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State of South Carolina  
Department of Revenue  
301 Gervais Street, P.O. Box 125, Columbia, South Carolina 29214

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SC INFORMATION LETTER 99-11

**SUBJECT:** Exemptions - Local Sales and Use Taxes Collected by the Department of Revenue (Sales and Use Tax)

**DATE:** June 15, 1999

**SUPERSEDES:** SC Information Letter #97-1 and all previous documents and any oral directives in conflict herewith.

**REFERENCE:** See Attached Chart.

**AUTHORITY:** S. C. Code Ann. Section 12-4-320 (Supp. 1998)  
SC Revenue Procedure #97-8

**SCOPE:** An Information Letter is a document issued for the purpose of disseminating general information or information concerning an administrative pronouncement.

Information Letters issued to disseminate general information have no precedential value and do not represent the official position of the Department. Information Letters designated as administrative pronouncements are official advisory opinions of the Department.

The South Carolina Code of Laws allows the imposition of various types of local sales and use taxes. As such, the citizens of a county, depending upon the needs within the county, may impose one or several local sales and use taxes. While most of these local sales and use taxes provide the same exemptions for certain sales and purchases, there are some differences. Attached is a chart that should provide guidance concerning the various types of local sales and use taxes collected by the Department of Revenue and the types of exemptions allowed under each tax. Please note that this chart only addresses the general local sales and use taxes collected by the Department of Revenue on behalf of the counties or school districts. It does not address the local taxes on sales of accommodations or on sales of prepared meals that are collected directly by the counties.

<i>SALES AND PURCHASES EXEMPT FROM LOCAL SALES AND USE TAXES</i>								
<i>COUNTY</i>	TYPE OF LOCAL SALES AND USE TAX AND EFFECTIVE DATE	12-36-2120 12-36-2130 STATE EXEMPTIONS	12-36-2110 EXEMPTION FOR MAXIMUM TAX ITEMS	12-36-1710 EXEMPTION FOR CASUAL EXCISE ITEMS	EXEMPTION FOR FOOD STAMP PURCHASES	EXEMPTION FOR CERTAIN FOOD SALES	“GRANDFATHER CLAUSE” EXEMPTION FOR CERTAIN PURCHASES BY CONTRACTORS	NOTE
<i>Abbeville</i>	Local Option - 5/1/92	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>Allendale</i>	Local Option - 5/1/92	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>Bamberg</i>	Local Option - 5/1/92	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>Barnwell</i>	Local Option - 5/1/99	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>Berkeley</i>	Local Option - 5/1/97	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>Beaufort</i>	Transportation - 6/1/99	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	1
<i>Charleston</i>	Local Option - 7/1/91	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>Cherokee</i>	Cherokee School - 7/1/96	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	1
<i>Chester</i>	Local Option - 5/1/94 Capital Projects - 5/1/99	Yes Yes	Yes Yes	Yes No	Yes Yes	No No	Yes Yes	1 & 2
<i>Chesterfield</i>	Local Option - 5/1/97	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>Clarendon</i>	Local Option - 5/1/97	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>Colleton</i>	Local Option - 7/1/91	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>Darlington</i>	Local Option - 5/1/97	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>Dillon</i>	Local Option - 5/1/96	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>Edgefield</i>	Local Option - 5/1/92	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>Florence</i>	Local Option - 5/1/94	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	

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<i>Hampton</i>	Local Option - 7/1/91	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>Jasper</i>	Local Option - 7/1/91 Capital Projects - 5/1/99	Yes Yes	Yes Yes	Yes No	Yes Yes	No No	Yes Yes	1 & 2
<i>Kershaw</i>	Local Option - 5/1/97	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>Lancaster</i>	Local Option - 5/1/92	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>Laurens</i>	Local Option - 5/1/99	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>Lee</i>	Local Option - 5/1/96	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>Marion</i>	Local Option - 7/1/91	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>Marlboro</i>	Local Option - 5/1/92	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>McCormick</i>	Local Option - 7/1/91	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>Newberry</i>	Capital Projects - 5/1/99	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	1
<i>Orangeburg</i>	Capital Projects - 5/1/99	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	1
<i>Pickens</i>	Local Option - 5/1/95	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>Saluda</i>	Local Option - 5/1/92	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>Sumter</i>	Local Option - 5/1/96	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>Williamsburg</i>	Local Option - 5/1/97	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>York</i>	Capital Projects - 5/1/98	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	1

## **TYPES OF LOCAL OPTION TAXES:**

**Local Option:** The local option sales and use tax is authorized under Code Section 4-10-10 et. seq. This tax is a general sales and use tax on all sales at retail (with a few exceptions) taxable under the state sales and use tax. This tax is imposed to reduce the property tax burden on persons in the counties that impose this type of local tax and is collected by the Department of Revenue on behalf of these counties.

**Capital Projects:** The local capital projects sales and use tax is authorized under Code Section 4-10-300 et. seq. This tax is a general sales and use tax on all sales at retail (with a few exceptions) taxable under the state sales and use tax. This tax is imposed specifically to defray the debt service on bonds issued for various capital projects in the counties that impose this type of local tax and is collected by the Department of Revenue on behalf of these counties.

**Transportation:** The local transportation projects sales and use tax is authorized under Code Section 4-37-30 et. seq. This tax is a general sales and use tax on all sales at retail (with a few exceptions) taxable under the state sales and use tax. This tax is imposed specifically to defray the debt service on bonds issued for various transportation projects in the counties that impose this type of local tax and are collected by the Department of Revenue on behalf of these counties.

**Cherokee School:** The Cherokee County School District One School Bond-Property Tax Relief Act provided, that upon public approval in a referendum conducted by the Cherokee County Election Commission, a 1% sales and use tax be imposed in Cherokee County for not more than 20 years. The revenue from this sales and use tax is used to pay debt service on general obligation bonds which were issued to defray the costs of specified improvements for Cherokee County School District One.

**Union School:** The School District of Union County School Bond-Property Tax Relief Act provided, that upon public approval in a referendum conducted by the Union County Election Commission, a sales and use tax (not to exceed 2%) be imposed in Union County for not more than 25 years. The revenue from this sales and use tax will be used to pay debt service on general obligation bonds which were issued pursuant to the School Bond Act or to pay directly costs of acquisition or construction of specified improvements for the School District of Union County. **As of the date of this information letter, the sales and use tax authorized under School District of Union County School Bond-Property Tax Relief Act has not been imposed in Union county.**

**Colleton School:** The Colleton County School District School Bond-Property Tax Relief Act provided, that upon public approval in a referendum conducted by the Colleton County Election Commission, a 1% sales and use tax be imposed in Colleton County for not more than 20 years. The revenue from this sales and use tax is used to pay debt service on general obligation bonds which were issued pursuant to the School Bond Act. **As of the date of this information letter, the sales and use tax authorized under the Colleton County School District School Bond-Property Tax Relief Act has not been imposed in Colleton county.**

### **TYPES OF EXEMPTIONS:**

**State Exemptions - 12-36-2120:** Sales of tangible personal property exempt from the 5% State sales and use tax are exempt from the local sales and use tax if marked “Yes” under this column.

**Exemption for Maximum Tax Items- 12-36-2110:** Sales of items subject to a maximum tax under the 5% State sales and use tax law (i.e. aircraft, motor vehicles, motorcycles, boats, trailers and semitrailers pulled by truck tractors, horse trailers, recreational vehicles (including tent campers, travel trailers, park models, park trailers, motor homes, and fifth wheels), self-propelled light construction equipment, unassembled aircraft, manufactured homes, musical instruments and office equipment purchased by certain religious organizations, and certain research and development machinery) are exempt from the local sales and use tax if marked “Yes” under this column.

**Exemption for Casual Excise Tax Items - 12-36-1710:** Sales of items subject to the casual excise tax under Code Section 12-36-1710 through Code Section 12-36-1740 (i.e. motor vehicles, motorcycles, boats, motors, and airplanes required to be registered, titled, or licensed) are exempt from the local sales and use tax if marked “Yes” under this column.

**Exemption for Food Stamp Purchases:** Sales of food purchased with food stamps are exempt from the 5% State sales and use tax; therefore, such sales are exempt from the local sales and use tax if marked “Yes” under this column.

**Exemption for Certain Food Sales:** Sales of certain foods, while subject to the 5% State sales and use tax, are exempt from the local sales and use tax if marked “Yes” under this column. Sales of food which are eligible to be purchased with United States Department of Agriculture food stamps come under this exemption. This exemption applies to everyone, not just persons using food stamps.

### **“Grandfather Clause” Exemption for Certain Purchases By Construction**

**Contractors:** All the local sales and use taxes discussed in this information letter exempt purchases of building materials for use under a construction contract if both of the following conditions are met:

- A. 1. the construction contract is executed before the imposition date; or  
2. a written bid is submitted before the imposition date culminating in a construction contract entered into before or after the imposition date; and
- B. a verified copy of the contract is mailed within 6 months of the imposition date to:

South Carolina Department of Revenue  
Office Services Division  
License and Registration Section  
P. O. Box 125  
Columbia, South Carolina 29214-0109

A "verified copy" is a copy accompanied by a statement, signed under penalties of perjury, that it is true and correct. If the contractor is a corporation, the statement is to be signed by an officer of the corporation or an employee authorized to sign. If the contractor is a partnership, the statement is to be signed by a general partner. If the contractor is a sole proprietorship, the owner is to sign.

**Special Exemption Certificate.** In order for a contractor to purchase building materials for a particular contract free of the local tax, the contractor must complete Form ST-10-C ("Application for Exemption from Local Option Tax") and submit it to the Department of Revenue. If the Department determines the contract in question meets the above requirements, the contractor will be issued a special exemption certificate (Form ST-35). The certificate may only be used to purchase building materials for the contract for which it is issued and may not be used to purchase anything other than building material. If the contractor uses this certificate to make purchases free of the local tax, upon which the tax should have been paid, then the contractor will be held liable for the tax. **Also, the certificate does not allow the contractor to make purchases of building materials free of the 5% state tax.**

**An exemption certificate (Form ST-35) issued by the Department of Revenue to a prime contractor under this exemption may not be used by a subcontractor nor may a prime contractor use a subcontractor's exemption certificate. Each contractor must obtain his own certificate for each construction contract.**

**Note #1:** By not exempting items subject to the casual excise tax (“No” in the “Casual Excise Items” column), counties imposing this local sales and use tax will impose the local tax on sales and purchases of trailers that can be pulled by vehicles other than truck tractors, sales of pole trailers and sales of boat motors not attached to a boat at the time of sale, but will not impose the local sales and use tax on items subject to a maximum tax under the 5% State sales and use tax law.

**Note #2:** Effective May 1, 1999, Chester and Jasper counties charge two local sales and use taxes - the 1% Local Option Tax and the 1% Capital Projects Tax.

**Please note that this chart only addresses the general local option taxes collected by the Department of Revenue on behalf of the counties or school districts. It does not address the local taxes on sales of accommodations or on sales of prepared meals that are collected directly by the counties.**