

WAC 458-57-035 Washington estate tax return to be filed—Penalty for late filing—Interest on late payments—Waiver or cancellation of penalty—Application of payment. (1) **Introduction.** This rule applies to deaths occurring on or before May 16, 2005, and discusses the due date for filing of Washington's estate tax return and payment of the tax due. It explains that a penalty is imposed on the taxes due with the state return when the return is not filed on or before the due date, and that interest is imposed when the tax due is not paid by the due date. The rule also discusses the limited circumstances under which the law allows the department of revenue to cancel or waive the penalty, and the procedure for requesting that cancellation or waiver. The Washington State Estate and Transfer Tax Return and the instructions for completing return can be found on the department's website at <http://www.dor.wa.gov/> under the heading titled forms. The return and instructions can also be obtained by calling the estate tax section at 360-570-3265, option 2. The estate tax rules for deaths occurring on or after May 17, 2005, can be found in WAC 458-57-105 through 458-57-165.

(2) **Filing the state return—Payment of the tax due.** The Washington estate tax return (state return) referred to in RCW 83.100.050 and a copy of the federal estate tax return (federal return) and all supporting documentation is due nine months from the date of the decedent's death. The tax due with the state return must be paid on or before the due date.

(a) Section 6075 of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) requires that the federal return be filed within nine months after the date of the decedent's death. In the case of any estate for which a federal return must be filed under the current IRC, a state return must be filed with the Washington state department of revenue (department) on or before the date on which the federal return is required to be filed. (This may include a federally granted extension of time for filing. See (b) of this subsection.)

(b) Section 6081 of the IRC permits the granting of a reasonable extension of time for filing the federal return, generally not to exceed six months from the original due date. If a federal extension of the time to file is granted, the personal representative is required to file a true copy of that extension with the department on or before the original due date, or within thirty days of the issuance of the federal extension, whichever is later. RCW 83.100.050(2). If the personal representative fails to do so, the department may require the personal representative to file the state return on the date that the federal return would have been due had the federal extension not been granted.

(c) When the personal representative obtains an extension of time for payment of the federal tax, or elects to pay that tax in installments, the personal representative may choose to pay the state estate tax over the same time period and in the same manner as the federal tax. The personal representative is required to file a true copy of that extension with the department on or before the original due date, or within thirty days of the issuance of the federal extension, whichever is later. RCW 83.100.060(2). If the personal representative fails to do so, the department may require the personal representative to pay the state tax on the date that the federal tax would have been due had the federal extension not been granted.

(d) The department shall issue a release when Washington's estate tax has been paid. Upon issuance of a release, all property subject to

the tax shall be free of any claim for the tax by the state. RCW 83.100.080.

(3) **The late filing penalty.** If the state return is not filed by the due date, or any extension of the state return's due date, the person required to file the return may be subject to a late filing penalty.

(a) **When does the penalty apply?** This penalty applies if the person required to file the return has not timely filed the state return with the department prior to being notified by the department, in writing, of the necessity to file the state return. The late payment penalty is equal to five percent of the tax due for each month during which the state return has not been filed, not to exceed the lesser of twenty-five percent of the tax or one thousand five hundred dollars. RCW 83.100.070.

(b) **How is the penalty computed?** The penalty is the equivalent of five percent for each month, but is accrued on a daily basis for those periods less than a month. For any portion of a month, it is calculated by taking the five percent monthly rate and dividing it by the number of days from the beginning of the month through the date the return is filed, including the filing date.

For example, assume a state return is due on February 3rd but is not filed until April 20th of the same year. The state return is delinquent starting with February 4th. The amount of tax due with the state return is \$10,000.

(i) The penalty should be computed as follows:

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| Feb 4-Feb 28 | \$10,000 tax at 5% per month | \$446.43 |
| Mar 1-Mar 31 | \$10,000 tax at 5% per month | \$500.00 |
| Apr 1-Apr 20 | \$10,000 tax at .1667% x 17 days | \$333.34 |
| | Total delinquent penalty due on April 20th filing date | \$1,297.77 |

(ii) In this example, the first month (February) is a partial month. February has twenty-eight days, the five percent monthly rate is divided by twenty-eight days to arrive at a daily rate of .0017857 (or .17857 percent). The daily rate is then multiplied by the twenty-five days of penalty accrual to arrive at the total percentage of penalty due for that portion of a month (.0017857 x 25 days = .044643 or 4.4643 percent). The second calendar month (March) is complete and incurs the full five percent penalty. The last portion of a month is a total of seventeen days, including both April 4th and April 20th. Since April has thirty days total, the five percent monthly rate is divided by the thirty days in April to arrive at a daily rate of .001667 (or .1667 percent). The daily rate is then multiplied by the twenty days of penalty accrual to arrive at the total percentage of penalty due for that portion of a month (.001667 x 20 days = .03334 or 3.334 percent).

(4) **Interest is imposed on late payment.** The department is required by law to impose interest on the tax due with the state return if payment of the tax is not made on or before the due date. RCW 83.100.070. Interest applies to the delinquent tax only, and is calculated from the due date until the date of payment. Interest imposed for periods after December 31, 1996, will be computed at the annual variable interest rate described in RCW 82.32.050(2). Interest imposed for periods prior to January 1, 1997, will be computed at the rate of twelve percent per annum.

(5) **Waiver or cancellation of penalties.** RCW 83.100.070(3) authorizes the department to waive or cancel the penalty for late filing of the state return under limited circumstances.

(a) **Claiming the waiver.** A request for a waiver or cancellation of penalties should contain all pertinent facts and be accompanied by such proof as may be available. The request must be made in the form of a letter and submitted to the department's special programs division. The person responsible bears the burden of establishing that the circumstances were beyond the responsible person's control and directly caused the late filing. The department will cancel or waive the late filing penalty imposed on the state return when the delinquent filing is the result of circumstances beyond the control of the person responsible for filing of the state return. The person responsible for filing the state return is the same person who is responsible for filing the federal return.

(b) **Circumstances eligible for waiver.** In order to qualify for a waiver of penalty the circumstances beyond the control of the person responsible for filing the state return must directly cause the late filing of the return. These circumstances are generally immediate, unexpected, or in the nature of an emergency. Such circumstances result in the person responsible not having reasonable time or opportunity to obtain an extension of their due date (see subsection (2)(b) of this section) or to otherwise timely file the state return. Circumstances beyond the control of the responsible person include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

(i) The delinquency was caused by the death or serious illness of the person responsible for filing the state return or a member of the responsible person's immediate family. In order to qualify for penalty waiver, the death or serious illness must directly prevent the person responsible from having reasonable time or opportunity to arrange for timely filing of the state return. Generally, the death or serious illness must have occurred within sixty days prior to the due date, provided that a valid state return is filed within sixty days of the due date.

(ii) The delinquency was caused by an unexpected and unavoidable absence of the person responsible. Generally, this absence must be within sixty days prior to the due date, provided that a valid state return is filed within sixty days of the due date. "Unavoidable absence of the person responsible" does not include absences because of business trips, vacations, personnel turnover, or personnel terminations.

(iii) The delinquency was caused by the destruction by fire or other casualty of estate records necessary for completion of the state return.

(iv) An estate tax return was timely filed, but was filed incorrectly with another state due to an issue of the decedent's domicile.

(v) A Washington estate tax return was properly prepared and timely filed, but was sent to the location for filing of the federal estate tax return.

(6) **Waiver or cancellation of interest.** Title 83 RCW (Estate Taxation) does not provide any circumstances that allow for waiver of the interest, even though penalty may be waived under limited circumstances (see subsection (5) of this section).

(7) **Application of payment towards liability.** The department will apply taxpayer payments first to interest, next to penalties, and then to the tax, without regard to any direction of the taxpayer.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 83.100.047 and 83.100.200. WSR 06-07-051, § 458-57-035, filed 3/9/06, effective 4/9/06. Statutory Authority: RCW 83.100.200. WSR 02-18-078, § 458-57-035, filed 8/30/02, effective 9/30/02; WSR 00-19-012, § 458-57-035, filed 9/7/00, effective 10/8/00; WSR 99-15-095, § 458-57-035, filed 7/21/99, effective 8/21/99.]