

August 12, 2026

Frequently Asked Questions for Tax Relief for Victims of Hurricane Helene

The purpose of this document is to provide answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) related to both penalty and interest relief. These FAQs are intended to provide general information to taxpayers and tax professionals. Accordingly, these FAQs may be updated or modified. For additional information, review the [notices](#) issued by the North Carolina Department of Revenue (Department).

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Topic A. Penalty Relief

A1. Who qualifies for penalty relief?

The penalty relief applies to all taxpayers identified by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as affected by Hurricane Helene (collectively, Affected Taxpayers).

Affected Taxpayers include:

- Individuals who live in North Carolina.
- Businesses (including tax-exempt organizations) whose principal place of business is in North Carolina.
- Other individuals and businesses whose records necessary to meet a State tax deadline are located in North Carolina.
- Relief workers who are assisting in North Carolina and are affiliated with a recognized government or philanthropic organization.
- Any individual visiting North Carolina who was killed or injured as a result of the disaster.

A2. What penalty relief is available?

Except as noted in [Question A7](#), the Department will remove certain penalties assessed against Affected Taxpayers for licenses, returns, or payments due on September 25, 2024, through September 25, 2025, if the license is obtained, the return is filed, or the tax is paid by September 25, 2025.

A3. What penalties are included in penalty relief?

The following penalties (collectively, Late Action Penalties) are included:

- Failure to Obtain a License (G.S. 105-236(a)(2))
- Failure to File a Return (G.S. 105-236(a)(3))
- Failure to Pay Tax When Due (G.S. 105-236(a)(4))
- Failure to File an Informational Return (G.S. 105-236(a)(10))

A4. What tax types are included in penalty relief?

All tax types are included in penalty relief.

A5. Are 2023 income tax returns eligible for the penalty relief?

It depends. As noted in [Question A2](#), the penalty relief is available to Affected Taxpayers that have tax returns due on September 25, 2024, through September 25, 2025, if the tax return is filed with the Department on or before September 25, 2025. This includes, but is not limited to, Affected Taxpayers that were granted an extension to file a 2023 tax return by October 15, 2024.

Examples:

- a) An individual who is an Affected Taxpayer was granted an extension to file their North Carolina individual income tax return for calendar year 2023 (NC Tax Return). Because the NC Tax Return was due on October 15, 2024, the Affected Taxpayer is eligible to receive a waiver of the failure to file a return penalty as long as the NC Tax Return is filed on or before September 25, 2025. As noted in [Question A7](#), the individual will not receive a waiver of the failure to pay penalty because the tax payment related to the 2023 Tax Return was due on April 15, 2024.
- b) An individual who is an Affected Taxpayer was not granted an extension to file their North Carolina individual income tax return for calendar year 2023 (NC Tax Return). Because the NC Tax Return was due on April 15, 2024, the Affected Taxpayer is not eligible for penalty relief when the Affected Taxpayer files the NC Tax Return.
- c) A corporation that is an Affected Taxpayer did not request an extension to file its North Carolina franchise and income tax return for the fiscal tax year ending June 30, 2024 (NC Tax Return). Because the NC Tax Return was due on October 15, 2024, the Affected Taxpayer is eligible to receive a waiver of the failure to file a return penalty as long as the NC Tax Return is filed on or before September 25, 2025. The corporation can receive a waiver of the failure to pay penalty provided the corporation pays the tax due by September 25, 2025.

A6. Are Affected Taxpayers that received Hurricane Debby tax relief eligible for penalty relief?

Yes. The Department will remove Late Action Penalties assessed against Affected Taxpayers that received Hurricane Debby tax relief if the license is obtained, the return is filed, or the tax is paid by September 25, 2025.

A7. Are there exceptions to the penalty relief?

Yes. There are two exceptions.

- 1. An Affected Taxpayer that has been notified by the Department that they are required to pay State withholding tax by the date set by the IRS for depositing federal employment taxes on those same wages (i.e., a semiweekly taxpayer) will only receive penalty relief

on tax payments due on or after September 25, 2024, and before October 10, 2024, if the payments were made by October 10, 2024.

2. Penalty relief does not apply to tax payments that were due to be paid prior to September 25, 2024. For instance, an Affected Taxpayer who under the disaster declaration has until September 25, 2025, to file a calendar year 2023 individual income tax return ("2023 Tax Return") will not receive a waiver of the failure to pay tax when due penalty because the tax payment related to the 2023 Tax Return was due on April 15, 2024.

A8. How can an Affected Taxpayer have penalties removed if penalties were assessed in error?

An Affected Taxpayer that was assessed a Late Action Penalty in error should notify the Department of the error by taking one of the following actions:

- Submit [Form NC-5500](#), Request to Waive Penalties or [Form NC-5501](#), Request for Waiver of an Informational Return Penalty and write "Hurricane Helene" at the top of the form.
- Call the Department at 1-877-252-3052 (7:00 am until 4:30 pm, Eastern Time, Monday through Friday).

A9. How can a Non-Affected Taxpayer request penalty relief?

In accordance with the [Department's Penalty Waiver Policy](#), a Non-Affected Taxpayer may request a penalty waiver if a natural disaster caused the taxpayer to not meet their State filing or payment requirement. To request a penalty waiver, submit [Form NC-5500](#) or [Form NC-5501](#), whichever is applicable.

Note. When filing Form NC-5500 or NC-5501, a Non-Affected Taxpayer should select "Natural Disaster" for the reason for the request, place an "X" in the block beside "Natural Disaster or Accident" located in Part 3, and complete the "Natural Disaster or Accident" section of Part 3.

A10. Did the Department update penalty relief?

Yes. On October 3, 2024, the Department announced penalty relief for taxpayers impacted by Hurricane Helene. Generally, this penalty relief provided relief through **May 1, 2025**.

On April 23, 2025, the Department updated the penalty relief. Generally, the updated penalty relief provides relief through **September 25, 2025**.

A11. Why did the Department update the penalty relief?

The Department updated the penalty relief in response to IRS action. On April 17, 2025, the IRS [announced](#) that due to the lingering effects of Hurricane Helene on North Carolina, the IRS would further postpone, until September 25, 2025, certain tax filing and payment deadlines for Affected Taxpayers.

Topic B. Interest Relief

B1. Who qualifies for interest relief? (Updated August 12, 2026)

1. A taxpayer that files an income tax return for the tax type(s) listed below is eligible for interest relief **through September 25, 2025**, but only if the taxpayer resides (or is located in) a Disaster County:
 - **Franchise and Corporate Income Tax** - Return must have been due to be filed on September 25, 2024, through September 25, 2025. The waiver of interest includes interest accrued on the underpayment of estimated income tax.
 - **Individual Income Tax** - Return must have been due to be filed on September 25, 2024, through September 25, 2025. The waiver of interest includes interest accrued on the underpayment of estimated income tax.
 - **Partnership Tax** - Return must have been due to be filed on September 25, 2024, through September 25, 2025.
 - **Estate and Trust Tax** - Return must have been due to be filed on September 25, 2024, through September 25, 2025.
2. A taxpayer that files a quarterly withholding tax return is eligible for interest relief **through September 25, 2025**, but only if the taxpayer is located in a Disaster County:
 - **Quarterly Return for 3rd Quarter 2024** (Period Ending September 20, 2024) - Payment must have been made on or before September 25, 2025.
 - **Quarterly Return for 4th Quarter 2024** (Period Ending December 31, 2024) - Payment must have been made on or before September 25, 2025.
 - **Quarterly Return for 1st Quarter 2025** (Period Ending March 31, 2025) – Payment must have been made on or before September 25, 2025.
 - **Quarterly Return for 2nd Quarter 2025** (Period Ending June 30, 2025) – Payment must have been made on or before September 25, 2025.
3. A taxpayer that files one of the following monthly withholding tax returns is eligible for interest relief for the tax period(s) listed below, but only if the is located in a Disaster County:
 - **Monthly Return for September 2024** – Payment must have been made on or before November 15, 2024.
 - **Monthly Return for October 2024** – Payment must have been made on or before December 15, 2024.
4. A taxpayer that files one of the following sales and use tax returns is eligible for interest relief for the tax period(s) listed below, but only if the taxpayer's principal place of business is in a [Disaster County](#):
 - **Monthly Return for September 2024** – Payment must have been made on or before November 20, 2024.
 - **Monthly Return for October 2024** – Payment must have been made on or before December 20, 2024.

- **Quarterly Return for 3rd Quarter 2024** (Period Ending September 30, 2024) – Payment must have been made on or **before November 30, 2024**.

B2. What counties are Disaster Counties for purposes of interest relief?

[Session Law 2024-51](#) provides disaster relief for any county declared a major disaster by the President of the United States under the Stafford Act (P.L. 93-288) as a result of Hurricane Helene.

B3. What counties in North Carolina are Disaster Counties for Interest Relief?

The following counties in North Carolina are Disaster Counties:

Alexander	Clay	Lincoln	Stanly
Alleghany	Cleveland	Macon	Surry
Ashe	Forsyth	Madison	Swain
Avery	Gaston	McDowell	Transylvania
Buncombe	Graham	Mecklenburg	Union
Burke	Haywood	Mitchell	Watauga
Cabarrus	Henderson	Nash	Wilkes
Caldwell	Iredell	Polk	Yadkin
Catawba	Jackson	Rowan	Yancey
Cherokee	Lee	Rutherford	

B4. How can a taxpayer have interest waived? (Updated August 12, 2026)

Underpayment of Estimated Tax. A taxpayer that qualifies for interest relief and did not pay the required amount of estimated income tax, can enter “E” in the “Exception to Underpayment of Estimated Tax” box on the applicable tax form.

Other Interest. A taxpayer that qualifies for interest relief can notify the Department by taking one of the following actions:

1. Submit [Form NC-5502](#) online at ncdor.gov. After submission, the electronic form will immediately be sent to the Department. The taxpayer will see a confirmation page that the request was submitted to the Department.
2. Mail a paper version of [Form NC-5502](#) to the address printed on the form. Write “Hurricane Helene” in the space provided on the form to explain why interest should be waived.
3. Call the Department at 1-877-252-3052 (7:00 am until 4:30 pm Eastern Time, Monday through Friday).

Note. Form NC-5502 is available on the Department’s website, ncdor.gov. However, a taxpayer that qualifies for interest relief and does not have electronic access to Form NC-5502 can call the Department at 1-877-252-3052 (7:00 am until 4:30 pm Eastern Time, Monday through Friday), to request assistance or visit a service center.

B5. I do not qualify for interest relief. Will interest continue to accrue on unpaid tax? (Updated August 12, 2026)

Yes. The Department cannot waive interest not provided by the [Disaster Recovery Act](#) except interest on taxes imposed prior to or during a period for which a taxpayer has declared bankruptcy under Chapter 7 or Chapter 13 of Title 11 of the United States Code.

B6. Why is a taxpayer that files a sales and use tax return not eligible for interest relief through September 25, 2025? (Added August 12, 2026)

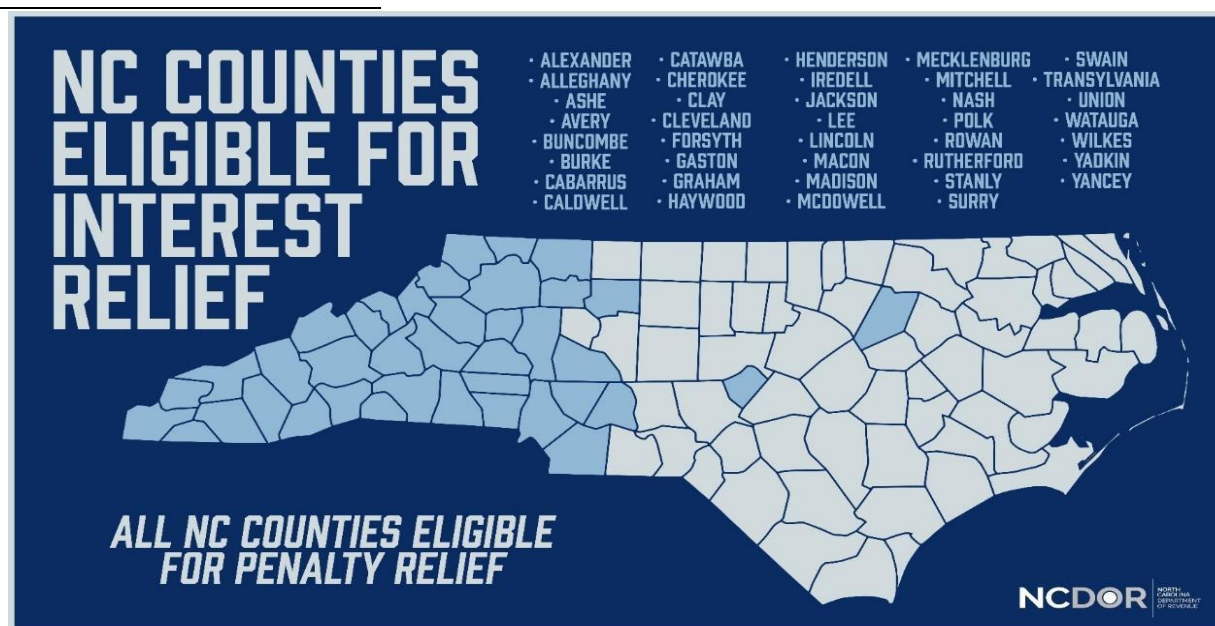
The Department cannot waive interest except when authorized by the North Carolina General Assembly. [Session Law 2026-31](#) permits the Department to waive interest through September 25, 2025, only for taxpayers and tax periods outlined in [Question B1](#).

Topic C. Miscellaneous

C1. Do you have a map to show the types of relief available?

Yes. Taxpayers in the counties shaded in blue and listed above the map image are eligible for interest relief for the tax periods outlined in [Question B1](#). In addition, these taxpayers are eligible for penalty relief as outlined in [Question A2](#).

Taxpayers in the counties not shaded in blue are not eligible for interest relief. However, these taxpayers are eligible for penalty relief as outline in [Question A2](#).



C2. What if I have a question not covered in these FAQs?

Call the Department at 1-877-252-3052 (7:00 am until 4:30 pm Eastern Time, Monday through Friday), to request assistance.