



Lodgment program deferrals

Lodgment deferrals can help if there are exceptional or unforeseen circumstances affecting lodgment by the due date.

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QC 34580

How lodgment deferrals work

How we grant deferrals, which obligations are eligible and when you don't need to apply for a lodgment deferral.

Last updated 1 July 2024

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What is a lodgment deferral?

A lodgment deferral gives you extra time to lodge a document without incurring a failure to lodge on time (FTL) penalty.

Exceptional or unforeseen circumstances

Lodgment deferrals can help if you or your clients experience exceptional or unforeseen circumstances which impact your ability to lodge on time.

Your request should be consistent with PS LA 2011/15 [🔗](#) *Lodgment obligations, due dates and deferrals*.

We monitor lodgment performance and use of deferrals. We may contact agents who have higher levels of non-compliance or are high users of deferrals so we can understand the reasons for their requests.

Eligible obligations

You can request a lodgment deferral for the following obligations.

Types of lodgment obligations

Lodgment obligation	Tax agents	BAS agents
Tax returns	Yes	No
Fringe benefits tax returns	Yes	No
Monthly and quarterly activity statements, but not : <ul style="list-style-type: none">quarterly PAYG and GST instalment notices form R, S and Tannual PAYG instalment notices form N	Yes	Yes
Annual GST returns	Yes	Yes
PAYG payment summary annual reports	Yes	Yes
Taxable payments annual reports	Yes	Yes

You cannot request a lodgment deferral for an activity statement before we have generated it and made it available online.

When you don't need to apply

You don't need to request a deferral if:

- the lodgment or payment due date falls on a weekend or public holiday as you can lodge or pay on the next business day
- the due date is 15 May for tax returns, as you already have an extension of time to lodge and pay to 5 June (a concessional due date in the lodgment program)
- you are affected by a general or geographical issue (such as a natural disaster or widespread system outage) **and** we have informed you that you don't need to request deferrals.

You can't request a deferral from the 5 June concessional lodgment date because it is not a due date under the lodgment program.

How to apply

You can apply for lodgment deferrals using the **Reports and forms** menu in Online services for agents.

If the problems you are experiencing are affecting your whole practice, you can request a **supported lodgment program**. We will work with you to tailor solutions and help you get your lodgment program back on track.

How we decide

We consider lodgment deferral requests in accordance with PS LA 2011/15 [Lodgment obligations, due dates and deferrals](#).

The PSLA sets out the following deferral types for registered agents:

- [Agent assessed](#)
- [ATO assessed](#)
- [New or re-engaged clients](#).

Agent assessed

Your lodgment deferral request may be agent assessed if:

- the request is for an existing client
- it is the first deferral request for this obligation
- it is no more than 3 business days after the original lodgment due date
- you or your client need no more than the default timeframes – a maximum of
 - 14 days for monthly obligations
 - 21 days for quarterly obligations
 - 28 days for annual obligations.

Agent assessed deferrals do **not** apply to:

- tax returns for
 - large and medium enterprises due 31 January

- company and super fund substituted accounting period (SAP) clients
- taxable payments annual reports
- payment summary annual reports
- significant global entities or large business entities.

If your agent assessed deferral request is approved, the payment due date automatically extends to the deferred lodgment due date. This does not apply:

- to FBT returns as the payment due date remains as
 - 25 June for returns lodged online
 - 21 May for returns lodged by paper
- if the lodgment is for individual tax returns or trust returns as these have a payment due date 21 days after the issue of the notice of assessment.

ATO assessed

Your lodgment deferral request may be ATO assessed if:

- you do not meet the agent assessed or new or re-engaged client deferral criteria
- your request exceeds the agent assessed deferral timeframes
- you submit the request after the lodgment due date
- it's for a second or subsequent deferral request
- your client has had a lodgment prosecution resulting in a revised lodgment date
- there are exceptional or unforeseen circumstances that are outside you or your client's control, which require a full explanation.

New or re-engaged clients

Your lodgment deferral request may be new or re-engaged if you take on new clients or re-engage existing or previous clients with overdue income tax returns.

We can provide you with a lodgment only deferral for your client's current year return. We will also consider delaying compliance action to secure lodgment of overdue prior year returns.

The maximum period of additional time allowed for both the lodgment deferral and the delaying of action on overdue prior year lodgments is **42 days** (6 weeks) from the date of request.

Example: lodgment deferral for new client with overdue tax returns

In November 2023, Stephen is approached by a new client with overdue prior year tax returns for 2020, 2021 and 2022. The 2023 tax return was due on 31 October 2023.

Stephen requests additional time to allow him to complete and lodge the overdue prior and current year returns. He does this by selecting 'New or re-engaged client' as the deferral reason when using the lodgment deferral function in Online services for agents.

Stephen is granted a deferral for the 2023 return for 42 days from the date of his request and can lodge the current year return on time.

The ATO also agrees to suspend compliance action on the overdue prior year returns for the same 42 days, while Stephen brings the client up to date.

Stephen's client is still liable for any late lodgment penalties and interest that are applicable for their overdue 2020, 2021 and 2022 tax returns.

Only select this lodgment deferral reason if the current year income tax return has a lodgment due date of 31 October. You can select a different reason if:

- your client has any other lodgment due date for their current year return
- you need more than 6 weeks to lodge their overdue tax returns
- your client has overdue obligations that are not tax returns.

On-time lodgment performance

If your client has more years of overdue returns to lodge, remember that only the current year tax return is included in the lodgment program on-time performance measurement.

Your on-time lodgment performance will only be affected if you lodge the current year return after the due date or deferred due date.

Declined or varied requests

We may decline your deferral request if:

- the client has a record of late lodgments, including poor compliance with deferred due dates
- we have started lodgment compliance action with your client
- you haven't provided sufficient supporting information for us to assess your request.

Our large business specialists review and may decline lodgment deferral requests for significant global entities or large business entities. If so, they will notify you.

If you are not happy with our decision, you can ask us to review a deferral decision.

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Applying for a lodgment deferral

How to apply for lodgment deferrals and what happens next.

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[Before you apply](#)

[How to apply](#)

Before you apply

Before you apply, find out **how lodgment deferrals work**, which obligations are eligible and when you don't need to apply.

You'll need to have some information ready to apply, including full details of:

- the exceptional or unforeseen circumstances you or your clients are experiencing
- how those circumstances are affecting your ability to lodge by the due date.

If you're requesting a payment deferral at the same time as a lodgment deferral, you'll need to provide full details of the circumstances preventing your client from paying by the due date. Your request must be consistent with **PS LA 2011/14** [🔗](#) *General debt collection powers and principles*.

How to apply

You can request lodgment deferrals in **Online services for agents**:

- select **Reports and forms**, then **Forms**
- select the **Lodgment deferral** form
- enter the required information, select the **Declaration** box and then **Submit**.

You can request up to 40 deferrals at a time. If you need more than 40 deferrals, you can submit additional requests.

On-screen prompts will help you as you go, or you can watch our videos or refer to the **Online services for agents user guide** for instructions.

Instructional videos

This video demonstrates how to add a single lodgment deferral.

Media:Instructional videos

<http://tv.ato.gov.au/ato-tv/media?v=bi9or7od46oroz>

This video explains how to add multiple lodgment deferrals.

Media:Provide valid supporting information

<http://tv.ato.gov.au/ato-tv/media?v=bi9or7od5yfy9x>

Provide valid supporting information

You need to include valid information to support your request, so we can assess it. This includes full details of:

- the exceptional or unforeseen circumstances you or your clients are experiencing
- how those circumstances are affecting your ability to lodge by the due date

- if applicable, why you are submitting the request after the lodgment due date.

This information will allow us to take all circumstances into consideration when assessing your request. It will also help prevent delays or your request being declined.

Significant global entities and large businesses

Lodgment deferral requests submitted for significant global entities or large business, including excise taxpayers, will be forwarded to our large business specialists for consideration. You may be contacted by them if you request a lodgment deferral for one of these entities.

To ensure your request is forwarded without delay, we recommend you submit requests for these entities in a separate request to those you submit for other clients.

New or re-engaged clients

Only select **New or re-engaged client** as the lodgment deferral reason if your client's current year tax return has a lodgment due date of 31 October.

You can select a different deferral reason from the drop-down list if:

- your client has any other lodgment due date for their current year return
- you need more than 6 weeks to lodge their overdue tax returns
- your client has overdue obligations that are not tax returns.

Find out how **new or re-engaged client** lodgment deferrals work.

After you apply

You will receive a receipt ID when you submit your request. You can also **view the request** along with any others you've submitted in the previous 90 days.

Processing your request

If your request meets the **agent assessed** or **new or re-engaged client** deferral guidelines, it will be processed within 48 hours.

All other requests will be escalated for manual assessment as an **ATO assessed** deferral and may take up to 28 days to finalise in peak lodgment periods.

See [View your submitted lodgment deferral requests](#) for the reasons a request may be escalated for manual assessment, rejected or failed.

Spreadsheet application forms

Spreadsheet applications forms are no longer available and will not be processed.

You need to request lodgment deferrals using the function under the **Reports and forms** menu in Online services for agents.

Notifying you of the outcome

We will notify you of the outcome of your request through Practice mail.

You will receive a second message once an escalated request is finalised.

If your request is approved, the deferred due date will show in Online services for agents and on your practitioner lodgment service (PLS) client report.

If your request is **declined or varied**, we will provide a reason for the decision.

The **Lodgment deferral history** screen also displays the receipt ID and the outcome of requests submitted through the lodgment deferral function in the previous 90 days.

QC 72294

Reviewing a lodgment deferral decision

How to request a review of a lodgment deferral decision.

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When to request a review

You can request an informal review of a lodgment deferral decision if you have lodged a deferral request and we have varied or declined it, and you are dissatisfied with our decision.

Your request must be lodged within 21 days from the date on the communication varying or declining your original request.

Before you apply

You'll need to have the following information ready to include in your request:

- the receipt identification number (ID) of your original request
- the date on the communication varying or declining your original request
- additional information to support your original request.

How to apply


You can apply by submitting the *Review of lodgment deferral decision form* using Practice mail in Online services for agents.

It's important to select the correct topic and subject to ensure your request is directed to the relevant area for processing.

Get the form

Double clicking the form won't open it. It will not load on a mobile device, tablet or within a browser.

Follow these steps to complete the form:

1. Download the form by right clicking the link [Review of lodgment deferral decision \(PDF 638KB\)](#)  and selecting **Save target as** or **Save link as** to save it to your desktop computer or laptop.
2. Open your saved form with **Adobe Acrobat** Reader DC (check you have the latest version installed).
3. Enable JavaScript if prompted.
4. Complete all fields.
5. Save the form using the **Save form** button.

Submit the form

To submit your completed form through **Practice mail** in Online services for agents:

- select topic **View more topics**
- select other topics **General questions, problems and help**
- select subject **Review of decision for deferrals from tax agents**
- complete the required fields and attach the form to the message
- select the **Declaration**, then select **Send**.

After you apply

You'll receive an ATO receipt ID when the message has successfully been sent.

We'll let you know the outcome of our informal review through Online services for agents.

Processing may take up to 28 days during peak lodgment periods. Do not resend an application within the 28-day processing period. This could cause delays to the processing of your request.

If you are dissatisfied with the decision you may apply to have the decision formally reviewed by the Federal Court or the Federal Circuit and Family Court under the *Administrative Decisions (Judicial Review) Act 1977*.

Supported lodgment program

If your whole practice has been affected by unforeseen events, we can help you get your lodgment program back on track.

Last updated 21 March 2025

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Eligibility

A supported lodgment program can help if you are experiencing difficulties managing your lodgment program due to unforeseen circumstances affecting your whole practice.

Examples may include:

- serious illness
- loss of a key staff member
- a natural disaster.

It's available to practices of all sizes when you need additional time to lodge a large proportion of your clients' obligations.

The intent of a supported lodgment program is to help you get your lodgment program back on track.

You may not be eligible if the circumstances are of your own making, within your control, or where you have not complied with the conditions of a previous supported lodgment program.

We may direct you to apply for **lodgment program deferrals** if that's a better way to manage the issue.

How we support you

We will work with you to tailor solutions based on your circumstances. This may include:

- identifying and prioritising overdue and upcoming lodgment obligations
- removing clients that you are not actively representing
- applying lodgment deferrals, or in some instances, suspending compliance action.

Requirements

If we provide a supported lodgment program, you are required to:

- keep your own taxation obligations up to date
- take reasonable action to resolve the issues that have caused you to fall behind with your lodgments
- remove any clients you are not actively representing from your ATO client list – we will only assist clients you are actively representing
- only take on new clients if you can lodge their documents on time, and they don't affect your ability to meet the agreed supported lodgment program
- plan how you will manage your client base and resources after the supported lodgment program has been completed.

We will not consider lodgment deferrals or suspension of lodgment action for clients who have been referred for prosecution action.

How to apply

You can apply for a supported lodgment program by submitting a request through **Practice mail** in Online services for agents.

It's important to select the correct topic and subject to ensure your request is directed to the relevant area:

1. Select topic **View more topics**.
2. Select other topics **General questions, problems and help**.
3. Select the subject **Supported lodgment program**.
4. Include your reasons for requesting assistance in the free text field.

We'll need to know:

- your contact details, including contact name, email address and phone number
- the circumstances that have affected your ability to meet lodgment program due dates
- the steps you have taken to resolve these circumstances and the extent to which they are currently affecting your practice
- the approximate length of time you may need to overcome your current situation.

If you are unable to access our online services to make your request due to exceptional and unforeseen circumstances, phone us on **13 72 86** Fast Key Code **1 3 2**.

After you apply

You'll receive an ATO receipt ID when you submit the request through Online services for agents.

We'll contact you as soon as possible to discuss your circumstances. We must speak with the registered agent or their practice manager to provide a supported lodgment program.

Contact may take longer during peak lodgment periods. Don't submit deferral requests in the meantime.

QC 72292

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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