

The Ontario Ministry of Finance's

**Service Commitments
and Standards in
Tax
Administration**

**Report for the period of
April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005**

Message from the Assistant Deputy Minister, Tax Revenue Division

I am pleased to present the Tax Revenue Division's second annual report on our Service Commitments and Standards in Tax Administration performance. The Ministry of Finance is committed to administering a tax program that treats the citizens of Ontario with fairness, equality and respect, and attention to these standards is key to attaining this goal.

For the first time, this report outlines results on the four Core Business Service Standards: registrations, refunds, account adjustments and tax roll updates. To assist readers, these statistics, as well as updated information on which we have previously reported, have been included in a chart identifying our progress from year to year.

Overall, the results for 2004/05 have improved over those of 2003/04. We have made great progress in areas such as the provision of professional service and written information, and maintaining taxpayers' privacy and confidentiality. For those areas where our 2004/05 results need improvement, we are identifying how best to address those areas of concern.

Please assist us in continuing to improve our services by completing our [Quality Service Questionnaire](#), or by visiting any Ministry of Finance service counter or walk-in office.

Marion E. Crane
Assistant Deputy Minister
Tax Revenue Division

Ensuring Accountability

As Chief Administrative Officer for the Ministry of Finance, I was accountable for conducting a third party review of the data in the 2004/2005 SCSTA report.

This year's review involved an audit conducted by Internal Audit Services to assess the adequacy of the controls, systems and procedures for reporting and the accuracy of the results. Based on the audit, quality controls were generally found to be adequate and the results were accurately reported. The majority of these results were determined to be statistically valid and reliable for the Tax Revenue Division. However with the service commitments, the volume of data was inadequate to establish a statistically valid conclusion for the second consecutive year. A footnote has been included in the results section indicating the basis for the ratings. In these circumstances, Tax Revenue Division will continue to take measures to increase the volume of data received in order to improve statistical validity in the future.

Based on my knowledge, this report presents accurately and fairly, in all material respects, the status of results for the fiscal year April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005.

Len Roozen
Chief Administrative Officer

Results - Commitments - April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005

Service Commitment	2004/05 Annual Results	2003/04 Annual Results	Diff.
	Satisfied or Very Satisfied	Satisfied or Very Satisfied	
1. Impartial and Professional Service. We will provide impartial, professional and courteous service and provide a means for you to hold us accountable for the services we provide. We will be pleased to deal with you or your authorized representative.	¹ 93%	² 84%	9%
2. Privacy and Confidentiality. We will keep your tax returns and other information secure and confidential.	¹ 94%	² 83%	11%
3. Accessible Information. We will offer clear, understandable and current tax information and will make this information available to you through various media.	¹ 94%	² 81%	13%
4. Assistance. We will provide timely, accurate responses to questions and requests for tax information. We will explain to you the tax implications of your current tax situation and if you seek to learn more about your liability and how it is determined, offer you the option of meeting with us.	¹ 91%	² 82%	9%
5. Reliable Written Information. We will provide written information that you can rely on.	¹ 100%	² 76%	24%
6. Education. We will provide education and information programs on specific tax issues.	100%	100%	N/A
7. Voluntary Disclosure. We will allow you to voluntarily disclose your tax situation without incurring a penalty or being prosecuted for tax violations under certain conditions.	100%	100%	N/A

1. Based on 37 completed Quality Service Questionnaires from more than 189,000 visits.

2. Based on 52 completed Quality Service Questionnaires from more than 190,000 visits.

Results - Standards - April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005

Performance data for this period is available for all eighteen(18) service standards including Registrations, Refunds, Account Adjustments and Taxroll Update. The 2003/04 report only included results on fourteen (14) of the eighteen (18) standards.

Service	Service Standard	2004/05 Annual Results	2003/04 Annual Results	Diff.
TRD General Standards				
Ensure information explaining significant change in tax policy or legislation is available	By the next working day following the change	100%	100%	N/A
Invite new Retail Sales Tax vendors to attend a PST-GST seminar	Within 15 working days of being registered	100%	100%	N/A
Conduct Retail Sales Tax industry and/or topic specific seminars	Schedule within 60 working days of request	100%	100%	N/A
Government Common Service Standards				
Correspondence by fax, mail or electronic mail	Respond within 15 working days or send acknowledgment within 5 working days	¹ 82%	86%	-4%
Telephone General Enquiries	a) Pick up by third ring b) Call back within 1 working day	98% 71%	100% 71%	-2% N/A
Walk-in Enquiries	Post expected waiting times	17%	33%	-16%
Customer Feedback/Complaint Resolution	Document and acknowledge complaints within 2 working days; with each contact, provide opportunity for feedback on service	100%	100%	N/A
Core Business Service Standards				
Registrations	Walk-in, mail-in and telephone - 1 working day Through Ontario Business Connects - 15 working days Other registration - 15 working days	98%	Data not available	N/A
Refunds (once we receive all required info and documentation)	All refunds to be processed within 40 working days	62%	Data not available	N/A
Account Adjustments	30 working days	81%	Data not available	N/A
Tax Roll Update	Walk-in and Telephone - 2 working days Mail - 15 working days	97%	Data not available	N/A

Service Commitments and Standards in Tax Administration : Report

Service	Service Standard	2004/05 Annual Results	2003/04 Annual Results	Diff.
TRD General Standards				
Audit Standards				
Notice of Audit	Arrange mutually agreeable date for the commencement of the audit, generally with 15 working days notice	¹ 98%	98%	N/A
Audit – taxpayer to respond to the proposed adjustments	Given up to 30 working days to respond	¹ 91%	91%	N/A
Objections Standards				
Objections – contact by appeals officer	Within 3 months of the objection being assigned	96%	94%	2%
Objections (complex objections) – Allow for response by objector to Opinion Letter	Within 30 working days from date of letter	100%	99%	1%
Objections – resolution of objections dealing with interest and penalties	Within 3 months from date of receipt of Notice of Objection	² 87%	92%	-5%
Objections	Resolve 80% of objections within 2 years from date of receipt of Notice of Objection	100%	³ 100%	0%
Collections Standard				
Collections – time before legal action may be started	Allow 30 working days after original assessment (other than exceptional circumstances)	100%	100%	

1. Data based on 3,398 responses to 13,976 mailed out Audit Questionnaires during a one-year period. Statistical reliability was achieved overall for the division.
2. Extended time provided to/required by the taxpayer to provide additional information to support claim.
3. This is a correction to the information in the 2003-2004 report.

Next Steps

The results from the 2004-2005 SCSTA report are encouraging. Overall, the Tax Revenue Division met the Core Business Service Standards in registrations, refunds, account adjustments and tax roll updates 62 to 98 per cent of the time. The division will continue to strive for improvement in all areas, while focusing efforts in those areas where service standards were not met at least 80 per cent of the time.

The division will also strive to improve the statistical reliability of the service commitment data by encouraging clients to complete the Quality Service Questionnaire during walk-in visits.

Building on this year's experience, the division will ensure that:

- staff understand the significance of the 24-hour call back component of the Government Telephone Service Standards,
- offices with high volume walk-in enquiries post expected waiting times in a strategic location that can be easily viewed by the public, and
- turnaround times are improved for the processing of refunds, account adjustments and complex objections.

Additionally, the division will continue to work toward the goal of providing tax administration services to the citizens of Ontario in a fair, efficient and effective manner, striving for excellence in all areas outlined in this report.

The third annual report on SCSTA will be presented in the spring of 2006.

Ce document est disponible en français

© Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2005

ISSN 1712- 381X