

Letter of Findings Number: 08-0282P
Negligence Penalty
For Tax Year 2007

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ISSUE

I. Tax Administration–Negligence Penalty.

Authority: IC § 6-8.1-5-1; IC § 6-8.1-10-2.1; [45 IAC 15-11-2](#).

Taxpayer protests imposition of a ten percent penalty.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

Taxpayer is an Indiana business. Taxpayer filed its November 2007 withholding tax payment late. The Indiana Department of Revenue ("Department") issued a proposed assessment for a ten percent negligence penalty for late payment. Taxpayer protests the imposition of the ten percent negligence penalty. Further facts will be supplied as required.

I. Tax Administration–Negligence Penalty.

DISCUSSION

The Department issued a proposed assessment for the ten percent negligence penalty for the tax period in question. Taxpayer protests the imposition of penalty and states that the employee in charge of sending in the withholding payment went on maternity leave. Other employees took over those duties. Taxpayer explains that as soon as those employees became aware of the fact that the withholding payment had not been remitted, they sent in the payment and contacted the Department to request that the penalty be removed. The Department notes that the burden of proving a proposed assessment wrong rests with the person against whom the proposed assessment is made, as provided by IC § 6-8.1-5-1(c).

The Department refers to IC § 6-8.1-10-2.1, which states in relevant part:

(a) If a person:

- (1) fails to file a return for any of the listed taxes;
- (2) fails to pay the full amount of tax shown on the person's return on or before the due date for the return or payment;
- (3) incurs, upon examination by the department, a deficiency that is due to negligence;
- (4) fails to timely remit any tax held in trust for the state; or
- (5) is required to make a payment by electronic funds transfer (as defined in [IC 4-8.1-2-7](#)), overnight courier, or personal delivery and the payment is not received by the department by the due date in funds acceptable to the department;

the person is subject to a penalty.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (g), the penalty described in subsection (a) is ten percent (10%) of:

- (1) the full amount of the tax due if the person failed to file the return;
- (2) the amount of the tax not paid, if the person filed the return but failed to pay the full amount of the tax shown on the return;
- (3) the amount of the tax held in trust that is not timely remitted;
- (4) the amount of deficiency as finally determined by the department; or
- (5) the amount of tax due if a person failed to make payment by electronic funds transfer, overnight courier, or personal delivery by the due date.

(c) For purposes of this section, the filing of a substantially blank or unsigned return does not constitute a return.

(d) If a person subject to the penalty imposed under this section can show that the failure to file a return, pay the full amount of tax shown on the person's return, timely remit tax held in trust, or pay the deficiency determined by the department was due to reasonable cause and not due to willful neglect, the department shall waive the penalty.

(e) A person who wishes to avoid the penalty imposed under this section must make an affirmative showing of all facts alleged as a reasonable cause for the person's failure to file the return, pay the amount of tax shown on the person's return, pay the deficiency, or timely remit tax held in trust, in a written statement containing a declaration that the statement is made under penalty of perjury. The statement must be filed with the return or payment within the time prescribed for protesting departmental assessments. A taxpayer may also avoid the penalty imposed under this section by obtaining a ruling from the department before the end of a particular tax period on the amount of tax due for that tax period.

(f) The department shall adopt rules under [IC 4-22-2](#) to prescribe the circumstances that constitute

reasonable cause and negligence for purposes of this section.

....

(Emphasis added.)

Next, the Department refers to [45 IAC 15-11-2\(b\)](#), which states:

Negligence, on behalf of a taxpayer is defined as the failure to use such reasonable care, caution, or diligence as would be expected of an ordinary reasonable taxpayer. Negligence would result from a taxpayer's carelessness, thoughtlessness, disregard or inattention to duties placed upon the taxpayer by the Indiana Code or department regulations. Ignorance of the listed tax laws, rules and/or regulations is treated as negligence. Further, failure to read and follow instructions provided by the department is treated as negligence. Negligence shall be determined on a case by case basis according to the facts and circumstances of each taxpayer.

(Emphasis added.)

[45 IAC 15-11-2\(c\)](#) provides in pertinent part:

The department shall waive the negligence penalty imposed under [IC 6-8.1-10-1](#) if the taxpayer affirmatively establishes that the failure to file a return, pay the full amount of tax due, timely remit tax held in trust, or pay a deficiency was due to reasonable cause and not due to negligence. In order to establish reasonable cause, the taxpayer must demonstrate that it exercised ordinary business care and prudence in carrying out or failing to carry out a duty giving rise to the penalty imposed under this section.

In this case, Taxpayer incurred an assessment which the Department determined was due to negligence under [45 IAC 15-11-2\(b\)](#), and so was subject to a penalty under IC § 6-8.1-10-2.1(a). While the Department understands that the normal employee was unavailable to make sure that Taxpayer remitted the payment on time, it was still Taxpayer's duty to remit the payment in a timely manner. Taxpayer has not established that its failure to remit the payment for withholding tax in a timely manner was due to reasonable cause and not due to negligence, as required by [45 IAC 15-11-2\(c\)](#). Taxpayer has not met the burden imposed by IC § 6-8.1-5-1(c).

FINDING

Taxpayer's protest is denied.

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