

R861. Tax Commission, Administration.

R861-1A. Administrative Procedures.

R861-1A-42. Waiver of Penalty and Interest for Reasonable Cause Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Section 59-1-401.

(1) Procedure.

(a) A taxpayer may request a waiver of penalties or interest for reasonable cause under Section 59-1-401 if the following conditions are met:

(i) the taxpayer provides a signed statement, with appropriate supporting documentation, requesting a waiver;

(ii) the total tax owed for the period has been paid;

(iii) the tax liability is based on a return the taxpayer filed with the commission, and not on an estimate provided by the taxpayer or the commission;

(iv) the taxpayer has not previously received a waiver review for the same period; and

(v) the taxpayer demonstrates that there is reasonable cause for waiver of the penalty or interest.

(b) Upon receipt of a waiver request, the commission shall:

(i) review the request;

(ii) notify the taxpayer if additional documentation is needed to consider the waiver request; and

(iii) review the account history for prior waiver requests, taxpayer deficiencies, and historical support for the reason given.

(c) Each request for waiver is judged on its individual merits.

(d) If the request for waiver of penalty or interest is denied, the taxpayer has a right to appeal. Procedures for filing appeals are found in Title 63G, Chapter 4, Administrative Procedures Act, and commission rules.

(e) If a taxpayer first requests a waiver of penalties or interest in an appeal to the commission, the taxpayer is not required to meet Subsections (1)(a)(i) through (iv).

(2)(a) Reasonable Cause for Waiver of Interest. Grounds for waiving interest are more stringent than for penalty. To be granted a waiver of interest, the taxpayer must prove that the commission gave the taxpayer erroneous information or took inappropriate action that contributed to the error.

(b) As a result of the COVID-19 emergency, the commission finds there is reasonable cause to waive interest from April 15, 2020 to July 15, 2020 for:

(i) a return due April 15, 2020 under Title 59, Chapter 7;

(ii) a payment due April 15, 2020 under Section 59-7-504; or

(iii) a return due April 15, 2020 under Subsection 59-10-514(1)(c).

(c) The commission may find reasonable cause to waive interest for a return due after April 15, 2020, but on or before July 15, 2020 for a fiscal year filer under Title 59, Chapter 7 or Chapter 10, if the commission finds that the interest accrued as a result of the COVID-19 emergency.

(3) Reasonable Cause for Waiver of Penalty. The following clearly documented circumstances may constitute reasonable cause for a waiver of penalty:

(a) Timely Mailing:

(i) The taxpayer mailed the return with payment to the commission by the due date and it was not timely delivered by the post office through no fault of the taxpayer.

(ii) In cases where the taxpayer cannot document a post office error, the penalties may be waived if the taxpayer:

(A) has an excellent history of compliance;

(B) proves that sufficient funds were in the bank as of the date of payment, and the check was written in numerical order; and

(C) presents documentation showing that the return or payment was mailed timely.

(b) Wrong Filing Place: The return or payment was filed on time, but was delivered to the wrong office or agency.

(c) Death or Serious Illness:

(i) The death or serious illness of a taxpayer or a member of the taxpayer's immediate family caused the delay.

(ii) With respect to a business, trust or estate, the death or illness must have been of the individual, or the immediate family of the individual, who had sole authority to file the return.

(iii) The death or illness must have occurred on or immediately prior to the due date of the return.

(d) Unavoidable Absence: The person having sole responsibility to file the return was absent from the state due to circumstances beyond his or her control.

(e) Disaster Relief:

(i) A delay in reporting, filing, or paying was due either to a federal or state declared disaster or to a natural disaster, such as fire or accident, that results in the destruction of records or disruption of business.

(ii) If delinquency or delay is due to a federally declared disaster, federal relief guidelines shall be followed.

(iii) In the absence of federal guidelines, and for other listed disasters, the taxpayer must demonstrate the matter was corrected within a reasonable time, given the circumstances.

(f) Reliance on Erroneous Tax Commission Information:

(i) Underpayments and late filings or payments were attributable to incorrect advice obtained from the commission, unless the taxpayer gave the commission inaccurate or insufficient information.

(ii) Proof of erroneous information may be based on written communication provided by the commission or, if the taxpayer clearly documents, verbal communication. Clear documentation of verbal communication should include the dates, times, and names of commission employees who provided the erroneous information.

(iii) A failure to comply will also be excused if it is demonstrated that the taxpayer requested the necessary tax forms and instructions timely, and the commission failed to timely provide the forms and instructions requested.

(g) Tax Commission Office Visit: The taxpayer proves that before expiration of the time for filing the return or making the payment, the taxpayer visited a commission office for information or help in preparing the return and a commission employee was not available for consultation.

(h) Unobtainable Records: For reasons beyond the taxpayer's control, the taxpayer was unable to obtain records to determine the amount of tax due.

(i) Reliance on Competent Tax Advisor: The taxpayer:

(i) furnishes all necessary and relevant information to a competent tax advisor, and the tax advisor:

(A) incorrectly advises the taxpayer;

(B) fails to timely file a return on behalf of the taxpayer; or

(C) fails to make a payment on behalf of the taxpayer; and

- (ii) demonstrates that the taxpayer exercised ordinary business care, prudence, and diligence in determining whether to seek further advice.
- (j) First Time Filer:
 - (i) It is the first return required to be filed and the taxes were filed and paid within a reasonable time after the due date.
 - (ii) The commission may also consider waiving penalties on the first return after a filing period change if the return is filed and tax is paid within a reasonable time after the due date.
- (k) Bank Error:
 - (i) The taxpayer's bank has made an error in returning a check, making a deposit or transferring money.
 - (ii) A letter from the bank verifying its error is required.
- (l) Compliance History:
 - (i) The commission will consider the taxpayer's recent history for payment, filing, and delinquencies in determining whether a penalty may be waived.
 - (ii) The commission will also consider whether other tax returns or reports are overdue at the time the waiver is requested.
- (m) Employee Embezzlement: The taxpayer shows that failure to pay was due to employee embezzlement of the tax funds and the taxpayer was unable to obtain replacement funds from any other source.
- (n) Recent Tax Law Change: The taxpayer's failure to file and pay was due to a recent change in tax law that the taxpayer could not reasonably be expected to be aware of.
- (4) Other Considerations for Determining Reasonable Cause.
 - (a) The commission allows for equitable considerations in determining whether reasonable cause exists to waive a penalty. Equitable considerations include:
 - (i) whether the commission had to take legal means to collect the taxes;
 - (ii) if the error is caught and corrected by the taxpayer;
 - (iii) the length of time between the event cited and the filing date;
 - (iv) typographical or other written errors; and
 - (v) other factors the commission deems appropriate.
 - (b) Other clearly supported extraordinary and unanticipated reasons for late filing or payment, which demonstrate reasonable cause and the inability to comply, may justify a waiver of the penalty.
 - (c) In most cases, ignorance of the law, carelessness, or forgetfulness does not constitute reasonable cause for waiver. Nonetheless, other supporting circumstances may indicate that reasonable cause for waiver exists.
 - (d) Intentional disregard, evasion, or fraud does not constitute reasonable cause for waiver under any circumstance.

KEY: developmental disabilities, grievance procedures, taxation, disclosure requirements

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