



Inland Revenue
Te Tari Taake

IR9XA
April 2016

Tax agents' extension of time (EOT) agreement

**For filing period 1 April 2016
to 31 March 2017**

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Extension of time (EOT) arrangements for 2016 returns

Introduction

Legislation extends the time tax agents have to file their clients' tax returns up to 31 March each year.

The extension of time (EOT) agreement sets out the guidelines for the percentage of returns to be filed by certain dates throughout the year.

It makes provisions for excluding clients from the 31 March target percentage if they're late providing you with the information necessary to file a return.

It also allows for special arrangements where a client's return is affected by exceptional circumstances.

Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand (CAANZ), previously NZICA and Inland Revenue annually negotiate the administrative details of applying an automatic EOT to agents.

This agreement is applied by Inland Revenue to all tax agents, whether or not they're members of CAANZ.

Why have an EOT?

Legislation requires income tax returns to be filed by 7 July each year. However, the Commissioner can give the clients of tax agents an extension of time to file income tax returns up to, but not beyond, 31 March of the following year. See page 7 for legal references.

Realistically tax agents couldn't prepare all returns by 7 July, so the EOT agreement lets:

- tax agents spread return filing over a year rather than in one peak period
- Inland Revenue maintain an even flow of tax returns over a 12-month window and ensure no work is carried over to the next filing year.

EOT filing guidelines and dates

Interim dates are provided each year as a guideline to help you meet the requirement to file 100% of your clients' returns by 31 March. If some returns can't be filed by 31 March 2017 this agreement sets out how these will be managed.

As well as a guide to file 100% of returns by 31 March, interim dates also help us manage the processing of the returns filed.

The interim dates are negotiable and won't be monitored unless you fail to file 90% of returns as at 31 March. If this happens we'll issue a caution. Your EOT arrangement will then be supervised by your account manager for the following filing year.

Standard, E-File and late balance dates

If you haven't negotiated personal dates, the following interim dates apply as your guidelines:

- 40% of clients' returns filed by 9 September 2016
- 60% of clients' returns filed by 11 November 2016
- 80% of clients' returns filed by 10 February 2017.

These dates are to help you meet the required:

- 100% of clients' returns filed by 31 March 2017.

Negotiated personal guidelines – genuine reasons

If you failed to file at least 90% of 2015 returns as at 31 March 2016 you would have received a caution and your account manager will be supervising your EOT arrangement for the filing of 2016 returns.

This may include negotiating interim guidelines that better suit your business, but still with the requirement to file 100% by 31 March 2017.

Linking and EOT

When you link a new client you'll automatically be given an EOT unless the client has two or more returns outstanding.

Two or more returns outstanding

New clients with two or more returns unfiled at the time of linking (R EOT) won't be entitled to an automatic EOT for the current year.

If you take on a client and find they have returns outstanding for two or more years, there are two alternatives:

1. If the returns identified aren't required to be filed, call the tax agents' line or advise your account manager.
2. You or the client may apply for an individual EOT arrangement under section 37(3) of the Tax Administration Act 1994.

Requesting information to file returns

Inland Revenue and CAANZ agreed on the following process to help tax agents obtain information so they're able to file a return for their client.

Deferral of policing for clients with exceptional circumstances ("D status")

We can't give an EOT beyond 31 March because we're constrained by legislation. However, in some circumstances clients can't file their returns by 31 March through no fault of their own. In these situations we'll change the client's EOT status to D (deferred) if they have:

- Y (EOT granted), or
- L (L letter requesting information) for the current year.

After 31 March, these clients will automatically be restored to the agent's client list for filing their 2017 returns.

Late provision of information (L letter)

If a client has an EOT and is late providing you with all the necessary information to complete their returns, you can issue a reminder letter by calling our 0800 tax agents' self-service line (0800 456 678).

Note

The letter is issued in the name of Inland Revenue. It won't be attributed to you or your agency and can't be used for clients who don't have an EOT or an overseas address. It reminds clients they haven't provided their tax agent with enough information to file a return. A copy of the L letter is on page 6.

The L letter is only available between August and the following February.

Request to withdraw a client's EOT

You can request the withdrawal of a particular client's EOT at any time by writing to your account manager or calling the tax agents' line.

We won't reinstate your EOT for that client without your agreement.

Request to reinstate a client's EOT

The EOT may be reinstated for your client for the 2017 filing year if:

- the 2016 return and current outstanding 2015 return are filed before a late filing penalty is imposed after 7 July, or
- it's unrealistic to expect the client to file their 2016 return before a late filing penalty is applied. Approval for reinstatement of the client's EOT may be negotiated provided:
 - the reasons for not filing the 2015 return by 31 March 2016 have been reviewed, and
 - where possible remedied, and
 - the agent has given us a written undertaking that their 2016 return will be filed by 31 March 2017.

Where a written guarantee can't be provided, an individual extension of time may be negotiated. Any reinstatement of your EOT is at the discretion of the account manager and will be based on your past and present filing performance.

If you want to apply for reinstatement please contact us prior to any late filing penalty being imposed on the 2016 tax return.

Filing performance as at 31 March 2017

If you've filed less than 100% of your client's returns by 31 March 2017 we'll take the following actions.

Where your performance is:

- 98% or better, we'll send you a letter of achievement and encouragement towards the ultimate goal of 100%
- less than 90%, we'll send you a caution and will supervise the EOT arrangement for your 2017-18 return filing year
- less than 90% as at 31 March 2016 and less than 90% as at 31 March 2017, we'll consult with you and may withdraw your EOT.

Returns outstanding after 31 March 2017

Returns outstanding after 31 March 2017 will be subject to enforcement action. We'll automatically withdraw your EOT for the client for the following year. To prevent any misunderstandings over actions we may take for overdue returns we'll maintain open communications with you. If you haven't filed 100% of your returns by 31 March, and we haven't heard from you, we'll contact the client direct to discuss their outstanding return.

Withdrawing a tax agent's EOT

If your performance was less than 90% as at 31 March 2016, we may withdraw your EOT if your filing is below 90% as at 31 March 2017. This won't be done without first issuing a notice in writing that we're considering withdrawing the EOT and inviting you to discuss your circumstances with your account manager or Inland Revenue manager.

Reinstating a tax agent's EOT

If your EOT is withdrawn it won't be reinstated before the end of the 2017-18 filing year.

Any reinstatement of your EOT is at the discretion of the account manager and will be based on your past and present filing performance.

An EOT can't be reinstated before the next filing year.

List of tax agents

We may remove you or your agency from our list if the Commissioner is satisfied that continuing to list you as a tax agent would adversely affect the integrity of the tax system and/or you're not eligible to be a tax agent (after a thorough review).

For more information go to www.ird.govt.nz/taxagents (search keywords: agents list).

Reports

We generate six reports periodically to help you manage your return filing. You can also request them by calling your account manager.

All the reports indicate:

- the period covered
- the date produced
- your agency's IRD number and name.

For more information about EOTs and reports go to www.ird.govt.nz/taxagents

AMBR1000 – Client listing for return type report

This report provides a list of clients currently linked to your agency number.

AMBR1001 – List of overdue income tax returns for previous four years

This report lists all outstanding income tax returns in the previous four years (not including the current year) for your clients.

AMBR1002 – Filing statistics by return type

This report details the number of returns required to be filed and the number lodged by return type. It also gives the percentage of lodged returns by balance date for that return type.

AMBR1004 – Listing of unfiled current EOT year income tax returns

This report lists all active clients whose current EOT year income tax returns are:

- required, and
- still unfiled, but
- not necessarily overdue.

You'll receive this report in December each year. It's also available at other times by calling the tax agents' line. You can request reports to be sorted by client's IRD number.

AMBR1005 – Provisional tax listing for return period

This report can be requested for the clients of your agency. It includes your client's balance date, provisional tax assessed, payments, transfers and the account balance.

AMBR1006 – Weekly activity report

The weekly activity report contains information about clients who have had an L letter issued, been linked or delinked, or had their EOT withdrawn.

The report is produced in five parts but you'll only receive the parts for which your agency has activity.

The parts are:

- Delinked for the period
- Linked for the period
- EOT withdrawn for the period
- L letters issued for the period
- Online credit transfer transactions.

This report is generated every Friday. A copy can be requested from your account manager up to two months after issue.

Copy of the "L letter"

Inland Revenue
Private Bag
Telephone
Facsimile

IRD number
Our reference

Dear

Information required to furnish your income tax return.

Your tax agent has an extension of time arrangement with Inland Revenue and you qualify to file your ____ income tax return up to 31 March ____.

At the time this letter was written you hadn't given your tax agent all the information they need to prepare this return.

Please provide this information to your tax agent immediately so they can file this return on time.

If your return is not filed on time Inland Revenue will begin action to ensure the outstanding return is filed.

This could result in:

- late filing penalty charges
- a default assessment
- withdrawal of the extension of time
- prosecution.

If you have now provided the information to your tax agent, please ignore this letter.

If you have any questions, please contact Inland Revenue on 0800 377 774.

Yours sincerely

Legislation relating to EOT

All references are to the Tax Administration Act 1994 (TAA).

Section 3

The definition in section 3(1) of the TAA sets out that a tax agent is a person who:

- is eligible under section 34B(2) of the TAA to be a tax agent, and
- is listed by the Commissioner as a tax agent, and
- has not been removed from the list of tax agents.

Section 34B

Section 34B(2) sets out who is eligible to be a tax agent, including the following.

A person who prepares returns of income required to be completed and sent in for 10 or more taxpayers and is one of the following:

- a practitioner carrying on a professional public practice, or
- a person carrying on a business or occupation in which annual returns of income are prepared, or
- the Māori Trustee.

Section 34B also:

- requires the Commissioner to compile and maintain a list of tax agents
- explains how to apply to be listed as a tax agent
- allows the Commissioner to refuse to list someone as a tax agent, when listing the applicant as a tax agent would adversely affect the integrity of the tax system and/or the applicant is not entitled to make the application
- allows the Commissioner to remove someone from the list of tax agents, when continuing to list the applicant as a tax agent would adversely affect the integrity of the tax system and/or the applicant is not eligible to be a tax agent
- requires the Commissioner to collect the names of key people from tax agent organisations
- requires the Commissioner to provide certain information before refusing to list a tax agent or removing them from the list
- requires a tax agent entity to provide certain information to the Commissioner.

Section 37

Section 37(3) allows the Commissioner to give individual taxpayers an extension of time to file tax returns. This extension is decided on a case or class of cases basis to a date that the Commissioner thinks appropriate under the circumstances.

Section 37(4) allows the Commissioner to "extend a tax agent's time for furnishing a return of income for any taxpayer to a date that the Commissioner thinks proper in the circumstance, if the Commissioner is satisfied that -

- (a) the tax agent is unable to furnish the return of income on or before the date set by subsection (1);
or
- (b) it would be unreasonable, having regard to the circumstances of the tax agent preparing the return, to require the return to be furnished on or before the date set by subsection (1)."

Sections 37(4B) and (5) allow the Commissioner to give tax agents' clients extensions of time to file income tax returns up to, but not beyond, 31 March of the following year.

New Zealand Government