



Earthquake – tax relief for the Canterbury region

After an earthquake we understand that tax isn't the first thing on your mind. We've put some tax relief measures in place to help you at this time. If you still have any concerns or questions about tax or social entitlements after reading this factsheet, please call us on 0800 473 566.

Help for businesses

Helpline

The Government has set up a helpline for businesses affected by the Canterbury earthquake. For information about assistance and services available, call 0800 779 997.

Returns and payments

Please file your returns and make payments if you can. You can pay online, by cheque or at any open branch of Westpac.

If you can't file your return or make your payment on time, that's okay.

You won't have to pay any late penalties or interest on the unpaid amount. So, if you get a letter from us charging late penalties and interest you'll need to call us on 0800 227 771 or write to us and we'll cancel them.

If you can't:

- file your return because you've lost your business records, please call us on 0800 227 771
- afford to make a payment, please call us on 0800 227 771 to discuss your options—see below.

Financial hardship

We understand that it may take some time for you to be able to pay your tax. There are a range of options available for paying overdue tax, such as setting up an instalment arrangement. In some circumstances we may be able to write off your debt.

GST refunds

If you're expecting a refund and urgently need the money, please call us on 0800 473 566.

If you're expecting GST refunds over the next few months you may want to file either monthly or two-monthly returns. This way you'll get your refunds more regularly. You can change your GST filing frequency by calling us on 0800 473 566.

Income equalisation scheme

Farmers who have money deposited in this scheme may be able to make an early withdrawal, or deposit funds from forced sale of livestock.

Provisional tax estimation/re-estimation

You may want to consider your provisional tax payments at the next due date. Depending on your circumstances, your taxable income may have changed. You may want to:

- talk to your tax agent
- re-estimate your provisional tax
- arrange an early refund if provisional tax has been overpaid.

Earthquake support subsidy for employers

You may be entitled to the earthquake support subsidy available through Work and Income.

This is a payment for employers with fewer than 20 employees. You can receive \$350 a week for each employee for up to four weeks.

If you receive this payment and you're registered for GST, you'll need to include it as income in your GST return.

You'll need to make PAYE and any other deductions from any wages you pay to staff, eg, child support, student loan, KiwiSaver.

You'll also need to continue making your employer contributions to us if your employee is a KiwiSaver member.

For more information about the subsidy go to www.workandincome.govt.nz

Help for families and individuals

Working for Families Tax Credits

Working for Families Tax Credits entitlements are based on a person's yearly family income. Your entitlement may change if your family income has been affected by the earthquake. You can update your estimated family income at www.ird.govt.nz "Secure online services".

You can claim your Working for Families Tax Credits either weekly, fortnightly or at the end of the tax year. You can change how often you receive your payments at www.ird.govt.nz "Secure online services".

Child support

If you have trouble making child support payments please call us on 0800 221 221.

If your income has reduced because of the earthquake you may need to re-estimate your income to reduce the amount of child support you pay. Please call us on 0800 221 221 if you're in this situation.

Donations to the Canterbury Earthquake Appeal

You can claim a tax credit for donations of \$5 or more to the New Zealand Red Cross Canterbury Earthquake Appeal.

To claim the credit you'll need to keep your donation receipts and complete a *Tax credit claim form (IR 526)* after April 2011. Call us on 0800 257 773 to order the IR 526 or download it from www.ird.govt.nz "Forms and guides".

KiwiSaver contributions holiday

You may be able to take a KiwiSaver contributions holiday. The contributions holiday can last from three months to five years. You can apply for a contributions holiday at www.kiwisaver.govt.nz (keywords: contributions holiday) or by calling us on 0800 549 749.



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- **Get it done online** – complete and send us forms and returns, make payments, make an appointment to see us and give us feedback.
- **Work it out** – use our calculators, worksheets and tools to help you manage your tax business like checking your tax code, or your filing and payment dates.
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