

## **THE RETAIL SALES TAX ACT**

### **FILM, VIDEO AND AUDIO PRODUCTIONS**

This bulletin explains the application of Retail Sales Tax (RST) relating to film, video and audio productions.

#### **Section 1 - GENERAL INFORMATION**

- Film, video or audio productions, and media used to record these productions, are exempt from RST when purchased for the purpose of exhibition or broadcast to the public, as outlined in Section 2 of this bulletin.
- All other film, video or audio productions are generally subject to RST on the selling price of the production.
- Equipment, repairs and other miscellaneous materials purchased/rented to produce film, video or audio productions are subject to RST.

#### **Section 2 – SALES OF FILM, VIDEO AND AUDIO PRODUCTIONS**

##### **Exemption for broadcast productions**

- Film, video, or audio productions that are produced for exhibition or broadcast to the public are not subject to RST. This includes the sale, rental or production of commercials, feature films and other programming.
- “Exhibition or broadcast to the public” means:
  - Through a radio or television station or pay television system, or
  - In a theatre or cinema accessible to the general public where, in the normal course of business, motion picture films are exhibited or theatrical performances are staged, and an admission is usually charged.
- The exemption also applies to recording media such as motion picture film, video tape, audio tape and other media used directly to record the production (including spoilage). Similarly, production services incorporated into a film, etc. for exhibition or public broadcast are tax exempt.
- To allow a tax exemption on the above items, the seller must obtain and record the purchaser’s RST number on the sales invoice.

**Note:** Revisions to content of previous Bulletin (July 2003) have been identified by shading ( ).

---

- Where the purchaser is not normally required to be registered for RST purposes, the vendor may still allow the exemption if the purchaser certifies on the sales invoice that the production (or the recording media) will be used for public exhibition or broadcast.

**Exemption for films, etc. and services purchased for resale**

- Film, video or audio productions purchased for the purposes of resale, may be purchased tax exempt. Similarly production services that are incorporated into a production or acquired for resale are not taxable. Examples of items that are commonly purchased for resale or incorporated into a finished production include:
  - Audio tracks and services
  - Camera work (filming services)
  - Dubbing
  - Editing services
  - Film processing
  - Special effects/computer enhancements.
- To allow a tax exemption on these items, the seller must obtain and record the purchaser's RST number on the sales invoice.

**Films, etc. shipped for use outside Manitoba**

- Film, video or audio productions, or related production services, sold and delivered to a purchaser outside the province are not subject to RST.
- To allow the exemption the seller must deliver the goods or services to the purchaser outside the province, or have them shipped by a common carrier for delivery outside Manitoba. The seller must retain proof of delivery outside the province (i.e. the courier's delivery bill, certified mail receipt, or an equivalent document) to support the non-collection of tax.

**Taxable film, video or audio productions**

- All sales (or rentals) of film, video or audio productions (except those that qualify for the tax exemptions listed above) are subject to the 7 per cent RST on the selling price (excluding GST). The following are some examples of productions that are subject to tax:
  - Demos of film, video or audio productions.
  - Internal training productions.
  - Promotional productions (e.g., to promote goods and services at a retailer's premises).
  - Industrial productions for in-house use (e.g., a video of a company's production process).
  - Educational productions for use in schools, libraries, etc.
  - Slide productions (except when for exhibition or broadcast to the public).
  - Wedding videos.

**Taxable services relating to films, etc.**

- Services such as editing, film processing, special effects, dubbing, audio services, etc. relating to film, video or audio productions are generally taxable (except when the service is purchased to produce a film, etc. for sale, or for public exhibition or broadcast).

**Section 3 – PURCHASES OF MATERIALS, SERVICES AND EQUIPMENT****Exempt materials and services**

- Recording media and services that are incorporated into a film, video or audio production (including packaging materials) may be purchased tax exempt if the production is produced for sale or for public exhibition or broadcast. In this case, the following goods and services may be purchased tax exempt:
  - Motion picture film, video tape, audio tape and other recording media (including recording media that is destroyed, wasted or cut).
  - Media cases and labels that become a direct part of the final production.
  - Video, film and audio productions purchased for incorporation into a final production for sale.
  - Editing, colorizing, duplicating, dubbing, mixing, special effects, audio tracking and other similar services.
  - Film developing and processing.

**Please note:** These materials and services are taxable when purchased for a purchaser's own use, i.e. they are not used to produce a film, etc. for purposes of sale, or public exhibition or broadcast.

**Taxable purchases**

- RST is payable on equipment, equipment repairs, supplies and other items (except recording media used for public exhibition or broadcast) that are used in connection with producing the film, video or audio production. The following are examples of items that are always subject to tax:
  - Audio equipment, including audio boards, headsets, microphones and video libraries.
  - Camera equipment, including camera cases, lenses, tripods and video heads.
  - Computer equipment and software, including charges to maintain, modify, install or upgrade software. But software that is custom-developed solely to meet the requirements of a specific person is exempt, e.g. software developed for a producer of a film to create certain images for his/her films. If this software program is also sold to other film producers, it does not qualify for the exemption. For additional information, see Bulletin No. 033 – Computer Software & Programming Services.
  - Editing equipment including digital switchers, media composers, special effect packages, recording equipment and caption makers.
  - Equipment repairs including parts and labour.
  - Stage equipment including cables, generators and lighting.
  - Costumes, clothing, jewellery, wigs and makeup.
  - Props, sets, and materials and tools to construct props and sets.
  - Promotional materials including posters and brochures.
  - Motor vehicles, trailers, etc.
- See Section 4 for equipment rentals.

**Taxable costumes, props and sets**

- The RST applies to all costumes, props and sets used in making film, video, and audio productions as follows:
  - Where the costumes, props or sets are purchased or rented from a retailer, the full purchase/rental price is taxable, including such items as vintage automobiles, aircraft and other equipment displayed in the production.
  - The rental of any animal without its owner/trainer is taxable. The charge for use of an animal that is accompanied and controlled by its owner/trainer is not taxable. In the latter case, the owner/trainer is responsible for paying the applicable tax on the purchase of the animal.
  - Where the costumes, props and sets for a production are constructed or sewn by the producer's employees (or contract employees), the tax is payable only on the cost of the materials purchased for the costumes, props and sets, but not on the employee or contract labour costs.

**Purchases from out-of-province suppliers**

- When taxable goods or services are purchased from a supplier who has not collected the Manitoba RST (e.g. an out-of-province supplier), the purchaser must self-assess the tax at 7 per cent of the purchase price (excluding GST) and remit it to the Taxation Division. For taxable items purchased outside Manitoba, the tax is payable on the total laid down cost, including freight, currency exchange, duty, brokerage, installation and other related charges.

**Temporary use of equipment brought into Manitoba**

- If an out of province business brings equipment or vehicles (which it owns) into Manitoba for a temporary period, the business must self-remit the Manitoba RST to the Taxation Division for each month or part month the equipment remains in Manitoba, or until the tax has been paid on the total taxable value. The monthly tax payable is 7 per cent x 1/36<sup>th</sup> of the fair value (taxable value) of the equipment at the time it comes into the province.  
**For example:** A non-resident film maker brings equipment, trucks, trailers and a motor home, to be used in producing a film in Manitoba, of which the fair value is \$360,000. The tax payable by the film maker is 1/36<sup>th</sup> x \$360,000 x 7% = \$700 for each month or part month the equipment remains in Manitoba.
- See Bulletin No. 005 – Information for Contractors, if additional information regarding temporary use of equipment is required.
- If the equipment brought into Manitoba is being leased, the Manitoba RST is payable on the total cost of leasing, including the basic lease charge, royalties, license fees, transportation and all other related costs (excluding GST).

**Section 4 – EQUIPMENT RENTALS****General meaning of rental**

- Equipment supply companies commonly use the term “rental” to represent either of the following two situations:
  - (1) Rental of equipment **with** an operator, or

(2) Rental of equipment **without** an operator.

However, since the application of RST for each of these situations is different, suppliers and purchasers should refer to the following information to apply the tax correctly.

**Equipment supplied with an operator (service)**

- Where equipment is supplied with an operator to provide functions such as editing, filming, special effects, or dubbing, the provision of such functions is considered to be a **service** and not a rental of equipment (even if the invoice describes the charge as a rental of equipment). Therefore, the amount charged for the service will either be totally taxable or totally exempt depending on the use as outlined in Section 2 of this bulletin.
- Equipment is considered “operated by the supplier” when the supplier accompanies the equipment and controls its functions during the task for which it was designed.
- In this case, businesses providing filming, editing, special effects or dubbing services (equipment supplied with an operator) are required to pay RST on their purchase, rental or lease of the equipment used to provide the service and any repairs to this equipment.

**Please note:** Where the services are provided by a non-resident supplier, the Manitoba purchaser is responsible to insure that the supplier has paid the applicable Manitoba tax on any equipment brought into the province as discussed in Section 3. Where the supplier fails to remit the applicable RST, the Manitoba purchaser will be required to do so.

**Equipment supplied without an operator (rental)**

- Equipment supplied without an operator (i.e. customer operates the equipment) is a **rental** of equipment, and the RST must be collected on the total rental charge, including charges for:
  - Assisting the customer to set up and take down the equipment.
  - Technical support to ensure the equipment functions without interruptions.
  - Instruction to customer’s staff on how to operate the equipment.
- Businesses that acquire and use equipment **exclusively for rental** to others (i.e. not supplied with an operator) may purchase the equipment and any repairs to this equipment exempt of tax by providing their supplier with their RST number.

## Section 5 – INFORMATION ON OTHER TAXES RELATED TO FILMS

**Manitoba film and video production tax credit**

- The Manitoba Film and Video Production Tax Credit was announced in the spring of 1997 to provide an incentive to the private film and television production industry, to create economic employment growth in the province. It is effective for expenditures between January 1, 1997 and **March 1, 2008**. The tax credit is a refundable corporate income tax credit available to qualifying producers of eligible Manitoba productions and co-productions. The tax credit includes a “deeming provision”; which means if a technical position can’t be filled by a willing, available and qualified Manitoba resident, the salary of a qualifying non-resident may be deemed

eligible for the tax credit. This is only in effect provided that the individual hired supervises the training of at least one Manitoba resident within the same department. The tax credit available to a qualifying production is equal to 35 per cent of eligible labour expenditures paid to Manitoba residents.

- Salary associated with a deemed resident who trains two or more Manitoba residents cannot exceed 20 per cent of eligible salaries paid to Manitoba residents, or 10 per cent if only one Manitoba resident is trained.
- The legislation for the Manitoba Film and Video Production Tax Credit is found in sections 7.5 to 7.12 of The Income Tax Act (Manitoba).
- Further information on the Film and Video Production Tax Credit may be obtained from:

Financial Services – Industry, Economic Development and Mines  
1049 – 259 Portage Avenue  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 3P4  
Phone: (204) 945-2475  
Fax: (204) 945-1193

## FURTHER INFORMATION

This bulletin is intended to serve as a guideline and is not all-inclusive. For the specific wording of the law, please refer to the Acts and Regulation stated below. Further information may be obtained from:

### Winnipeg Office

Manitoba Finance  
Taxation Division  
101 - 401 York Avenue  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0P8  
Telephone (204) 945-5603  
Manitoba Toll Free 1-800-782-0318  
Fax (204) 948-2087  
E-mail: [MBTax@gov.mb.ca](mailto:MBTax@gov.mb.ca)  
Web Site: [www.gov.mb.ca/finance/taxation](http://www.gov.mb.ca/finance/taxation)

### Westman Regional Office

Manitoba Finance  
Taxation Division  
311, 340 - 9th Street  
Brandon, Manitoba R7A 6C2  
Telephone (204) 726-6153  
Manitoba Toll Free 1-800-275-9290  
Fax (204) 726-6763

---

### Principal References in Legislation:

*The Retail Sales Tax Act of Manitoba (C.C.S.M. c. R130)*, Sections 3(1)(v) and (x), 3(17), 3(26), 4(1)(d) and (g).  
*Manitoba Regulation (75/88R)*.  
*The Income Tax Act (Manitoba)*, Sections 7.5 to 7.12.