

## FIRST INSTALLMENT TAX BILLS ARE DUE MARCH 1

Contact: Ali ElSaffar, Oak Park Township Assessor  
(708) 383-8005

First installment property tax bills for tax year 2017 were mailed on January 26, according to Oak Park Township Assessor Ali ElSaffar. "Property taxes are paid in two installments," ElSaffar said. "The first installment is fifty-five percent (55%) of a property's total tax bill for the previous year, and will be due on March 1, 2018."

Taxpayers should note that first installment tax bills will not reflect homeowner, senior citizen or other exemptions, nor will they reflect the impact of successful assessment appeals filed in calendar year 2017. Exemptions and successful appeals will instead appear on second installment bills, along with the effect of changes in the tax levies of local governments.

Total tax bills for the year should be calculated by late June, at which time second installment bills will be issued. The amount due on the second installment will be the total annual tax bill for each property, less the first installment payment.

**Those who Prepaid their Taxes.** At the beginning of 2018, changes to the federal tax law took effect that limited the deductibility of property tax payments on income tax returns. Approximately 120,000 Cook County taxpayers sought to avoid the impact of this change by paying their first installment tax bills before January 1.

Most taxpayers who paid their first installment bills in full by the end of 2017 will not receive a tax bill in the mail. Those taxpayers will instead receive an e-mail notification indicating that they have a \$0 balance on the first installment. Bills indicating a \$0 balance will be mailed only to those taxpayers who did not provide e-mail addresses when making prepayments.

**Details about Paying Taxes.** If money for property taxes is paid into an escrow account with a taxpayer's mortgage company, the financial institution should receive the tax bill electronically, even if the taxpayer also receives a copy of the bill. Assessor ElSaffar advises taxpayers with property tax escrows held by their mortgage companies not to pay property taxes on their own. If they do, an overpayment of property taxes may result.

Property owners who *do not* have mortgage companies paying their taxes can make tax payments in person, by mail, or online at the Cook County Treasurer's web site, **[www.cookcountytreasurer.com](http://www.cookcountytreasurer.com)**. To encourage online payments, the Treasurer's office has eliminated the \$1 fee previously charged for electronic payments from bank accounts.

Those wishing to pay in person can do so at the Cook County Treasurer's downtown office at 118 N. Clark Street and at any Chase Bank in the Chicago area. Chase branches most convenient to Oak Park residents are located at 800 Madison Street and 1048 Lake Street in Oak Park, and at 630 N. Harlem Avenue in River Forest.

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