

Validity of meal vouchers from 3 months to 1 year

Meal vouchers complying with a number of conditions are not considered as salary and are fully tax exempt. Both for the employer as for the beneficiary. One of the conditions is the validity of the meal voucher. The validity has been increased from 3 months to 1 year. The new validity applies to paper meal vouchers issued as from September 2013 and to electronic meal vouchers which are credited to the employee's meal vouchers account as from 11 August 2013.

Special fiscal and social security measures

Meal vouchers which are issued to employees or directors are subject to special tax and social security measures. They are considered as social advantages which are under certain conditions tax exempt:

- they are not granted in lieu of salary, bonuses, benefits in kind or any other payment;
- the granting of the meal vouchers is foreseen by a collective labour agreement in the sector or the company or, in absence of a union delegation, by a written individual agreement (in case the company director has employees and they do not receive meal vouchers, the director has no right to meal vouchers either; the amount on the meal vouchers should not be higher than what the employees receive);
- the number of the meal vouchers should equal with the actual days worked;
- the meal vouchers should be issued in the name of the beneficiary;
- the meal voucher should mention that their validity is limited to 1 year (instead of 3 months as from 11 August 2013) and that they can only be used to buy a meal or ready-to-eat food;
- the employer's contribution in the total amount of the meal voucher cannot exceed 5,91€ per meal voucher;
- the contribution of the employer or director in the cost price of the meal voucher should amount at least to 1,09€ per meal voucher.

So the maximum value of a meal voucher amounts to 7€.

Electronic meal vouchers should comply with additional conditions in order to be tax exempt.

Why a longer validity?

Numbers have shown that 286 million meal vouchers are distributed annually. 0,3% to 0,4% are not used because they are not longer valid. A number of vouchers are consequently lost and this means less money for the companies, less buying power for the employees and less income for the food and distribution sector. By extending the validity of meal vouchers, they have more time to use the vouchers. The extension of the validity up to 12 months is operated both for tax and social security purposes. In order to benefit from the tax and social security exemption, the validity should be mentioned on the voucher. The maturity date mentioned on the voucher is the date which is applicable.

The extension of the validity has entered into force on 11 August 2013. The new validity applies to paper meal vouchers which will be issued as from September 2013 and to electronic meal vouchers which are credited on the meal voucher account of the employees as from 11 August 2013. The advantage of the use of electronic meal vouchers is that the payment terminal automatically uses the oldest electronic meal voucher first. Moreover you will receive a warning when the oldest meal vouchers are reaching the maturity date.

COMPTAFID-Benelux NV SA
Brussels

Bld. Edmond Machtensl. 180/100
B-1080 Brussels
Tel: +32 (0)2 410 75 75
www.comptafid.be

COMPTAFID-Benelux NV SA
Antwerp

Schijnparklaan 45
B-2900 Antwerp (Schoten)
Tel: +32 (0)3 658 89 02
www.comptafid.be

COMPTAFID (Schweiz) AG
Zürich

Seefeldstrasse 19 – Postfach
CH-8032 Zürich
Tel.: +41 44 250 2929
www.comptafid.ch