



# **Paper Form to Electronic Form - Wisconsin's Sales/Use Tax Exemption Certificate**

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# Overview

- What was the problem with the paper exemption certificate?
- What is the electronic exemption certificate?
- How did WI DOR and taxpayers benefit?

# History

- Many years ago, WI DOR merged 10+ exemption certificates into one paper certificate that could be used by any purchaser (Form S-211)
- The number of exemptions has grown substantially (more than 78 exemptions require a certificate)
- The paper certificate is 2 full pages with small font



# Problems with Paper Certificate

- Limited space on 2 pages
- Sellers and purchasers don't want to print/complete/retain more than 1 piece of paper for an exemption certificate
- Many exemptions are not listed
- New exemptions are not added

# Problems with Paper Certificate

- Many purchasers must write a description of the exemption under "Other purchases exempted by law"
- Industries request their exemptions to be specifically identified on the form
- Updates to the PDF form, and posting to the website, is performed by 3 employees



# Possible Solution

An online tool that allows purchasers to create their own customized exemption certificate, save it to their computer, and send it to their vendors.



# Transition to an Electronic Certificate

A small team was formed to brainstorm and work together on creating a customizable, electronic sales and use tax exemption certificate

- Director and two Sales Tax Specialists from the Office of Technical Services
- Programmer from the Division of Technology Services



# Transition to an Electronic Certificate

The tax specialists explained the exemption certificate to the programmer, including:

- How purchasers use the certificate
- Current problems with the paper certificate
- What data elements a seller must have on the certificate to obtain relief from liability



# Transition to an Electronic Certificate

## External Features – wish list:

- View entire list of exemptions
- Use a keyword search to find or limit exemptions
- View information about each exemption
- Capable of entering additional information for certain exemptions (e.g., sellers permit # or % of use)

# Transition to an Electronic Certificate

## External Features – wish list:

- Allow purchaser to enter all data elements on the certificate (e.g., seller's info)
- Contain a declaration/acknowledgement statement from purchaser
  - All information is complete and accurate
  - Purchaser is responsible for use tax



# Transition to an Electronic Certificate

## External Features – wish list:

- Select only the exemption(s) to be claimed
- Create a 1-page PDF document that can be saved to computer
- Look similar to the paper certificate

# Transition to an Electronic Certificate

## Internal Features – wish list:

- Allow sales tax specialists to make changes to exemptions without programmer
  - Immediate updates to the certificate
  - Immediate fixes to any grammatical errors
- Keep historical record of all changes made to certificate

# Transition to an Electronic Certificate

- Multiple team meetings were held to view and discuss programming development
- Many tweaks were made to improve the end product
- Some limitations encountered (e.g., competition for programming time with other areas of the department)

# Transition to an Electronic Certificate

- Internal application
  - Single page application front end
    - HTML\JavaScript\jQueryMobile
  - Java servlet backend
    - Implements a REST API
    - Apache PDFBox used to dynamically render certificates to support testing

# Transition to an Electronic Certificate

## Final Steps – data entry:

- Exemption short title
- Exemption text, including citation
- Questions added, if exemption requires additional information
- Links to other reference materials
- Keywords added to enhance search function
- Post date – date to make exemption available on external application

# Internal Application

Title: Manufacturing - Fuel and Electricity

Text: Fuel and electricity consumed in manufacturing tangible personal property in Wisconsin. Section 77.54(30)(a)6, Wis. Stats.  
Exempt Electricity Percentage: {{ExemptElectricity}}%    Exempt Fuel Percentage: {{ExemptFuel}}%

Reference: <https://www.revenue.wi.gov/DOR%20Publications/pb203.pdf>

Keywords:

Post Date: 2018-06-01

Deactivated: 9999-01-01

## Questions

Type	Name	Question
percent ▾	ExemptElectricity	Exempt Electricity Percentage
percent ▾	ExemptFuel	Exempt Fuel Percentage

Showing 1 to 2 of 2 entries

Save

Cancel

Copy

# Transition to an Electronic Certificate

- External application
  - Simple web form on our SharePoint site
    - JQuery validation of input
  - Java servlet backend
    - Same Apache PDFBox service to render the PDF was used in the internal application for testing

# Electronic Exemption Certificate

## Electronic Wisconsin Sales and Use Tax Exemption Certificate

You may use the electronic certificate (S-211E) to claim an exemption from Wisconsin state, county, baseball stadium, local exposition, and premier resort sales or use taxes. Fully complete the information in tabs 1 through 4 before providing your vendor with an electronic copy of the certificate or a printed and signed copy. Do not send this form to the Department of Revenue (DOR). Exemption certificate instructions can be found here: [📄 S-211 Instructions](#).

For questions or assistance, please contact DOR Customer Service Bureau at (608) 266-2776 or [DORSalesandUse@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DORSalesandUse@wisconsin.gov).

# Electronic Exemption Certificate

1. Purchaser's Information

2. Seller's Information

3. Acknowledgement

4. Exemptions

**Purchaser's Name**

**Type of Business**

Select... ▼

**Address**

**City**

**State**

**Zip Code**

**Tax ID Number**

**State of Issue**

If no Tax ID Number, enter  
one of the following

**FEIN**

**Driver's License or State  
Issued ID Number**

**State of Issue**

# Electronic Exemption Certificate

1. Purchaser's Information

2. Seller's Information

3. Acknowledgement

4. Exemptions

**Seller's Name**

**Address**

**City**

**State**

**Zip Code**

# Electronic Exemption Certificate

1. Purchaser's Information

2. Seller's Information

3. Acknowledgement

4. Exemptions

Check one of the following:

- Single Purchase** - Check if this certificate is for a single purchase only. Future purchases should be taxed unless another certificate is provided.
- Continuous Purchases** - Check if this certificate is for continuous purchases. A continuous certificate remains in force as long as the purchaser continues making purchases or until otherwise cancelled by the purchaser.

Enter your name and title after reading this statement:

I declare that the information provided is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge, and that the product(s) purchased will be used in the exempt manner indicated. If a product is not used in an exempt manner, I will remit use tax on the purchase price at the time of first taxable use. I understand that failure to remit the use tax may result in a future liability, including tax, interest, and penalty. **CAUTION:** Using this certificate to avoid paying sales tax may result in a fine of \$250 for each transaction for which the certificate is used.

Name (employee, officer or manager)

Title

# Electronic Exemption Certificate

1. Purchaser's Information

2. Seller's Information

3. Acknowledgement

4. Exemptions

Select the reason for exemption from the list below.

Search Exemptions (Type at least 3 characters)

- Resale
- Aircraft
- Aircraft - Nonresident
- Biomass - Residential Use
- Blood Sugar Testing Supplies
- Clay Pigeons to Shooting Facility
- Commercial Vessels and Barges
- Common Carrier
- Construction - Building Materials for Contracts with Exempt Entities
- Construction - Construction Contract Exemption
- Construction - Electronic and Information Technology Manufacturing Zone
- Construction - Professional Sports and Entertainment Home Stadiums
- Construction - Sports and Entertainment Facility

# Electronic Exemption Certificate

1. Purchaser's Information

2. Seller's Information

3. Acknowledgement

4. Exemptions

Select the reason for exemption from the list below.

Search Exemptions (Type at least 3 characters)

manufacturing

- Construction - Electronic and Information Technology Manufacturing Zone
- Manufacturing - Consumables
- Manufacturing - Fuel and Electricity
- Manufacturing - Machinery and Equipment
- Printing - Raw Materials for Printed Materials Sent Outside Wisconsin
- Qualified Research - Consumables
- Qualified Research - Machinery and Equipment
- Raising Animals Sold to Biotechnology Business - Consumables
- Raising Animals Sold to Biotechnology Business - Fuel and Electricity
- Raising Animals Sold to Biotechnology Business - Machinery and Equipment

 Create Exemption Certificate

The certificate will open in a new page. If you use a popup blocker, you will need to allow the popup.

# Electronic Exemption Certificate

1. Purchaser's Information

2. Seller's Information

3. Acknowledgement

4. Exemptions

Select the reason for exemption from the list below.

Search Exemptions (Type at least 3 characters)

manufacturing

Construction - Electronic and Information Technology Manufacturing Zone

Manufacturing - Consumables

Manufacturing - Fuel and Electricity

Fuel and electricity consumed in manufacturing tangible personal property in Wisconsin. Section 77.54(30)(a)6, Wis. Stats.

Exempt Electricity Percentage: \_\_\_\_\_% Exempt Fuel Percentage: \_\_\_\_\_%

Exempt Electricity Percentage:

Exempt Fuel Percentage:

( [Click here for additional information](#) )

Manufacturing - Machinery and Equipment

Machines and specific processing equipment and repair parts or replacements thereof, used exclusively and directly by a manufacturer in manufacturing tangible personal property and safety attachments for those machines and equipment and services to such exempt machines and equipment. Section 77.54(6)(am)1, Wis. Stats.

( [Click here for additional information](#) )

Printing - Raw Materials for Printed Materials Sent Outside Wisconsin

Qualified Research - Consumables

Qualified Research - Machinery and Equipment

Raising Animals Sold to Biotechnology Business - Consumables

Raising Animals Sold to Biotechnology Business - Fuel and Electricity

Raising Animals Sold to Biotechnology Business - Machinery and Equipment

[Create Exemption Certificate](#)

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# Electronic Exemption Certificate



## Wisconsin Sales and Use Tax Exemption Certificate

Form S-211E

*Do not send this certificate to the Department of Revenue*

**Purchaser:** Complete this certificate and give it to the seller.  
**Seller:** If this certificate is not fully completed, you must charge sales tax. Keep this certificate as part of your records.  
 Check One  Single Purchase  Continuous

Purchaser Information			
Purchaser's Business Name		Purchaser's Type of Business Select...	
Business Address	City	State	Zip Code
Purchaser's Tax ID Number		State of Issue	
If no Tax ID Number, enter one of the following:	FEIN	Driver's License Number/State Issued ID Number and State of Issue	

Seller Information			
Seller's Name			
Seller's Address	City	State	Zip Code

### Reason for Exemption

Manufacturing - Fuel and Electricity - Fuel and electricity consumed in manufacturing tangible personal property in Wisconsin. Section 77.54(30)(a)6, Wis. Stats.  
 Exempt Electricity Percentage: 65% Exempt Fuel Percentage: 0%

Manufacturing - Machinery and Equipment - Machines and specific processing equipment and repair parts or replacements thereof, used exclusively and directly by a manufacturer in manufacturing tangible personal property and safety attachments for those machines and equipment and services to such exempt machines and equipment. Section 77.54(6)(am)1, Wis. Stats.

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**CAUTION:** Using this certificate to avoid paying sales tax may result in a fine of \$250 for each transaction for which the certificate is used.

Signature of Purchaser	Print or Type Name	Title	Date
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# Electronic Exemption Certificate

## Reason for Exemption

Manufacturing - Fuel and Electricity - Fuel and electricity consumed in manufacturing tangible personal property in Wisconsin. Section 77.54(30)(a)6, Wis. Stats.

Exempt Electricity Percentage: 65%      Exempt Fuel Percentage: 0%

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# Electronic Exemption Certificate

*I declare that the information provided is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge, and that the product(s) purchased will be used in the exempt manner indicated. If a product is not used in an exempt manner, I will remit use tax on the purchase price at the time of first taxable use. I understand that failure to remit the use tax may result in a future liability, including tax, interest, and penalty.*

**CAUTION:** Using this certificate to avoid paying sales tax may result in a fine of \$250 for each transaction for which the certificate is used.

Signature of Purchaser	Print or Type Name	Title	Date
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S-211E (R. 03-19)

Wisconsin Department of Revenue

# Results

- Hours spent on the project:
  - 150 hours for programmer
  - 100 hours for sales tax specialists
- Sales tax specialists can make changes to certificate instantly without a programmer

# Results

- Average of 500 users/month since deployed October 2018
- Very few questions asked about the electronic certificate

# Practitioner Feedback

- Very positive:
  - Can create for clients
  - Can wholly or partially complete
  - Can send to clients via email
- Question: Does WI DOR use the information entered by the purchaser for audit selection?

# Future Improvements

- Cosmetic changes (e.g., bullet points, indenting, font)
- Additional links to reference materials
- Additional keywords
- Interaction between purchaser and seller?



Questions?