

This letter discusses the rolling stock exemption. See 86 Ill. Adm. Code Section 130.340. (This is a GIL.)

June 3, 2009

Dear Xxxxx:

This letter is in response to your letter dated March 23, 2009, in which you request information. The Department issues two types of letter rulings. Private Letter Rulings ("PLRs") are issued by the Department in response to specific taxpayer inquiries concerning the application of a tax statute or rule to a particular fact situation. A PLR is binding on the Department, but only as to the taxpayer who is the subject of the request for ruling and only to the extent the facts recited in the PLR are correct and complete. Persons seeking PLRs must comply with the procedures for PLRs found in the Department's regulations at 2 Ill. Adm. Code 1200.110. The purpose of a General Information Letter ("GIL") is to direct taxpayers to Department regulations or other sources of information regarding the topic about which they have inquired. A GIL is not a statement of Department policy and is not binding on the Department. See 2 Ill. Adm. Code 1200.120. You may access our website at www.tax.illinois.gov to review regulations, letter rulings and other types of information relevant to your inquiry.

The nature of your inquiry and the information you have provided require that we respond with a GIL. In your letter you have stated and made inquiry as follows:

COMPANY is a small privately owned railroad company that is located in CITY, Illinois. We are in the process of expanding our operations to allow us to operate a bigger inventory of railroad cars. In all of the research I have done I have found that railroads are exempt from sales tax on railroad cars because they are 'rolling stock' (See Attachment 1). Could you please clarify if we would be able to be exempt from paying sales tax on the materials we purchase for the construction of additional facilities to expand our operations since the newly constructed facilities will be used in the production of non-taxable sales?

Thank you for your clarification in this matter.

DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE:

The Illinois Retailers' Occupation Tax Act imposes a tax upon persons engaged in this State in the business of selling tangible personal property to purchasers for use or consumption. See 86 Ill. Adm. Code 130.101. In Illinois, Use Tax is imposed on the privilege of using, in this State, any kind of tangible personal property that is purchased anywhere at retail from a retailer. See 86 Ill. Adm. Code 150.101. These taxes comprise what is commonly known as "sales" tax in Illinois.

Under the rolling stock exemption, the Retailers' Occupation Tax does not apply to sales of tangible personal property to interstate carriers for hire for use as rolling stock moving in interstate commerce or lessors under leases of one year or longer executed or in effect at the time of purchase to interstate carriers for hire for use as rolling stock moving in interstate commerce. In addition, notwithstanding the fact that the sale is at retail, the Retailers' Occupation Tax does not apply to sales of tangible personal property to owners, lessors, or shippers of tangible personal property that is utilized by interstate carriers for hire for use as rolling stock moving in interstate commerce as long as so used by the interstate carriers for hire. See 86 Ill. Adm. Code 130.340 and 130.2090. The carrier must move in interstate commerce on a regular and frequent basis in order to qualify for the exemption.

Railroad "rolling stock" includes all railroad cars, passenger and freight, and locomotives (including switching locomotives) or mobile power units of every nature for moving the cars, operating on railroad tracks, and includes all property purchased for the purpose of being attached to the cars or locomotives as a part of the cars or locomotives. The exemption includes some equipment (such as containers called trailers) that are used by interstate carriers for hire, loaded on railroad cars, to transport property, but that do not operate under their own power and are not actually attached to the railroad cars. See 86 Ill. Adm. Code 130.340(b).

The rolling stock exemption does not provide an exemption for facilities used to house or store rolling stock. Please note, that if the facilities are constructed within an enterprise zone, the enterprise zone exemption may be available. I recommend that you contact the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to determine whether any facilities you intend to construct will be located within an enterprise zone.

The Department's regulation governing various enterprise zone exemptions is found at 86 Ill. Adm. Code 130.1951. Subsection (d) of this regulation explains the current requirements for persons claiming the enterprise zone building materials exemption. This exemption applies to qualified sales of building materials to be incorporated into real estate in an enterprise zone established by a county or municipality under the Illinois Enterprise Zone Act by remodeling, rehabilitation or new construction. A "qualified sale" means a sale of building materials that will be incorporated into real estate as part of a building project for which a Certificate of Eligibility for Sales Tax Exemption has been issued by the administrator of the enterprise zone in which the building project is located.

The enterprise zone building materials exemption from sales tax applies to both state and local sales taxes on qualifying building materials. Some examples of the kind of building materials that could qualify include common building materials such as lumber, bricks, and cement, plumbing systems and components thereof, heating systems and components thereof, electrical systems and components thereof, central air conditioning systems, ventilation systems and components thereof, built-in cabinets, and built-in appliances. Items that are not physically incorporated into the real estate cannot qualify for the exemption. Examples of this include tools, machinery, equipment, fuel, forms and other items that may be used by a construction contractor at an enterprise zone building site, but are not physically incorporated into the real estate, and free-standing appliances such as stoves and refrigerators if they are connected to and operate from a building's electrical or plumbing system but do not become a component of those systems. See 86 Ill. Adm. Code 130.1951(e).

I hope this information is helpful. If you require additional information, please visit our website at www.tax.illinois.gov or contact the Department's Taxpayer Information Division at (217) 782-3336.

Very truly yours,

Richard S. Wolters
Associate Counsel

RSW:msk