

WAC 192-320-036 How are unemployment insurance tax rates determined for employers who are delinquent on taxes or reports, beginning in rate year 2011? (1) An employer that has not submitted by September 30th all reports, taxes, interest, and penalties required under Title 50 RCW for the period preceding July 1st of any year is not a "qualified employer."

(2) For purposes of this section, the department will disregard unpaid taxes, interest, and penalties if:

(a) The unpaid taxes, interest, and penalties add up to less than either one hundred dollars or one-half of one percent of the employer's total tax reported for the twelve-month period immediately preceding July 1st. These minimum amounts only apply to taxes, interest, and penalties, not failure to submit the required tax and wage reports; or

(b) The unpaid taxes, interest, and penalties were found in a voluntary audit unless the department determines the employer did not make a good faith effort to comply with the law.

(3) (a) Under RCW 50.29.080, the department may redetermine an employer's previously assigned tax rate and retroactively assign delinquent tax rates to prior years if the department discovers an employer did not correctly report its taxes and wages.

(b) In the event an employer does not register with the department, the department may assign the delinquent tax rate beginning the calendar year after the July 1st following the first quarter an employer paid wages.

(4) (a) This section does not apply if the otherwise qualified employer shows to the satisfaction of the department that he or she acted in good faith and that applying the delinquent tax rate would be inequitable. This exception is to be narrowly construed to apply at the sole discretion of the department. The department's decision will be subject to review only under the arbitrary and capricious standard and will be reversed in administrative proceedings only for manifest injustice.

(b) If the department finds the employer knew or should have known its actions or inactions would result in a failure to submit all reports, taxes, penalties and interest by September 30th, then the department will find that an employer did not act in good faith and that application of the delinquent tax rate will not be inequitable.

(c) In determining if an employer acted in good faith and if application of the delinquent tax rate would be inequitable, the department may consider all facts surrounding the delinquent reports, taxes, penalties and interest.

(i) The department will consider the following factors when determining if an employer acted in good faith and if application of the delinquent tax rate will be inequitable. No single factor is conclusive. The factors include, but are not limited to:

(A) Whether there were events beyond the employer's reasonable control;

(B) Whether departmental error led to the delinquency;

(C) Whether the employer made only isolated errors instead of repeated errors;

(D) If the employer was a domestic service employer under RCW 50.04.160;

(E) Whether the employer, upon learning of the delinquency, made a diligent effort to pay overdue taxes, penalties, and interest and file overdue reports within ninety days;

(F) The amount of taxes, penalties and interest an employer failed to pay compared to the amount of taxes an employer reported and paid during the same time period;

(G) The number of employees an employer failed to report compared to the number of employees an employer reported during the same time period;

(H) The additional amount of taxes, penalties, and interest resulting from the application of delinquent tax rates compared to the amount of taxes, penalties, and interest the employer failed to pay originally.

(ii) The department will not consider the following factors when determining if an employer acted in good faith and if application of the delinquent tax rate would be inequitable:

(A) An employer's lack of available funds to pay taxes, penalties, and interest;

(B) Delay by the employer or its representative in opening mail or receiving other notices from the department relating to tax filing and payment.

(5) (a) An employer that is not a "qualified employer" because of failure to pay contributions when due will be assigned the array calculation factor rate it would otherwise have had if it had not been delinquent, plus an additional one percent. If the employer fails to pay contributions when due for a second or more consecutive year, it will be assigned the array calculation factor rate it would otherwise have had if it had not been delinquent, plus an additional two percent.

(b) If the employer fails to provide quarterly tax reports and the department cannot otherwise calculate what tax rate the employer would otherwise have had if it had not been delinquent, the department will use the higher of the rate calculated under RCW 50.29.025 (2) (d) (NAICS rate with one percent minimum) or the last annual rate assigned to the employer.

(c) The higher rate for an employer in (a) of this subsection will not apply if the employer enters a deferred payment contract approved by the agency by September 30th of the previous rate year.

(d) If, after September 30th of the previous rate year and within thirty days after the date the department sent its first subsequent tax rate notice to the employer, an employer in (a) of this subsection pays all amounts owed or enters a deferred payment contract approved by the department, the additional rate will be one-half percent less than it would otherwise have been in (a) of this subsection. "First subsequent tax rate notice to the employer" means the first notice to the employer assigning that specific delinquent tax rate, regardless of whether the notice is part of the department's annual tax rate run.

(e) If an employer with an approved deferred payment contract fails to make any one of the payments or fails to submit any tax report and payment in a timely manner, the employer's tax rate will immediately revert to the rate in (a) of this subsection.

(6) An employer that is not a "qualified employer" because of failure to pay contributions when due will be assigned a social cost factor rate in rate class 40. The tax rate caps for "qualified employers" in RCW 50.29.025 will not apply either to the calculation of the social cost factor rate in rate class 40 or to the sum of the array calculation factor rate and the graduated social cost factor rate for employers that are not "qualified employers."

(7) An employer that is not a "qualified employer" because it is a successor and its predecessor was not a "qualified employer" will be assigned rates based on its successor status.

(8) Assignment of the rate for delinquent taxes is not considered a penalty that is subject to waiver under WAC 192-310-030.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 50.12.010 and 50.12.040. WSR 17-14-077, § 192-320-036, filed 6/29/17, effective 7/30/17; WSR 10-23-065, § 192-320-036, filed 11/12/10, effective 12/13/10.]