Australian Government
Australian Taxation Office

Payday Super year 1: getting it right



An employer's guide to how the ATO is approaching compliance with super guarantee in the first year of Payday Super.

Getting it right

In the first year of Payday Super (1 July 2026 – 30 June 2027), our focus is on helping you transition and get it right.

From 1 July 2026, you must ensure super guarantee contributions are received by your eligible employees' super funds within 7 business days after each payday (see Payday Super). The day you pay qualifying earnings is day 0. This timeframe does not change if there is an error or delay processing the contribution (though you may have longer to pay in some circumstances, such as for a new employee).

What we're doing for the first year

We will support employers who are trying to do the right thing. Our approach is outlined in Practical Compliance Guideline 2026/1 (PCG 2026/1).

When it comes to missed and late super contributions, we will look at your behaviour, not just the mistake.

We consider:

- Are you trying to pay each payday?
- Are you fixing issues quickly?

We will focus our compliance action on employers who are not trying to make the adjustment to more frequent contributions, or not paying super at all.

Risk assessments

There are 3 levels of risk behaviour we will consider in the first year of Payday Super.

These apply to situations where an employer hasn't complied with the rules. If your contributions are paid in full, on time and to the right fund, we won't apply a risk assessment to you.

We will:

- prioritise compliance activity for medium and high-risk behaviours
- not apply compliance resources to review employers who are considered low risk.

The table below sets out our approach for each category.

Risk zone	Requirements
Low	
No further review of the employer's actions is expected.	We'll consider an employer low risk if all of the following apply: • The employer has attempted to make sure super guarantee for each employee is paid for the relevant payday, by making contributions on time and for the correct amount. • Some or all of those contributions were not received (or were received without enough information to allocate to a member's account) by the employee's chosen super fund on time. • The employer takes steps to correct the issue as soon as reasonably practicable, ensuring the contributions are paid, received and can be allocated to the employee's account. • As a result, there is no remaining unpaid super guarantee for any employee for that payday once the issue is resolved.
Medium	
Compliance resources may be applied. These cases are lower priority than high-risk cases.	An employer will generally be considered medium risk if they do not meet the low-risk criteria but have rectified any unpaid super guarantee within 28 days after the end of the quarter in which the qualifying earnings were paid. This means that, while there may have been some initial unpaid super guarantee for one or more paydays, the employer has addressed the issue within a reasonable timeframe by ensuring the contributions are paid, received and allocated to employee accounts, and no unpaid super guarantee remains by the deadline that would have applied under the quarterly super system.
High	
Compliance resources are likely to be applied. These cases are the highest priority for compliance action.	An employer will generally be considered high risk if they do not meet the criteria for low or medium risk. This includes situations where there are outstanding super guarantee amounts for one or more employees that have not been corrected within 28 days after the end of the quarter in which the qualifying earnings were paid.

What to do if something goes wrong

If you make a mistake you should fix it as soon as possible. If it's a missed payment, the best way to do this is to pay any outstanding super to your employee's fund, and keep a record of what happened and how you corrected it. If you have reported something incorrectly, you may need to correct it.

If you don't take action to pay an outstanding super guarantee contribution, we may send you a notice of assessment for the super guarantee charge. If you receive this, you must pay the amount to the ATO.

The super guarantee charge is the total of any unpaid super guarantee, notional interest and administrative costs. It includes an additional amount if you haven't followed the choice of fund rules.

Paying outstanding amounts to your employee's super fund before an assessment is issued reduces your super guarantee charge liability.

It's essential that you keep good records to show how you have calculated qualifying earnings and super guarantee contributions. This includes records of any corrections for an earlier payday.

Voluntary disclosure statements and Payday Super

If you miss a super guarantee contribution, or you pay late, the wrong amount or to the wrong fund, you can lodge a voluntary disclosure statement reporting it to the ATO.

Lodging voluntary disclosure statements is *voluntary*. They don't replace the quarterly super guarantee statement that was previously required to be lodged if you had a super guarantee shortfall.

Lodging a voluntary disclosure statement can reduce your final super guarantee charge, especially if lodged early.

When considering whether to lodge a voluntary disclosure statement for paydays in the period 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027, you should first consider your risk level as outlined above. We will not apply compliance resources to review the actions of employers who are considered low risk, even if they submit a voluntary disclosure statement. You can factor this into your decision about whether to lodge a voluntary disclosure statement in the first year of Payday Super.

The voluntary disclosure statement for 2026–27 has been streamlined to recognise our practical compliance approach.

Key things to remember

- The best way to minimise your risk of compliance action is to pay super guarantee on payday and fix any errors as quickly as possible. Your actions determine how we respond.
- Contributions must be received by the employee's super fund within 7 business days after payday (also known as QE day).
- Pay outstanding amounts to the super fund as soon as possible. Do not wait for us to send you a notice of assessment.
- Consider your risk level when deciding whether to lodge a voluntary disclosure statement.

Common scenarios and what to do

Most issues under Payday Super are straightforward to fix. In the first year, we will focus compliance attention on employers who are not trying to comply or not quickly correcting mistakes.

Scenario	Expected risk level	What you should do	What the ATO will do in year 1
I've just found out about Payday Super. I missed the first 10 fortnightly super guarantee payments this year.	Medium	• Pay the outstanding amounts to the super funds as soon as possible. • Review your processes and start paying for each payday going forward. • Consider lodging a voluntary disclosure statement.	• Repeated late payments increase your risk of compliance action. • If this is corrected within 28 days after the end of the quarter, we will consider you medium risk. • Your risk level can decrease for future QE days if you update your process to pay super for each payday and correct any errors as soon as you can.

Scenario	Expected risk level	What you should do	What the ATO will do in year 1
I pay super guarantee 3 days after payday. My employee tells me it is received by their super fund 2 days late each time.	Low	• Review your processes and start paying on payday going forward.	• We consider whether you took reasonable steps. Continuing to pay late may increase your compliance risk for future QE days.
I pay super guarantee on payday and receive an error message from the super fund on day 4. By the time the issue is resolved, the contribution is 5 days late.	Low	• Review the error and correct the issue. • Pay the outstanding amount to the fund as soon as possible • Make sure the details are correct on the subsequent payment.	• If you fix the error promptly, we will not focus compliance action on you.
I pay super guarantee on day 7, and don't take into consideration clearing house processing timeframes. The payment is late.	Low	• Review your processes and start paying on payday going forward. • Ensure payment reaches the fund on time for the next pay cycle.	• We consider whether you took reasonable steps. • We may consider increasing your risk level for future QE days if you don't fix this error quickly, or continue to pay late.
I pay super guarantee on payday but I'm not sure it is received on time.	Not applicable	• Check that no errors have been received for this contribution. • If no errors have been received, you can assume the amount was received by the fund on time. • If errors were received, correct the issue and return the contribution as soon as possible.	• If there were errors but you fixed them promptly, we will not focus compliance action on you.

Scenario	Expected risk level	What you should do	What the ATO will do in year 1
I am impacted by a natural disaster.	Not applicable	• Check if you are covered by an exceptional circumstance determination. If so, you have extra time to pay super guarantee contributions. • If you are not covered by an exceptional circumstance determination, you should pay contributions by the usual due date.	• If you are covered by a determination and meet the longer allowable time, we will not take action. • If you are not covered by a determination and your contributions are received after the due date, we will consider your risk level in line with PCG 2026/1.
I provide a choice of super fund form to my employee but they don't provide their super fund details.	Not applicable	• Review onboarding procedures to ensure this information is received from your employees. • Ask us for stapled super fund details for the employee. Pay super contributions to the stapled fund if your employee has not chosen a fund. If we advise you that the employee doesn't have a stapled super fund, pay to your default fund.	• If this is the first contribution for this employee, you have 20 business days after payday for this payment. • We consider whether you took reasonable steps.
My employee has a non-complying self-managed superannuation fund (SMSF).	Not applicable	• Non-complying SMSFs do not qualify to receive eligible contributions. • Ask us for stapled super fund details for the employee and pay super contributions to this fund. If we advise you that the employee doesn't have a stapled super fund, pay to your default fund.	• If you have to pay to a new super fund for this employee, you have 20 business days after payday for this payment. • We consider whether you took reasonable steps.
During payroll reconciliation I determine an employee wasn't paid an allowance that is qualifying earnings.	Not applicable	• Pay the employee the qualifying earnings in the next pay period. • The super guarantee for this missed allowance is due 7 business days after the amount is paid (unless it is considered an out-of-cycle payment).	• There is no unpaid super guarantee as long as the amount is received by the employee's fund within 7 business days after the allowance is paid. • We will not take any compliance action.

Scenario	Expected risk level	What you should do	What the ATO will do in year 1
An employee was paid an allowance, but it was misclassified and not included in their qualifying earnings amount.	Low	• If you haven't received a notice of assessment, pay any unpaid super guarantee to the fund and update your STP reporting. • If you have received a notice of assessment, pay the super guarantee charge amount to us.	• We focus on whether you corrected the error and how quickly you did so.
My employee has reached the maximum contribution base limit.	Not applicable	• You can stop paying minimum super guarantee payments for the employee. • Continue to report the maximum contribution base amount at the **year to date qualifying earnings** label in STP. • You may receive an exemption certificate if your employee has more than 1 employer. Your employee would need to apply for a certificate to opt out of receiving super guarantee contributions.	• You're not required to make contributions above the maximum contribution base. • We will not take any compliance action.
I overpaid super guarantee.	Not applicable	• You may not need to take action. Excess contributions above the minimum super guarantee amount will be automatically applied to any existing unpaid super guarantee, or carried forward for up to 12 months to offset future super guarantee amounts. • You may still have additional super obligations under enterprise or industrial agreements. • If your employee no longer works for you, you will need to contact their super fund to request a refund of any overpaid amount.	• We will not take any compliance action. • We will keep records of accrued credits and apply these to offset future amounts.

More information

This guide is a summary of our Payday Super year one compliance approach. For full details of our compliance approach see PCG 2026/1.

For more information visit ato.gov.au/PaydaySuper

NAT 75834-06.2026 DE-83158