



*Wishing you a safe  
and happy Christmas  
and a great New Year!*

Our office will close on  
Friday 20 December 2019  
and reopen in the new year on  
Monday 13 January 2020.  
Thank you for all your support this year.  
From the team at EPA Business.

December is notoriously hectic and we know you'll be in the middle of a squillion-and-one things right now. That's why we're talking 'self-care and staff-care' this month', quick tips worth reading over your morning coffee or lunch. We're all looking forward to taking a well-earned break over the summer and hope you are too. Merry Christmas to you and your family, and if you're hitting the road - travel safe and enjoy every moment.

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# Six planet-friendly ways to show staff you care this Christmas

Got your staff Christmas gifts sorted? There's still time! Think outside the box and be good to your people, and the planet, with these sustainable Christmas gift ideas.

**Gift an experience:** Why not shout your staff a chance to try something new? Grab a voucher for a local eatery or attraction or check out [www.redballoon.co.nz](http://www.redballoon.co.nz) for inspiring experiences - from arts and entertainment to watersports and tours. No packaging in sight.

**Be charitable:** Create more joy and less waste by heading to [www.thegoodregistry.com](http://www.thegoodregistry.com), where you can buy gift cards that enable staff to make donations to charities they care about. Or for a bit of fun, do good by grabbing a pile of poo, a pair of chickens or a pineapple at [www.oxfam.org.nz/unwrapped](http://www.oxfam.org.nz/unwrapped). Remember, donations over \$5 are eligible for a tax credit.

**Gifts that grow:** From single trees to bonsai and culinary hampers, NZ's leading living gift company, [Tree Gifts](#), has something for everyone. Plus, they do corporate branding.

**Keep it simple:** If you're stuck for ideas, Google The Pressie Box. They've got hundreds of different corporate gift boxes, baskets and tins, including eco-friendly options for the budget-conscious or big spender.

**Sustainable branding:** [www.allaboutpromo.nz](http://www.allaboutpromo.nz) is NZ's only carboNZero certified promotional product and branding company with more than 500 sustainable gift options.

**Get browsing:** From home and garden, health, beauty, food and drink, you can browse local, eco options online at sites such as [Green Elephant](#) and [EcoWarehouse](#).



## Getting holiday pay right

Do you have staff taking leave over Christmas? Are systems in place to make sure everyone gets what they're entitled to? Even if someone else handles your payroll, you are responsible for making sure holiday pay and leave payments are handled correctly.

Remember:

- Whether your staff work full-time, part-time, casual, on-call, or shift work, they're entitled to any benefits that come from working on public holidays.
- If your employee agrees to work on a public holiday that falls on a day they would normally work, they will need to be paid time and a half PLUS receive another paid day off later, otherwise known as a day in lieu. If an employee works on a public holiday, and it is not a day they would usually work, the employee is only entitled to the time and a half. The entitlement to time and a half has to be included in employment agreements.
- Employees can choose to take their day in lieu:
  - on a mutually agreeable date that is not a public holiday
  - on another day on which they would normally be working
  - for a whole working day, regardless of how much of the public holiday they actually worked.
- If your business is having a closedown period, employees are entitled to a paid public holiday if they would ordinarily work on the day of the public holiday.
- Make sure your payroll system:
  - is flexible enough to handle different working arrangements (eg, changing employee work schedules)
  - records all relevant time worked and payments made
  - has accurate and up-to-date information.
- If you realise an employee hasn't been paid the right amount, be up front and correct the mistake immediately.





## Five simple ways to finish the year feeling relaxed (not rushed!)

Is less stress at the top of your Christmas list? For the sake of your sanity and the best interests of your business, follow these steps to remain calm and collected as the year comes to a close.

1. **Outsource!** Look at everything you need to do before 25 December. Is it doable without losing the plot? Write a list of what you can pass on to a trained virtual assistant or someone (less busy) in your team.
2. **Say No.** Often there's a sense of guilt when we refuse an invite, opportunity or request but if you take everything on, you'll suffer. It's already a busy time of year, so the next time someone asks you something - check to see if it's something you want to do or feel you have to do. Then if you can, politely say no.
3. **Lean on your support network:** Will you be working longer hours in the lead up and during the festive season? If you need to be able to prioritise your business over everything else, you'll need a hand to make sure other areas of your life stay standing. Talk to your family. Enlist their help if you need it. You could even do a skill-swap with friends - mow their lawn in exchange for a meal.
4. **Leave some tasks till 2020:** There's often a feeling of 'I jusssst want to get this done by the end of the year' running through our veins in December but taking time to relax over the holidays means letting a few things go. Write a 'to do' list then break it into three categories: must do, should do, can probably wait.
5. **Hide your phone:** The best present you can give yourself over the Christmas break is presence. Time away from work, spent doing what you love to do, and truly relaxing. Putting your devices in a drawer (even just for an hour!) will do you the world of good before launching into the new year.

## New Trusts Act 2019: What you need to do

If you're protecting your family property in a trust, there may be changes you need to make before the new Trusts Act comes into force in January 2021.

The changes to the Trusts Act (the first in more than 60 years!) aim to make trust law more efficient and accessible, lower admin costs, simplify core trust principles and essential obligations for trustees, and make it easier to resolve disputes.

While it might seem an eternity away, 2021 will whip around quickly, so here's what you need to do.

1. **Review your trust:** Meet with your accountant and lawyer to review arrangements for your trust. There might be opportunities to improve your tax structure, reduce your risk profile and better your family's financial situation.
2. **Revisit your succession planning:** The new legislation has extended the maximum life-span of trusts by 45 years, to 125 years. This means you'll need to make significant succession planning adjustments.
3. **Be prepared for beneficiary requests:** The new law means most trust beneficiaries will be able to request financial reports on the state of the family trust and find out 'who gets what'. Be prepared for extra admin, costs and possibly damage control if you're having to avoid family issues around distribution of funds.
4. **Know your responsibilities as a trustee, which include:**
  - a. Knowing the terms of the trust
  - b. Acting according to the terms of the trust
  - c. Acting honestly and in good faith
  - d. Holding trust property
  - e. Acting for the benefit of the beneficiaries or the permitted purpose
  - f. Exercising trustee powers for a proper purpose



## Business Health Check

- Cash flow is essential at this time of year, so if chasing late payments makes you feel uncomfortable, outsource those phone calls to a trusted virtual assistant.
- To avoid late payments, switch up your invoicing processes. Offer discounts to customers for early payments, or multiple payment methods, or suggest split instalments to even out cash flow throughout the year.
- Having a Christmas party? How about a catered lunch at your office then give everyone the rest of the day off? It's the ultimate thank you!
- Are all staff clear on the closedown period and how it affects their leave entitlements? Communicate clearly now so there's no confusion.
- Did you ensure your employment contracts and collective agreements are fully compliant? They need to take into account recent changes to the Employment Relations Act 2000 and the rise in minimum wage.

# New GST on low-value imported goods

Overseas businesses selling goods valued at \$1,000 or less online to New Zealanders are now required to register for, collect and return GST where their supplies to New Zealanders exceed (or are expected to exceed) \$60,000 in a 12-month period. This is good news for local businesses who may have been at a competitive disadvantage by having to charge GST on their sales, when their foreign competitors didn't. Want to know more? Read the special report at <http://taxpolicy.ird.govt.nz/publications/year/2019>.

## KEY TAX DATES – DECEMBER 2019

Date	Category	Description
5 December	PAYE	Large employers' payment due. File employment information within two working days after payday.
20 December	PAYE	Small and large employers' payment due. File employment information within two working days after payday.
20 December	RWT	RWT return and payment due for deductions from dividends and deductions of \$500 or more from interest paid during November.
20 December	NRWT / Approved Issuer Levy	Payment and return for November.
15 January	PAYE	Large employers' payment due. File employment information within two working days after payday.
15 January	GST	Payment and return for November.
15 January	Provisional Tax	Instalment due.
20 January	PAYE	Small and large employers' payment due. File employment information within two working days after payday.
20 January	FBT	Return and payment due.
28 January	GST	Payment and return for December.

Note: the provisional tax due date applies to those clients who have a March balance date. Different dates will apply for those clients who have different balance dates.

***Disclaimer:** This publication has been carefully prepared, but it has been written in general terms only. The publication should not be relied upon to provide specific information without also obtaining appropriate professional advice after detailed examination of your particular situation.*