

Maryland Form Approval Process for 2016

Administrative Release 26, Section VI

VI. Approval

A. Basic Requirements: Preparers who want to file substitute privately designed and printed tax forms and/or computer-generated and computer-prepared tax forms must develop such substitutes using these guidelines. These substitutes, unless excepted by this release, must be approved by the Division.

B. Requests for Approval:

1. The Division will not approve your substitute form until the final version of the official form has been published. Please propose your substitute only after you have examined the official form.

The Division may release advance proof copies of selected major tax forms that are subject to further changes and approval before their release in final format for printing and distribution to the public. These advance proofs are subject to significant change before forms are finalized. If these advance proofs are used as the basis for your substitute forms, you will be responsible for subsequently updating your final forms to agree with the final official version before submitting them for approval.

2. From one filing period to another, a change in law or a change in internal need (processing, audit, compliance, etc.) may change the allowable limits for altering the official form.

3. **PDF Review samples:** To have proposed substitute forms approved, vendors must submit PDF copies of 1 blank and 4 variable data samples of the forms they would like to have approved. The blank and corresponding data samples should be in the **one** PDF file.

a. Vendors will be supplied with one

blank sample, one grid sample and an overlay of our form. The blank sample is the example of the final version. The grid sample details the formatting. The overlay details data entry placement. Vendors will need to use these samples in order to successfully reproduce our form.

b. When sending PDF samples, vendors are to submit 1 PDF file containing 5 pages.

i. Page 1 must contain the blank sample. The blank sample of the form must have the appropriate 1D barcode present and be accurate regard to sequence, line reference and item caption.

ii. Pages 2 through 5 of the PDF file must contain variable data in the data entry fields. The data on these 4 samples must allow for the testing of each “bulleted” item on the form. The sample data must vary in Name, SSN/FEIN, Address, and Numerical fields. If the substitute form will be offered with a 2D barcode, the 2D barcode must be present for testing.

iii. All samples must also have the latest revision date present and centered in the footer of the form.

c. PDF samples should be submitted to MDSOFTWAREDEVELOPERS@comp.state.md.us.

i. The subject line must contain your vendor number, the words “PDF Review,” and the date of submission (VENDOR 99: PDF Review 07/01/16). If you have a question regarding a resubmission, be sure to put “**Question**”

in the subject line along with the other required subject line information.

ii. The body of the email must list the proposed form(s), those attached to the email, and contain the vendor's contact information.

iii. The file name for the PDFs must follow this naming convention: Maryland Vendor ID number, 2 digit year of form, form number, date of submission and submission number. For example, "99_16_502_110116_sub1" denotes that Vendor 99 is submitting the 2016 Form 502 on 11/01/16. It is the first submission.

iv. Do not put more than one form type in each PDF file. Forms that can be used with more than one type of return should be submitted only once for approval, regardless of how many different tax return types the form is associated with.

Note: If your firm produces different product lines, each product line must be approved separately.

4. Once notified by the Division, send hard copy samples of the PDF Reviewed form(s). Be sure to only send the latest version as noted by the date centered in the footer of the form.

a. Hard copies of PDF Reviewed samples **must be submitted**. Include 2 blank copies and 2 sets of 4 variable data samples. Failure to submit the correct number of samples or failure to send the latest PDF Reviewed submission will result in a rejection of your hard copy submission.

b. Hard copy samples must be sent to: Forms Manager, Room 201, Revenue Administration Division, 110 Carroll Street, Annapolis, Maryland, 21411-0001. To expedite handling, **it is recommended you use a courier service such as UPS, FedEx or DHL.**

c. Notify the Division once hard copies have been sent. Include tracking information, estimated date of arrival and a scanned copy of each form type in the package.

Note: Hard copies must be sent in order to have the form(s) approved for live production.

5. The Division does not review or approve the logic of specific software programs, nor confirm the calculations entered on forms output from programs submitted for approval. The accuracy of the program itself remains the responsibility of the software developer, distributor, and user.

6. Non-scannable official forms, those forms not containing a barcode or scanline, do not have to be submitted for approval. However, if submitted, these forms will be reviewed.

Note: You must place your Maryland Vendor ID number on the bottom left corner of all non-scannable forms.

7. If you are unable to meet these requirements please contact us at MDSOFTWAREDEVELOPERS@comp.state.md.us.

C. When to Send Proposed Substitutes:

Proposed substitutes should be sent to the email address listed in Subsection B.3 of this section no later than December 15. This allows adequate time for the analysis and response and permits revision of internal documentation to reflect the substitute is acceptable. Forms submitted after December 15th may experience extended delays. Forms for the 2016 filing season will not be reviewed after January 31, 2016.

D. Accompanying Statement: Hard copy samples should be accompanied by a statement/cover sheet listing the form number of each substitute requested for approval and notification/explanation for any bulleted field not represented for testing.

E. Forms Approval/Non-Approval: As part of the forms approval process, the Division will



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review all income tax forms received. The Division will send notification of approval/non-approval by e-mail. Approval notification may contain qualifications for use of the substitutes. Non-approval notification will specify the changes required in order to gain approval and will require resubmission.

F. Duration of Approval:

1. Approvals are valid for only one calendar year (January through December).
2. In general, each new filing season requires new approval, even if the official form does not change. But see the exception below.

G. Limited Continued Use of an Approved Change:

If you received written approval of a previous tax year computer-generated form, you must continue to use that exact version for filing that form in subsequent tax years. (i.e. an approved 2011 tax form may be filed in 2012 or 2013, etc.)

H. Requested Copies: You may be asked to send to the Division additional copies of each approved form. The copies will be used to notify the various processing units of the Division that your substitute forms are approved.

The requested forms should be assembled in sets. A set includes a return with the related schedules and forms in the same order as they will be filed.

I. Responsibility: After a substitute forms package, or a software output program to print substitute forms, is approved, the originator (designer or distributor) must provide each client with the pertinent Maryland tax forms requirements which must be met for continuing acceptability. Examples of this responsibility include the use of prescribed print paper, font-size legibility, and collections requirements stated in the instructions for the official Maryland tax forms, completion of documents, etc.

J. Vendor Release: Vendors should not release their package prior to receiving approval from the Division. If it is absolutely necessary to release their package prior to receiving approval, the program shall print "DRAFT - DO NOT FILE" on the return in bold print. Vendors shall advise their customers that those forms are not to be submitted to the Division or released to clients by practitioners. Vendors shall advise their customers as to when they can expect an update to print the correct, approved form.