
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Small Business and Revenue

ENHANCED TAXPAYER FAIRNESS AND SERVICE CODE

VICTORIA – Taxpayers in British Columbia will find more information on the audit commitment to timely service and improved customer satisfaction standards in the third edition of the Taxpayer Fairness and Service Code, launched today by Rick Thorpe, Minister of Small Business and Revenue and Minister responsible for Regulatory Reform.

“Our ongoing partnership with small business and individual British Columbians has improved the clarity, timeliness and quality of the audit process, as well as other aspects of the Taxpayer Fairness and Service Code,” said Thorpe. “These third-edition enhancements build on the rights in the original code and reflect our commitment to customer service excellence.”

Additions to the Taxpayer Fairness and Service Code include:

- Tight timeframes and high customer satisfaction standards for consumer taxation audits. For example, the ministry will conclude sales, hotel, fuel and tobacco tax audits within 20 business days of a customer agreeing with the results, and ensure customer satisfaction of at least 90 per cent with these audits.
- A commitment to provide at least 60 provincial sales tax seminars annually and ensure a customer satisfaction level of at least 90 per cent.
- Seven-business-day turnaround for decisions on International Fuel Tax Agreement initial licence applications.
- A step-by-step outline of the audit process, a list of audit roles and responsibilities and a flow chart outlining a typical small business audit timeline.

“We welcome the latest version of the code,” said Richard Rees, CEO of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of British Columbia. “We are encouraged the government is looking at the audit process from a small business owner’s perspective and trying to make the process as smooth and timely as possible.”

“As accountants know, the prospect of an audit can be daunting – particularly for a busy small business owner,” said Colin Bennett, president and CEO of the Certified Management Accountants of British Columbia. “It’s encouraging to see the Province raise its benchmark again, to make the audit process as transparent and fair as possible.”

“This is the third generation of the Taxpayer Fairness and Service Code in just over two years, which demonstrates government’s ongoing commitment to setting solid, quantifiable standards for customer information and service,” said Gordon Clissold, president of the Certified General Accountants Association of British Columbia.

The first version of the Taxpayer Fairness and Service Code was developed in partnership with a number of key British Columbia business organizations and first introduced in January 2005. The code contains rights and service standards to ensure customer needs are met through fair, efficient and equitable tax administration.

The Taxpayer Fairness and Service Code is available at www.sbr.gov.bc.ca online.

To view a photo of Minister Thorpe launching the third edition of the Taxpayer Fairness and Service Code with representatives from British Columbia Certified Management Accountants, Institute of Chartered Accountants, and Certified General Accountants Association, please visit www.mediaroom.gov.bc.ca//DisplayEventDetails.aspx?eventId=350 online.

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