



How to avoid professional negligence claims

When I present this talk I encourage the audience to contribute their own ideas of what works for them as regards a number of topics covered during the session.

I have listed a selection of contributed ideas below. I update the list on my website usually within a week of each presentation.

Guarantees that I am happy to give my clients

- Meeting deadlines
- Turnaround within 20 working days
- If ALL records supplied within timescale set in engagement letters then tax return and accounts will be prepared by stated date
- 100% satisfaction guarantee (*this links in with the point I made during the session that many people offer this anyway but just don't publicise it*)
- Ability to contact me and get a reply with 24 hours (*someone else added: except on Fridays*)
- A professional and competent service
- Work will meet all relevant criteria
- Accounts prepared within agreed time limit or fee returned (*Note that the person who said this clearly gets fees paid up front – an excellent idea and one I recommend in another talk I give "How to make more money from your tax work"*)
- Second partner/director if client is not satisfied with treatment by main contact
- Thirty day turnaround or 100% refund (*again from someone who takes fees upfront*)
- Three week turnaround
- None other than that I'll be there when they need me
- We will pay any fine/penalty/interest which we cause
- Fixed fee for first year's accounts
- Only to try my best!
- If you get me all your return info by 30/11 I'll get your return in on time
- Satisfaction
- You keep paying your fees and I'll keep giving you good advice
- We'll take a robust position with HMRC where it's justified
- If asked for advice and I am on uncertain ground I will ALWAYS seek specialist advice from elsewhere. I let me clients know that; they do not expect me to be an expert in everything
- That HMRC will visit you
- If accounts are not prepared within 8 weeks they are free
- When ALL tax return info is received – as a firm – we guarantee to complete the tax return within 30 days or money back (*again from someone who takes fees upfront*)
- We will still be here next year
- Fixed fees for 12 months irrespective of how often they ring to ask questions before they buy/do something
- None! (*the most common response*)

Please note that by sharing contributors' views I am neither endorsing nor condoning any of them. It's your decision what you do. Not mine.

Last updated: July 2006