

Goods Brought Into BC by New Residents

Provincial Sales Tax Act

This bulletin provides information to help new residents understand how the provincial sales tax (PST) applies to goods they bring into BC.

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Overview

What is PST

PST is BC's provincial retail sales tax. PST applies to goods that are:

- purchased at a retail sale in the province,
- leased (rented) in the province, or
- brought in from outside BC for use in the province.

Exemption for New Residents

PST applies to goods brought, sent or delivered into BC for use, unless a specific exemption applies.

As a new resident individual, you may be eligible for an exemption from PST on goods you bring into the province if you meet the criteria outlined below.

Who is a New Resident

For the purposes of this exemption, you are a new resident if:

- you were previously a resident of another jurisdiction and have never resided in BC, or
- you previously resided in BC, but gave up your residency here and lived somewhere else as your principal residence.

You become a new resident on the date that you actually move to BC to take up residence. This means that a real estate closing date does not determine when you become a resident of BC. If you are an out-of-province resident and buy a home in BC because you will be moving here, but you are still a resident of another jurisdiction on the date that the real estate sale closes, you are not yet a resident of BC.

If you reside in BC, or have temporarily lived outside BC but did not give up residency in BC, you are not eligible for the exemption. You are required to pay PST on goods purchased elsewhere and brought into BC for use.

Corporations are not eligible for this exemption.

Goods Eligible for the Exemption

As a new resident, you may bring goods (e.g. equipment, motor vehicles, boats) into BC without paying PST if **all three** of the following criteria are met:

1. The goods are brought, sent or received in BC solely for a non-business purpose.
2. The goods enter BC within six months of you becoming a resident of BC (e.g. if you became a resident on January 1, the goods must enter BC by June 30), or would have entered within that time if it was not for circumstances that made it impractical for the goods to have entered BC within that time.
3. You own the goods and have owned the goods for a continuous period of at least 30 days before you became a resident of BC.

Unable to Bring Goods Into BC Within Six Months

Goods, which otherwise meet the criteria for exemption, that arrive more than six months after you take up residence in BC may qualify for exemption if circumstances make it **impractical** to bring the goods into BC at an earlier date. The following examples are circumstances that the ministry considers as meeting the impractical exception.

- You initially take up temporary residence in an isolated area of BC and are limited as to what you can bring to this temporary residence.
- You are a temporary resident living in BC who is being sponsored to become a Canadian citizen and you would jeopardize your residency application if you leave Canada before obtaining permanent resident status. Therefore, in certain circumstances, it may be impractical for you to bring your goods into BC until you obtain this status.

Please note: The ministry does not consider the timing of a move or weather-related issues to be a circumstance that made it impractical to have brought goods into BC. If you are making a claim that circumstances made it impractical for you to have brought, sent or received goods in BC within the six-month timeframe, you should request a ruling from the ministry by emailing us the details of your situation.

Business Use

Goods Brought Into BC for Business Use

PST must be paid on the value of goods you bring, send or receive in BC for business use.

Unless you can provide evidence to the contrary, motor vehicles and other goods registered in the name of a business (i.e. with a DBA name) are considered to have been brought into BC for business use. PST must be paid on such items.

A personal vehicle registered and licensed in your name, which you also use to do business for your employer, may qualify for exemption, even if you receive compensation from your employer for business use of the vehicle. To find out if you are eligible for the exemption in such a situation, you should request a ruling from the ministry by emailing us the details of your situation.

Personal Goods Brought Into BC and Later Used for Business Use

Under certain conditions, if you initially qualified for the exemption above because you brought, sent or received goods in BC solely for a non-business use, you may later use the goods for a business use without paying PST.

This applies only if the conversion to a business use does not begin within the first six months after the entry date of the goods, and the following conditions are met:

- the goods are not a vehicle, boat or aircraft,
- you have owned the goods for more than three years before you became a resident of BC, and
- you previously paid one of the following taxes on the goods and you are not eligible for a refund, rebate or credit of that tax, including input tax credits:
 - PST (under the *Provincial Sales Tax Act* or the *Social Service Tax Act*),
 - tax on designated property (TDP) (under the *Consumption Tax Rebate and Transition Act*),
 - a provincial portion of the HST, or
 - sales tax of another province.

Leased Goods

Leased Goods Brought Into BC

Leased goods do not qualify for this exemption because you do not own them. You must pay PST on each lease payment for all lease periods during which the leased items are in BC.

If you later exercise an option to purchase contained in the lease agreement, PST applies to any consideration you pay to obtain title to the item.

Paying PST on Leased Motor Vehicles

PST is collected by the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) when you register a motor vehicle. If you bring a leased motor vehicle into BC and register it in your name, or in your name and the name of the person or company leasing the motor vehicle to you, PST applies as follows.

If the person or company leasing the motor vehicle to you is located in BC, you may register the motor vehicle without paying PST. Your ICBC Autoplan broker will ask to see the written confirmation.

If that person or company is not located in BC, you will be required to pay PST on the fair market value of the motor vehicle at the time of registration.

If the lease is later terminated or expires, or the motor vehicle is removed from BC for registration outside BC, you may apply for a refund equal to the difference between the PST paid when you registered the motor vehicle, and the PST that would otherwise have been payable on the lease payments while the vehicle was used in BC.

To apply for a refund of PST paid on a motor vehicle, complete an *Application for Refund of Provincial Sales Tax (PST) Paid on a Motor Vehicle* ([FIN 355/MV](#)) and provide the supporting documentation listed in the instructions to the form.

Paying the PST

If you bring, send or receive goods in BC and do not qualify for an exemption, you must pay the PST due.

You are required to self-assess and pay the PST due as follows:

- if you have a PST number, on your next PST return,
- if you do not have a PST number, on or before the last day of the month following the month you brought, sent or received the goods in BC by using a *Casual Remittance Return* ([FIN 405](#)), or
- if the good is a motor vehicle and you have not already paid the PST due as discussed in the above two bullets, at the time you register the vehicle with ICBC (in which case ICBC will collect the PST at the time of registration)

Need more info?

Online: gov.bc.ca/PST

Toll free in Canada: 1 877 388-4440

Email: CTBTaxQuestions@gov.bc.ca

You can access our forms, publications, legislation and regulations online at gov.bc.ca/PST (go to [Forms](#) or [Publications](#)).

The information in this bulletin is for your convenience and guidance and is not a replacement for the legislation.

For up to date information on the return to PST, subscribe to our What's New page at www.sbr.gov.bc.ca/msbr/whats_new/consumer_taxes/whatsnew.htm

References: *Provincial Sales Tax Act*, section 1 “entry date”, “fair market value”, “use”, 2, 30, 39-41, 46, 49, 50, 55 and 82; *Provincial Sales Tax Exemption and Refund Regulation*, subsection 1(2) and section 22.