

# The Navigator



Wealth  
Management

INVESTMENT, TAX AND LIFESTYLE PERSPECTIVES FROM RBC WEALTH MANAGEMENT SERVICES



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## RRSP deduction limit statement

Understanding and interpreting your Notice of Assessment

Shortly after you file your 2018 tax return, you should receive a Notice of Assessment (NOA) from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). Here's an overview of the RRSP deduction limit statement ("statement") on your NOA to help you determine the amount you can contribute, how much you can deduct on your income tax return and whether you're in an over-contribution position.

Keep in mind that while this article focuses on your Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP), your RRSP deduction limit also shows the maximum amount that you and/or your employer may contribute to a Pooled Registered Pension Plan (PRPP) for the year. All PRPP contributions by you and/or your employer will reduce your RRSP contribution room for the year.

Consider contributing to your RRSP early in the year. By contributing early, your RRSP assets will have more time to benefit from tax-deferred compound growth.

## The RRSP deduction limit statement

The following is a sample of an RRSP deduction limit statement:

<b>RRSP/PRPP deduction limit statement</b>	
For more information about the details listed below or how employer contributions to a PRPP or group RRSP will affect your contribution room for the year, go to <a href="http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/">http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/</a> or refer to Guide T4040, <i>RRSPs and Other Registered Plans for Retirement</i> .	
<b>Description</b>	<b>(\$)</b> Amount
RRSP/PRPP deduction limit for 2018	\$20,007
<b>Minus:</b> Employer's PRPP contributions for 2018	
<b>Minus:</b> Allowable RRSP/PRPP contributions deducted for 2018	\$11,007
<b>Plus:</b> 18% of 2018 earned income, up to a maximum of \$26,500	\$26,500
<b>Minus:</b> 2018 pension adjustment	\$13,640
<b>Minus:</b> 2019 net past service pension adjustment	
<b>Plus:</b> 2019 pension adjustment reversal	\$2,300
<b>RRSP/PRPP deduction limit for 2019 (A)</b>	<b>\$24,160</b>
<b>Minus:</b> Unused RRSP/PRPP contributions previously reported and available to deduct for 2019 (B)	\$3,500
<b>Available contribution room for 2019</b>	<b>\$20,660</b>
Note: If your available contribution room is a negative amount (shown in brackets), you have no contribution room available for 2019 and may have over-contributed to your RRSP/PRPP. If this is the case, you may have to pay tax on any excess contributions.	

\*Please note that the letters (A) and (B) are not actually shown on your statement but have been included in this sample for ease of reference and to provide continuity with past statements.

## How much can I contribute to my RRSP?

The maximum amount you can contribute to your RRSP without triggering penalty tax is equal to (A) – (B) + \$2,000 where:

- (A) is your RRSP deduction limit for 2019;
- (B) is your unused RRSP contributions; and
- **\$2,000** is the cumulative lifetime allowable amount of over-contribution you can make without being subject to penalty tax.

Using the information from the sample statement, this individual may contribute \$22,660 (\$24,160 – \$3,500 + \$2,000) to their own RRSP or to a spousal RRSP without triggering penalty tax. If this individual would like to deduct the contribution on their 2019 tax return, the contribution needs to be made by the 2019 RRSP deadline of March 2, 2020.

Consider contributing to your RRSP early in the year. By contributing early, your RRSP assets will have more time to benefit from tax-deferred compound growth.

## How much can I deduct on my tax return?

The amount of RRSP contributions you can deduct for 2019 is your 2019 RRSP deduction limit, which is the amount next to the letter (A) in the sample statement. The CRA determines your 2019 limit using information from your 2018 tax return, plus any unused RRSP contribution room carried forward from previous years.

Your RRSP deduction limit is calculated in part by determining your earned income. Earned income includes net income from employment, business and rentals, as well as other income, such as alimony received, but it doesn't include investment income.

Your RRSP deduction limit will be **reduced** by any pension adjustments (PAs) calculated by your employer. For example:

- If you or your employer contributes to a Registered Pension Plan or your employer contributes to a Deferred Profit Sharing Plan, your employer will report a current-year PA on your T4 slip for the benefits accruing to you under the plan(s). A PA will reduce your RRSP contribution room for the following year.
- If you purchased past years of pension service or your benefits relating to a previous period of pensionable service are improved, a "past service pension adjustment" (PSPA) is reported to you. Your net PSPA for 2019 will reduce your RRSP contribution room for 2019.

On the other hand, your RRSP deduction limit will be **increased** by any "pension adjustment reversals" (PARs) calculated by your employer. For example:

- If you received the commuted value from a Defined Benefit Pension Plan, you may have a PAR. A PAR restores your RRSP deduction limit if the amount you receive from the plan is less than the total PAs and PSPAs that were previously reported to you. If you have a PAR in 2019, your RRSP deduction limit for 2019 is increased.

## Have I over-contributed to my RRSP?

In order to determine if you've over-contributed to your RRSP, you'll need to refer to the amount next to the letter (B) (as shown on the earlier sample statement) on your statement. This amount represents your unused contributions, which are also known as undeducted contributions. Unused contributions are RRSP contributions you made in previous years, or in the first 60 days of the current year, that were not deducted on a prior year income tax return. Based on the information from the sample statement, the individual made \$3,500 of RRSP contributions in previous years that they did not deduct for income tax purposes.

You may have chosen not to deduct these contributions because your taxable income was low in the previous year or you expected your income to rise significantly in a future year. It's also possible that you didn't deduct these contributions because you didn't have sufficient RRSP deduction room.

Note that any RRSP contributions you made during the first 60 days of 2019 (i.e. on or before March 1, 2019) should have been reported on Schedule 7 of your 2018 income tax return, even if you did not deduct them. If you did not deduct them, the CRA will report these as unused RRSP contributions (next to where the letter (B) is on the sample statement) on your 2019 RRSP deduction limit statement. Any amounts contributed to your RRSP after March 1, 2019 will not be reflected in your 2019 statement.

The relationship of amount (B) to amount (A) will determine if you are over-contributed. This relationship can be classified in one of the following three ways:

1. **If (B) – (A) is less than or equal to \$0, you have not over-contributed to your RRSP.** This means you still have additional room to make contributions to your RRSP. This additional room is equal to  $(A) - (B) + \$2,000$ .
2. **If (B) – (A) is greater than \$0 but less than \$2,000, you're within the allowable over-contribution limit.** You are allowed to over-contribute a cumulative lifetime total of \$2,000 to your RRSP without incurring a penalty tax. This limit is designed to provide a buffer in case of accidental over-contributions. You can use the \$2,000 over-contribution to have your funds grow on a tax-deferred basis in the RRSP, but keep in mind that the additional over-contribution amount will not be deductible.
 

As you get closer to retirement, make sure that you eventually claim the \$2,000 as part of your deductions to avoid double taxation. The double taxation occurs because you must include the amount in income and may pay tax on the amount when you withdraw it, even though the amount was not deductible when you contributed it. This is important to consider when determining the amount you should contribute to your RRSP when you're nearing retirement.
3. **If (B) – (A) is greater than \$2,000, you have over-contributed to your RRSP and are accruing a penalty.** Over-contributions in excess of \$2,000 are subject to a 1% per month over-contribution tax calculated from the month you first exceeded your contribution limit. The tax will continue to apply until the month you remove the excess or until new contribution room that's sufficient to absorb the over-contribution may become available to you on January 1 of the following year.

Please contact us for more information about the topics discussed in this article.

If you're in an over-contribution position in excess of \$2,000 in any year, you are required to file a T1-OVP, *Individual Tax Return for RRSP Excess Contributions*.

This return is used to calculate the penalty you owe. You are required to pay the penalty and submit the completed return to your tax centre no later than 90 days after the end of the year. If you're in an over-contribution position, you should notify a tax advisor to discuss your options and ensure that the T1-OVP is completed and submitted in a timely fashion.

### What if I can't find my Notice of Assessment?

If you're unable to locate your NOA, you can determine your RRSP contribution room by contacting the CRA directly by phone at 1-800-267-6999, using the MyCRA mobile app or visiting the "My Account" page of the Government of Canada website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/e-services/e-services-individuals/account-individuals.html>.

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