

Property Field Inspection Frequently Asked Questions

Why does the Assessor have to physically inspect my home?

Pursuant to RCW 84.41.041, & WAC 458-07-015, the Assessor is required to physically inspect every property no less than once every six years. The purpose of this inspection is confirming property characteristics in the Assessor's database reflect the actual characteristics of King County properties. This ensures fair, accurate and reliable property tax assessments.

Can Assessments staff come to my property without an appointment?

The short answer is yes. With over 700,000 properties in King County making an appointment to visit each one is not feasible. RCW 84.40.025 allows Assessors reasonable access to the exterior of properties without owner permission. This access is subject to Assessor property access guidelines and is respectful of a property owners' reasonable expectation of privacy. This approach strives to balance staff safety, workload and property owners' rights.

What if I have young children at the house during an inspection?

Department of Assessments field staff are specifically instructed not to engage with minor children. If they encounter a minor child, they are instructed to ask for the property owner. If unavailable, they must leave a business card and depart immediately..

What if I have a "No Trespassing" sign?

Assessor field staff will not climb over or otherwise evade barriers to gain entry. Assessments staff will pass no trespassing signs and head directly to the front door to engage the property owner. If asked to leave the property, Assessments staff is instructed by policy to do so.

Do I have to let Assessments staff on my property?

RCW 84.40.025 allows Assessor's reasonable access to properties. The Assessor has created detailed property access guidelines that balances common sense, staff safety and property owners' privacy rights. Assessor staff are instructed to comply when asked to leave a property and seek answers to questions using other sources and means.

What if my property has a locked gate?

Assessor field staff will not climb over or otherwise evade a locked gate to gain entry. The Assessor will use other means to communicate with property owners or gain the information needed to complete the inspection.

What information does the Assessor want during an inspection?

Deputy Assessors update photo records, confirm property characteristics (both land and buildings), and look for changes to the property not captured previously.

What if I have dangerous animals?

Assessment staff will not enter livestock or animal enclosures without owner consent. If dogs are present Assessments staff will stay in their vehicle for their personal safety.

Do Deputy Assessor's drive Department of Assessments vehicles?

Deputy Assessor's drive combination of Department of Assessment vehicles, King County Fleet vehicles and often their personal vehicles. When driving personal vehicles staff is instructed to be deliberate and communicate openly with people who confront them. Department of Assessments employees all have King County ID, business cards and identifying clothing.

Can I ask a Deputy Assessor to review my property characteristics?

Yes, contact the King County Assessor Public Information team at (206) 296-7300 or Assessor.info@kingcounty.gov to ask for an Assessment Review. Often characteristic updates can be handled informally with sharing information through phone conversations or e-mail. If you have the business card of a Deputy Assessor, you can contact them directly.

I have lived at this address my whole life and this is the first time I have seen Assessments staff.

Deputy Assessors do not always need to engage property owners. It is possible in past years all needed information could be gathered from public vantage points such as streets or sidewalks.