

Information regarding the tax liabilities in lease situations may be found at 86 Ill. Adm. Code 130.220 and 86 Ill. Adm. Code 130.2010. (This is a GIL.)

December 6, 2019

Dear XXX:

This letter is in response to your letter dated September 9, 2019, in which you requested 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:

We are located in CITY, STATE and in the business of renting and selling heavy construction equipment. I contacted the Department of Revenue, but was not able to get a clear answer on the type of tax that we need to charge when renting equipment in the state of Illinois. I would like a letter ruling on the type of tax that would need to be charged once we are set up to do business in your state. It is unclear whether to charge sales and or use tax and if that amount would be calculated on the value of the equipment or on the amount charged for the rental.

DEPARTMENT’S RESPONSE:

In Illinois, lessors of tangible personal property under a true lease, except for automobiles leased for terms of one year or less, are considered to be the end users of the property to be leased. See 86 Ill. Adm. Code 130.220 and 130.2010. As the end users of tangible personal property located in Illinois, lessors incur Use Tax on the lessors’ cost price of the property. Since lessors are considered the end users of the property and have paid the Use Tax, no Retailers’ Occupation Tax is imposed upon the rental receipts, and the lessees incur no Use Tax liability for the rental charges. In Illinois, a true lease generally has no buy-out provision at the close of the lease. If a buy-out provision does exist, it must be a fair market value buy-out option in order to maintain the character of the true lease.

As mentioned, in the case of a true lease, the lessors of the property being used in Illinois

would be the parties with Use Tax obligations. The lessors would either pay their suppliers, if their suppliers were registered to collect Use Tax, or would self-assess and remit the tax to the Department. Use Tax does not apply to the use in this State of tangible personal property that is acquired outside this State and caused to be brought into this State by a person who has already paid a tax in another state in respect to the sale, purchase or use of that property, to the extent of the amount of the tax properly due and paid in the other state. See 86 Ill. Adm. Code 150.310(a)(3).

Even though lessees do not incur any tax liability in a true lease situation, it is typical of true leases to contain contractual provisions stating that the lessees will reimburse the lessors for their tax costs. This is not a matter of Illinois tax law but of private agreement between lessors and lessees. If the lessees agreed to such provisions, they are bound to satisfy that duty because of a contractual agreement, not because of Illinois tax law.

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:rkn