



Season's greetings

As this is the last edition of AGENTSanswers for 2005, I would like to thank all of you who have provided us with feedback and suggestions throughout the past 12 months.

I would like to wish you and your families a safe and happy break and look forward to working with you all again next year.

Kathleen Clement
Manager
Delivery Planning and Initiation



Inland Revenue services over the Christmas and New Year break

E-File

The E-File system and the E-File helpdesk will be unavailable from midday 23 December 2005 to 8am 4 January 2006. You will not be able to use the E-File facility during this period as annual maintenance will be taking place.

AMBR 1006 weekly activity reports

The last weekly activity reports to be issued before Christmas will be for the week ending 16 December 2005.

The next weekly activity report will be issued on Wednesday 4 January 2006. This report will include any activity between 17 December 2005 and 23 December 2005.

Another report will be issued on Friday 6 January 2006. This report will include any activity between 24 December 2005 and 6 January 2006.

Call centre hours

Friday 23 December	8am-8pm
Saturday 24 December	Closed
Monday 26 December	Closed
Tuesday 27 December	Closed
Wednesday 28 December	8.30am-5pm
Thursday 29 December	8.30am-5pm
Friday 30 December	8.30am-5pm
Saturday 31 December	Closed
Monday 2 January	Closed
Tuesday 3 January	Closed
Wednesday 4 January	8am-8pm

Our normal hours of service (8am to 8pm weekdays and 9am to 1pm Saturdays) resume from 4 January 2006.

The Child Support enquiry line (0800 220 222) will close at 4.30pm on 23 December and re-open on 4 January 2006.

INFOexpress availability

Friday 23 December	Normal hours*
Saturday 24 December	Not available
Sunday 25 December	Not available
Monday 26 December	Not available
Tuesday 27 December	Not available
Wednesday 28 December	Normal hours
Thursday 29 December	Normal hours
Friday 30 December	Normal hours
Saturday 31 December	Normal hours
Sunday 1 January	Normal hours
Monday 2 January	Normal hours
Tuesday 3 January	Normal hours
Wednesday 4 January	Normal hours

*INFOexpress provides an automated response from 6am to 12 midnight, and accepts messages from midnight to 6am seven days a week.

As other Inland Revenue systems that are used by INFOexpress will be unavailable during this period, there will be a delay in sending your requested items, for example stationery or tax returns.

Faxbacks, which detail client information, will be available on the same dates as INFOexpress.

Statement and refund issuing

The last day of issuing statements, refunds etc prior to Christmas is 16 December 2005. Issuing will recommence on 4 January 2006.

Internet

As other Inland Revenue systems that are used by the internet will be unavailable from 23 December 2005 to 4 January 2006, there will be a delay in sending your requested items, or processing any requests.



Look at account information Look – Link – Do

Many organisations today are using the internet to provide services to their customers. For example you may have incorporated a new company online at the Companies Office website. The *look at account information* service is an example of how we are also taking advantage of this channel to provide improved services.

This service was introduced in November 2003 and has been available to you for over a year. Currently approximately 75% of you are now registered.

Benefits

There are a number of benefits to using this service irrespective of your client base including:

- the service is quick and secure – it saves you waiting on the phone and frees us up to give service in the areas where you really need it
- the information available is accurate and up-to-date
- the service is available when it suits you (day or night) including outside call centre hours.

Feedback from agents

Feedback from agents who are using the service has been very positive. Here are some of the comments we have received:

“This is a brilliant service – saves us so much time and now that the 2005 summary of earnings is available it is even better.”

“I don’t know what we did before account look-up came in ... my staff used to spend so much time on the telephone but now they don’t need to.”

“My staff are not using the phones like last year because of the new SOE information on account look up. IR is making life a lot easier with technology.”

We will be continuing to add more features to the *look at account information* service to meet more of your needs.

In the future you will be able to “Look – Link – Do” through this service.

- Look at client information.
- Link new clients.
- Do certain actions yourself.

You can already look at a great deal of client information such as account balances, account transactions and summary of earnings details.

From February 2006 you will be able to look at client return information from the:

- Employer monthly schedules
- GST returns
- ICA returns.

Early next year we will be working on providing you with the ability to link and delink clients online (in real time) as well as viewing your client list.

If you are not already among the many agents taking advantage of the benefits this service offers, now is a good time to start. You will have the opportunity to become familiar with the service’s features in preparation of the enhancements to come.

Using this service will help you avoid delays when the demand on our phone services increases.

If you would like to register, or if you have any questions regarding this service, your agent account manager will be happy to help.





Tax agents 0800 line – levels of service

Due to the number of upcoming legislative changes such as the Working for Families programme, we are expecting a substantial increase in our call volumes from January 2006. This will result in longer waiting times on the tax agents' line.

As a result of the the increased business demand we will not be able to provide the same level of service to you through this channel in future.

Over the last year we have invested substantially in "self-service" options such as the online *look at account information* service to provide an efficient alternative to the 0800 line.

We are looking to meet the challenges ahead by providing you with alternatives to the phone as a means of doing business with us. In many ways we believe you will find these alternatives, especially the *look at account information* service, to be better than the phone. There are further enhancements coming that will assist you even more.

Using these self service options will help us meet the upcoming challenges and minimise any inconvenience to you.

Over the next few months agent account managers will be promoting the *look at account information* service and offering help and support to make sure you can take advantage of these benefits.

Availability of L letters

We will be "turning off" L letters at the end of January 2006 and they will be available again from early August 2006. This means you won't be able to request an L letter to be sent to your clients during this period.

If you have any clients who have not yet provided you with their records and you would like us to send them an L letter, make your request through INFOexpress before the end of January – remember when using INFOexpress you do not need to wait for the voice prompts before you move on to the next step.

Remember, by issuing an L letter, the client is removed from your performance statistics until the return is filed.

GST return due date

GST is due on the last working day of the month following the taxable period.

For example a GST return covering April and May is due by the last working day of June.

The one exception is the GST payment and return which would be due on the last working day of December – it is actually due on 15 January. As 15 January 2006 falls on a weekend, the payment and return will be accepted as on time if mailed or handed in on Monday 16 January 2006.

Standard practice statement SPS 05/10 - remission of penalties and interest

The above standard practice statement (SPS) sets out the Commissioner's practice in respect to granting remission of penalties and interest under sections 183A, 183ABA and 183D of the Tax Administration Act 1994.

This replaces SPS RDC 600 - Remission of penalties and interest, and can be found in *Tax Information Bulletin (TIB)* Vol 17, Number 9 (November 2005) or viewed at www.ird.govt.nz/aboutir/newsletters/tib/

Reminders

Restricted clients

We have had occasions where requests have been made for restricted clients. Please remember that Special Files must always be contacted for these requests. Call us on 0800 227772, 8am-5pm Monday – Friday.

Credit transfers

When requesting a credit transfer from one account to another, please remember that you need to be linked for the tax type and account where the credit is coming from.

Note from the editor

If your mailing details are incorrect, we have missed someone off the distribution list or you have suggestions for future topics, please contact:

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AGENTSanswers is also on our website:

www.ird.govt.nz/taxagents/newsletters/agents-answers