

An Roinn Oideachais & Scileanna  
An Rannóg Párolla  
Cor na Madadh  
Baile Átha Luain  
Co. na Íarmhí



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**Circular Letter 0084/2015**

**For the Attention of Teachers, Special Needs Assistants, Clerical Officers, Caretakers, Child Care Workers, Retirees and their Spouses and Children who are paid on Payrolls operated by the Department of Education and Skills**

## **Policy and Procedures for dealing with the recovery of Overpayments of Salary or Pension**

The purpose of this Circular is to set out the administrative arrangements for the recovery of overpayments made to individuals paid on payrolls operated by the Payroll Division of the Department.

This policy will be implemented by the Department with immediate effect.

This circular supersedes Circular Letter Pay 15/04 on policy and procedures for dealing with overpayment of salary/allowances

This Circular can be accessed on the Department's website under [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) Home - Circulars and Forms.

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## **Definitions**

For the purposes of this circular the following terms shall have the meanings assigned to them here unless the context indicates otherwise:

**The Department** – means The Department of Education and Skills.

**Employer** – means a Board of Management/Manager in the case of primary, voluntary secondary, community/comprehensive schools.

**On Line Claims System (OLCS)** – means the system to record absences and input claims to pay substitute and non-regular part-time teachers currently operating in primary, voluntary secondary, community and comprehensive schools.

**Salary** – includes all salary, allowances and temporary rehabilitation remuneration paid by the Payroll Division of the Department.

**Pension** – means any pension paid by the Payroll Division of the Department to retired primary, voluntary secondary and community / comprehensive teachers, retired special need assistants, certain retired clerical officers and caretakers, their spouses and children.

**Payroll Division** – is the Department Business Unit operating four payrolls:

- a. Primary Payroll pays salary and allowances, where applicable, to all primary teachers,
- b. Post Primary Payroll pays salary and allowances, where applicable, to all voluntary secondary and community /comprehensive teachers,
- c. Non-Teaching Staff (NTS) Payroll pays salary to special need assistants, certain clerical officers and caretakers,
- d. Retired Payroll pays pension to retired primary, voluntary secondary and community /comprehensive school teachers, retired special need assistants, certain retired clerical officers and caretakers, spouses and children.

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Overpayments of salary or pension occur for a variety of reasons. The following are typical reasons that overpayments can occur.
- a. Late notification from the school of the end-date of a contract / acting-up allowance
  - b. Incorrect start date of contract
  - c. Payment of salary on an incorrect salary scale or on the incorrect point of a salary scale
  - d. Payment of an incorrect allowance
  - e. Delays / errors in recording absences on OLCS
  - f. Late notification of commencement of unpaid leave (maternity/parental/unpaid sick leave etc.)
  - g. Late notification of date of retirement
  - h. Appointment of retired teachers to temporary / permanent posts
  - i. Failure to repay monies due in respect of the Cycle to Work or Travel Pass schemes.
  - j. Incorrect payment of Illness Benefit
  - k. Miscalculation of sick pay / TRR
  - l. Delays in notification of the death of a serving staff member or person in receipt of a pension.
- 1.2 The Payment of Wages Act, 1991 (Section 5(5)), sets out the rights of employers and employees in relation to overpayment of wages, allowances or expenses from his/her employee(s) salary.

The superannuation schemes provide the rights to recover an overpayment of pension

## **2 Principles**

- 2.1 It is not intended that the operation of these procedures will cause undue hardship to any staff member or individual.
- 2.2 Individuals must immediately report instances where they are aware that they may have been overpaid by Payroll Division. Relevant contact details are provided at paragraph 8.
- 2.3 Where an individual resigns and there is no opportunity to recoup the full amount of the overpayment from a deferred entitlement for example, incremental credit, redundancy or July Provision, the outstanding balances remain due for payment.
- 2.4 All overpayments should be repaid as soon as possible.
- 2.5 Any outstanding balances of an overpayment on retirement will be recovered in a single lump sum from the retirement gratuity.
- 2.6 Where an individual is due a payment in addition to salary or pension, for example: July Provision, redundancy, refund of pension contributions or a pension revision, before the overpayment is fully recovered, the payment will be held as part or full payment of the overpayment. Arrears of salary or pension resulting from a delay in setting up an individual on payroll are excluded from this paragraph.
- 2.7 Where an overpayment cannot be recovered by deductions from salary / pension or other arrangements, then appropriate legal proceedings may be initiated by the Department for the recovery of the overpayment. This may result in any consequential costs of the proceedings being borne by the individual.

- 2.8 Where an individual takes unplanned unpaid leave, unpaid leave at short notice, or exceeds the permitted limits for sick leave, the full amount of the overpayment will be recouped in full at the earliest available opportunity. Where the amount exceeds the gross salary, it will be offset against all subsequent pay dates until the amount is fully recouped.
- 2.9 Where an overpayment recoupment plan is agreed or in train before the commencement of this Circular, those arrangements will not be affected.

### **3 Calculation of overpayment**

#### **3.1 Overpayment in a current tax year**

When an overpayment is discovered in the tax year in which it occurred and it is recouped from salary/pension during the same tax year, the gross amount of the overpayment will be deducted from **gross** salary. Using this method, any Pension or statutory deductions owing to the individual will be generated through the payroll.

When an overpayment is discovered in the tax year in which it occurred and the individual is no longer in receipt of salary / pension from the Department, the amount of the overpayment recouped will be the gross less the pension contributions and PRD paid on that amount. The Department will send statements of the overpayment recouped to the staff member on request. The individual may then apply to the Revenue Commissioners and the Department of Social Protection for a refund of statutory deductions paid on the amount of the overpayment recouped. This statement can only issue when the overpayment has been fully recouped.

#### **3.2 Overpayment in the previous four tax years**

If the overpayment is recovered during the first, second, third or fourth tax year following the tax year in which the overpayment occurred (out-of-year recoupment), the amount of the overpayment recouped is the gross amount of the overpayment less the pension contributions and PRD paid on that amount.

If the overpayment is recouped by deduction from salary/pension, it is deducted from **net** salary.

The Department will provide individuals with a statement confirming the amount of the overpayment that has been recouped on request. The individual may then apply to the Revenue Commissioners and the Department of Social Protection for a refund of statutory deductions paid on the amount of the overpayment recouped. This statement will only be provided when the overpayment has been fully recouped.

#### **3.3 Overpayment dating back in excess of four tax years**

If the overpayment is recovered during the fifth tax year or later, following the tax year in which the overpayment occurred, the amount of the overpayment recouped is the net value of the overpayment. The net value of the overpayment is calculated by adjusting the gross overpayment by the value of any overpaid Pension or statutory deductions. This will be done by reference to the P60 figures for the year in question.

If the overpayment is recouped by deduction from salary/pension, it is deducted from **net** salary.

In this case it will not be necessary to apply to the Revenue Commissioners or the Department of Social Protection for a refund of statutory deductions.

## **4 Procedure for recoupment of an overpayment**

- 4.1 On discovery of an overpayment, the Department will notify the individual by letter as quickly as possible of:
- a) the existence of the overpayment,
  - b) the amount,
  - c) the reason the overpayment occurred,
  - d) the period covered by the overpayment,
  - e) repayment options,
  - f) proposed recovery plan.
- 4.2 The individual will be required to select their chosen repayment option and advise the Department within the specified timeframe.
- 4.3 Where the individual does not notify the Department of their chosen repayment option or does not appeal the proposed recovery plan within 21 calendar days (3 weeks) of the date of the letter, it will be taken to mean that the consent of the individual is given to apply the proposed recovery plan. The letter will be the notification for the purposes of the Payment of Wages Act that deductions will commence from the next available salary / pension pay date.

## **5 Repayment options where the individual is in receipt of salary / pension.**

### **5.1 Repayment by deduction from Salary / Pension**

Overpayments will be recovered at the rate of 5% of gross salary / pension and will be deducted from the individual's fortnightly salary/pension.

Individuals may increase the fortnightly percentage deduction in order to repay the overpayment over a shorter period.

Individuals whose employment is due to cease before the overpayment is fully repaid should arrange to increase the fortnightly percentage deduction in order to discharge the overpayment in full in advance of departure.

There may be exceptional instances where the individual cannot make the fortnightly repayment of 5% of gross salary / pension. They may apply to have their case reviewed by the designated Overpayments Appeals Officer. The reason for the appeal should be outlined in an email to the contact details at paragraph 8 and marked for the attention of the Overpayment Appeals Officer.

Where a person is paid salary/pension on more than one payroll operated by Payroll Division, the overpayment deduction of 5% will be deducted from each payroll until the overpayment is recovered in full.

### **5.2 Repayment by Lump Sum**

An individual may wish to repay the overpayment in a single lump sum. This can be done by arranging an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) directly into the Department's bank account. Details of the bank account will be made available as part of the agreed arrangement.

**5.3 Repayment in part by lump sum and the balance by deduction from salary / pension.**

It is open to the individual to repay part of the overpayment by lump sum as set out in paragraph 5.2. The balance will be then repaid by fortnightly deductions at the rate of 5% of gross from salary / pension.

**6 Repayment options where the individual is no longer in receipt of salary / pension.**

**6.1 Repayment by Lump Sum**

When an individual is no longer in receipt of salary / pension, s/he may repay the overpayment in a single lump sum as set out in paragraph 5.2.

**6.2 Repayment in part by lump sum and the balance by Instalments**

If it is not possible to repay the full amount of the overpayment in a single lump sum payment, the individual may repay part of the overpayment by lump sum as set out in paragraph 5.2 and the balance by instalments over an agreed period of time.

Repayment by instalments can be done by arranging an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) by Standing Order directly into the Department's bank account at regular intervals. The minimum value of the installment must be €100. Details of the bank account will be made available as part of the agreed arrangement.

**6.3 Repayment by Instalments**

If neither of the options at 6.1 or 6.2 are possible, the individual may repay the full amount of the overpayment by instalments over an agreed period of time as set out in paragraph 6.2.

**7 Repayment options in the case of death in service / while on pension**

7.1 The Department should be informed (contact details at paragraph 8) at the earliest opportunity of the death of an individual who is serving or in receipt of a pension and is paid on any of the four payrolls operated by the Payroll Division.

7.2 If an overpayment has occurred, the amount of overpayment recouped in these cases will always be the net amount of the overpayment.

7.3 The Department will issue notification of the occurrence of the overpayment to the executor/administrator of the estate or next of kin of the deceased person.

7.4 Where an individual dies in service and a death gratuity is payable to the estate of the deceased under the term of the relevant superannuation schemes, any outstanding overpayment will be recouped in a single lump sum from the death gratuity.

7.5 The repayment options available to next of kin of deceased individuals are:

- a. Repayment by lump sum
- b. Repayment in part by lump sum and the balance by instalments over an agreed period
- c. Repayment by instalments over an agreed period
- d. Repayment from Spouses Pension if payable
- e. Repayment from the estate of the deceased

## **8 Contact Details**

Enquiries regarding this Circular should be e-mailed to:

- a. Primary Payroll - [primtch\\_payroll@education.gov.ie](mailto:primtch_payroll@education.gov.ie)
- b. Post Primary Payroll - [PPPayroll@education.gov.ie](mailto:PPPayroll@education.gov.ie)
- c. Non Teaching Staff Payroll - [NTSPayroll@education.gov.ie](mailto:NTSPayroll@education.gov.ie)
- d. Retired Payroll – [RTPS@education.gov.ie](mailto:RTPS@education.gov.ie)