

Certifying Land to State

The process in WinCollect for certifying land to the State Land Commissioner is a very flexible and dynamic process that greatly simplifies this task.

You begin the certification process by going to the *Action* menu and selecting *Certification To State*. This opens the certification window where you will perform all the tasks necessary to complete this process.

If this is your first time performing a certification, the parcel list will be empty. If you have performed this task previously, the parcel list from your previous work will come up. You can determine when the list was last built by looking at the bottom of the screen. If the data is from last year, you can simply rebuild the list and erase it. Saving the parcel list allows you to work on the list as you have time over the course of a couple of days. Any changes you make are automatically saved.

To build a new list, click the Build button. You will be prompted for the Tax Year to certify. The second question asks whether to limit the search to parcels in the search list. If you say no, every real estate parcel that is delinquent for the tax year you specified will be considered. Parcels previously certified from earlier years will be skipped, but all other parcels that meet the tax year criteria will be added to your list.

If there are large groups of parcels that you know you can exclude with a record filter, you can begin at the main screen from the Property Search screen and select only parcels that qualify for certification. This would allow you to exclude mobile homes, improvement only parcels, special parcels representing only non-ad valorem tax issues, and other parcels that may not be eligible. Once you have your select list built, come back to the certification screen, and at the build menu, select to limit to parcels in the search list, and all the ineligible parcels will be automatically excluded.

Once the build process is complete, the parcel list will contain all parcels that can *potentially* be certified to the state. Keep in mind that there may still be exceptions in this list as described in the previous paragraph. By default, every parcel has a checkmark next to it, indicating it should be certified. This screen allows you to review each parcel and uncheck any parcel that should be excluded, allowing you to manually fine tune the list until it is correct.

The certification window works differently from most windows in WinCollect in that you can keep this window up but return to the main screen. This allows for very convenient proofing of the list. Start by hitting the Select button. This will copy the list of parcels from the certification list to the property search list. Then—while keeping the certification screen open—click back to the main collection screen, and you can use the arrows at the top to move parcel to parcel and browse the records. If you are on the certification screen and want to see more details about the currently highlighted parcel,

simply double-click it, and it will automatically move your property search list to the same parcel. You can then view the Property Summary information just as you do when selecting a parcel. If this information allows you to determine the parcel should be excluded, simply click back to the certification window and uncheck the box next to that parcel number.

If after building your list, you discover a parcel (or group of parcels) that you had previously excluded needs to be on the list, you can use the Add button to manually add that parcel or parcels to the certification list. There is no delete button—just uncheck the parcel and it will be excluded from the other actions.

Once you have your list set with the checkmarks set as needed, you can print your list by clicking the Report button. This will print the Certification report in accordance with the State Land Commissioners Office. Note that only checked parcels will appear on the list. You can run this report as often as you like, so if you prefer to proof from a printed list, you can run this immediately after building the parcel list, and use it to determine which parcels to uncheck.

Once your Certification report is correct, you can click the Publication button to create your publication list for the newspaper. It also is limited to checked parcels, so it will match your certification list exactly without having to be sure to run the same set of record filters. Once the publication list is created, the final step is to click the Set Certified button, which will apply the certified exemption code to all checked parcels in your list automatically.