon) will be offered. This class is worth 1.5 CE hours, but attendees must register with the Central Oregon Coast Board of REALTORS®. Register for the Property Tax Appeal Process on the COCBR website.

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## **2.3 Million Public Records and Counting: Tax Information on RMLSweb**

 RMLS™ strives to provide property and tax data in one location for all counties where our subscribers do business. Currently RMLS™ maintains over 2.3 million property records encompassing 43 counties in Oregon and Washington.

Each county has its own assessor and its own system for

maintaining property and tax records. Many systems are one of a kind—one county system still uses 3×5 cards! Although some counties provide a website where individual tax properties can be researched, many counties do not provide such convenient access.

RMLS™ obtains data from the county itself or from another tax provider and then processes it into a standard RMLS™ format. The data is quality checked to the best extent possible. Updated property and tax data is then deployed to RMLSweb each week on Tuesday evening.

Depending on availability and other factors, sales are updated either weekly, quarterly, or biannually. Some counties do not provide sale data at all. It is important to remember that regardless of the update schedule, *RMLS™ data will always lag a little compared to data from the county itself*. This is especially true of tax amounts due to the volume of processing required.

Along with a defined primary set of property data (tax ID, acres, site address, market values, sales data, etc.) each county also has a unique set of ancillary data (heating, foundation, parking, etc.). Each data item also has a “fill factor” unique to each county. For example, in Baker County 98% of properties have a zoning value, in Jackson it is 83%, in Tillamook it is 72%, and in Benton it is 0%. RMLS™ analyzes these data items and factors and then displays the most relevant data on the tax report. Every county’s tax report is therefore slightly different.

The property and tax data also contains errors and omissions. Humans, computers, and governments are involved in the process and mistakes do occur. Whenever a subscriber encounters such a situation, they should contact us (you can reach me at [kim.h@rmls.com](mailto:kim.h@rmls.com)) and provide sufficient details (county, tax ID, description of error) so that research can be done and the proper correction made. Most cases are resolved with the next

update from the county. In the meantime, subscribers are advised to put a comment about any tax issues into the listing's private remarks field.