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For tax professionals

Information for tax professionals.

Payment interest and penalties

How your clients can pay, what happens if they don't pay on time, and penalties if they don't meet their obligations.

Prepare and lodge

Information for registered agents about lodgment program due dates and preparing and lodging tax returns and statements.

Support and communication

Resources to help tax professionals interact with us, keep up to date and find the information and resources they need.

Your practice

Your practice is a central source of administrative and practice information for tax professionals.

Client-to-agent linking

Information for registered agents about the client-to-agent linking process.

Tax professionals newsroom



Read the latest updates on tax, super and registry services.

QC 82608

Payment, interest and penalties

How your clients can pay, what happens if they don't pay on time, and penalties if they don't meet their obligations.

Last updated 26 February 2026

Paying the ATO

It's important that your clients pay their tax in full and on time to avoid interest charges and firmer actions. Encourage them to plan ahead, so they're ready to make payment by the due date.

We offer your clients a range of payment options, including BPAY and credit card. For payment options, refer your clients to [how to pay](#).

If your client has a tax debt and they are unable to pay on time – you can make an arrangement on their behalf, for payment by instalments. If your client is experiencing, or considers payment will cause them serious hardship, you can apply on their behalf for a release from payment, of an eligible tax debt.

Payment plans

If your client is experiencing financial difficulties, they may be eligible for a [payment plan](#).

You can use our [Online services for agents](#) to view, set up, modify or cancel a payment plan for your client if they:

- owe \$200,000 or less
- don't already have a payment plan for that debt amount.

If your client wants to set up or modify a payment plan or instalment schedule using a credit or debit card, they will need to do it

themselves. Only the card holder can do this.

You will need to phone our [registered agent phone line](#) if your client doesn't meet the requirements to set up a payment plan online. See [setting up a payment plan](#) for more information.

If your client doesn't pay

If your client [doesn't pay](#) their tax in full and on time, we will apply general interest charge (GIC) and we may take [firmer actions](#) or [legal actions](#) to collect the debt.

General interest charge (GIC)

We will apply [GIC](#) if an amount of tax or other liability remains unpaid after it's due date.

GIC incurred in income years from 1 July 2025 can't be claimed as a tax deduction, regardless of whether the debt relates to an earlier income year. For entities with a substituted accounting period, this applies from their next accounting period starting after 1 July 2025.

If your client has extenuating circumstances, you can request a [remission of GIC](#).

You need to submit the completed remission application form on their behalf using Practice mail. The form simplifies remission applications by guiding you to provide the required information.

Firmer actions

We take a deliberate and targeted approach that considers your client's compliance history and their engagement with us when deciding what [firmer action](#) to take.

Legal actions

In most cases, we will try to collect your tax or super debt through firmer actions. If appropriate we take [legal action](#) to recover the debt, for example if we consider there is a risk to revenue.

Penalties

If your client fails to meet a tax obligation, [penalties](#) may be applied.

A [failure to lodge on time penalty](#) may apply if lodgment obligations, like activity statements, tax returns, fringe benefits tax returns, or PAYG withholding annual reports, aren't met by the due date.

[Safe harbour](#) provisions mean there is no penalty for your client in certain circumstances.

Payment-only deferral requests for registered agents



You can request a payment-only deferral if your client needs more time to pay.

QC 16870

Payment-only deferral requests for registered agents

You can request a payment-only deferral if your client needs more time to pay.

Last updated 27 March 2026

Eligibility

Registered agents can request a payment-only deferral for the following liabilities:

- income tax
- liabilities arising following lodgment of activity statements
- fringe benefits tax.

A payment-only deferral request must:

- be for an existing client
- only include documents that have been lodged and processed
- meet requirements under [exceptional or unforeseen circumstances](#).

For information about deferral requests for:

- combined global and domestic minimum tax returns, see [Lodging, paying and other obligations for Pillar Two](#)
- other lodgment obligations, see [Lodgment program deferrals](#).

Payment-only deferral requests for large businesses

Payment deferral requests for significant global entities or large businesses will be considered by our large business specialists. We may contact you if you request a payment deferral for one of these entities.

Exceptional or unforeseen circumstances

You can lodge a payment-only deferral application if:

- there are, or have been, exceptional or unforeseen circumstances beyond your client's control
- the exceptional or unforeseen circumstances must be consistent with those outlined in Practice Statement [PS LA 2011/14](#) *General debt collection powers and principles*.

For the deferral request to be considered, you must:

- provide full details of your client's exceptional or unforeseen circumstances that have or will prevent them from paying by the due date
- provide the steps your client took to mitigate the effects of those circumstances
- demonstrate that your client can make full payment once the circumstances have been resolved
- demonstrate that your client will pay their continuing tax-related liabilities on time, once the circumstances are under control.


If applicable, you must also provide details:

- of any payment arrangement relating to the debt
- on why you are submitting the request after the payment due date.

Phone us on **13 11 42** or **13 72 86** Fast Key Code **1 2 2** if your client is not eligible for a payment-only deferral and needs [help with paying](#) because of financial difficulty.

How to make a request for payment-only deferral

To request a payment-only deferral, download the *Payment-only deferral application – Registered agent only* form below. You must complete a separate form for each client unless your client is linked to another entity on the form. Submit your application through [Online services for agents](#) using the following steps:

- Complete all fields on the [Payment-only deferral application \(XLSX, 45.8KB\)](#)  form, including detailed information of [exceptional or unforeseen circumstances](#) and mitigating steps taken to allow us to accurately assess your request (insufficient information could result in your request not being accepted).
- Save your application form (in Excel format).
- Open a New **Practice** mail message.
- Select the topic **Debt and lodgment**.
- Select the subject **Request for Payment Deferral**.
- Select the appropriate option in the **Enquiry type** drop-down menu.
- Attach your completed payment deferral application form.
- Select the **Declaration**, then **Send**.

If a form is incomplete or contains incorrect information and we cannot process your deferral request, we will send a mail message through Online services for agents. You will have 2 business days to respond.

After you submit your request

Processing may take up to 28 days. Do not resend a deferral application for the same clients within the 28-day processing period. This could cause delays to the processing of your original request.

We will notify you of the outcome of your request through [Online services for agents](#).

Deferred due dates for eligible clients will display on our systems within a period of time that allows for system processing.

QC 62240

Our commitment to you

We are committed to providing you with accurate, consistent and clear information to help you understand your rights and entitlements and meet your obligations.

If you follow our information and it turns out to be incorrect, or it is misleading and you make a mistake as a result, we will take that into account when determining what action, if any, we should take.

Some of the information on this website applies to a specific financial year. This is clearly marked. Make sure you have the information for the right year before making decisions based on that information.

If you feel that our information does not fully cover your circumstances, or you are unsure how it applies to you, contact us or seek professional advice.

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