



## 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.*

### **Beyond MLR\*, my screening process for potential clients includes:**

- Are they content with proposed fees?
- Check industry references and Dun & Bradstreet;
- Check with friends in the profession;
- Completing a pre-appointment checklist;
- Initial personal interview;
- Write to predecessor and ask if they have ever had any problems with the client (*I suggest you might get a more honest reply if you telephone rather than write*);
- Ask the client if they have had previous Revenue enquiries and the outcome of these;
- Ask them when they normally provide the information to prepare tax returns and when their return is normally filed;
- I don't take them on if their opening line is "How much will the work cost?"
- If a referrals, discuss with the person referring, what is the client expecting and what has the referrer told them they can expect?
- Do I like them?
- Am I happy with their type of business?
- I avoid clients with 'cash' businesses;
- Was their previous return filed on time?
- Are they organised with their bookkeeping?
- I don't take on clients who are late for their first meeting with me.
- I check their website:
- I ask my predecessor if there were any problems getting fees paid and if so, why?
- Intuition;
- Always meet them face to face;

\*MLR = (Anti) Money Laundering Regulations

*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: May 2006*