

Tax officials get 60-day cap to resolve grievances

Tired of following up your complaint with the income tax department! Here is some good news.

To bring in more transparency with effective and timely redressal of tax payers' grievances, the income tax department has set strict deadlines for its officers to dispose of complaints: 15-60 days.

Central board of direct taxes (CBDT) chairman Atulesh Jindal wrote to his officers on June 22, asking them to ensure that tax payers' complaints are resolved within 60 days, sources said.

The deadlines have become part of the tax department's annual action plan, which was released after the recent tax officers' meeting at the Rajasva Gyan Sangam, in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid special emphasis on citizen-friendly services and complaint resolution.

In addition to imposing deadlines, the CBDT chairman will also hold monthly review meetings to monitor grievance redressal as the tax department looks to improve its image. Complaints from the Prime Minister's office, the tax department itself, the CBDT or from a member of Parliament will have to be resolved within 15 days of receipt of the complaint.

If a complaint is routed through the government's online grievance portal— CPGRAMS or the Aaykar Seva Kendra (ASK centre)— it would have to be disposed of within 60 days of receipt. Tax adjustment requests with outstanding refunds should be processed within 30 days.

CBDT had during the tax administrators conference announced an 'e-nivaran' (digital redressal) module that aims to fast-track grievance redressal by integrating all online and physical grievances received by the department, and tracking them to their logical conclusion.

The department is now considering launch of an 'e-nivaran' form on the lines of the ITR (income-tax-returns) form to take care of issues related to refunds and other grievances with SMS/ email acknowledgements.

The income tax department is fifth behind telecommunications, railways, banking and home affairs in terms of complaints received.

(Hindustan Times)