

Chapter 1

Late filing penalties explained

1. What are late filing penalties?

Late filing penalties were introduced in 1992 to encourage directors of companies to file their accounts and reports on time, because this information is required for the public record. All companies - private or public, large or small, trading or non-trading must send their accounts and reports to Companies House every year. If you submit company accounts and reports late, the law imposes an automatic penalty.

The period allowed for filing your company's accounts depends on whether you are filing your first accounts since incorporation or subsequent accounts:

Your first accounts

If your company's first accounts cover a period of more than 12 months, you must deliver them to Companies House within 21 months of the date of incorporation for private companies and within 18 months for public companies, or 3 months from the accounting reference date, whichever is the longer.

Please see our ['Life of a Company Part 1 – Annual Requirements'](#) guide for more information.

Subsequent Accounts

In subsequent years, a private company has 9 months from the end of the accounting reference period in which to deliver its accounts. A public company has 6 months. However if you change the accounting reference period the filing time may be reduced. Further information on accounting reference dates and the filing deadline is in our ['Life of a Company Part 1 – Annual Requirements'](#) guide. If you are a director of the company you are personally responsible for ensuring you deliver your accounts before the time allowed runs out. Delivery means actual receipt at Companies House in the correct format. If the accounts are late a penalty is automatically imposed.

2. How much are late filing penalties?

The level of the penalty depends on how late the accounts reach Companies House and is shown in the following table.

Length of period (measured from the date the accounts are due)	Penalty	Penalty
	Private company	Public company
Not more than 1 month	£150	£750
More than 1 month but not more than 3 months	£375	£1,500
More than 3 months but not more than 6 months	£750	£3,000
More than 6 months	£1,500	£7,500