

# **Maintenance Enforcement Program Update**

Government of Alberta ■  
Justice and Attorney General

The Maintenance Enforcement Program (MEP) wants to make sure you are aware of some important changes and information about the program.

## **January 4, 2010 - Banking Error**

Thank you for your patience and understanding regarding the banking error that occurred on January 4, 2010. MEP has worked closely with the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) to correct the banking errors experienced by clients and to reverse any resulting banking fees.

MEP continues to work with RBC to ensure this error does not happen again. If you have any questions or concerns relating to this error, please contact MEP at 780-422-5555 (dial 310-0000 for toll free access anywhere in Alberta).

## **Legislation Change – Driver’s Licence Suspension**

Effective February 21, 2010, MEP will be able to suspend a debtor’s driver’s licence when a client does not pay their child support for at least 60 days and has made no effort to contact MEP to make payment arrangements. A suspended driver’s licence, unlike a cancelled driver’s licence, will appear clearly on a driver’s abstract and be more visible to police officers and motor vehicle registries in other Canadian jurisdictions. Previously, MEP had the ability to cancel a debtor’s driver’s licence upon at least 60 days of default. Cancellations in effect on February 21, 2010 will be changed to suspensions on that date.

If you are driving in Alberta with a suspended licence, you are subject to the same penalties as those for driving with a cancelled licence. For more information, visit <http://www.transportation.alberta.ca/2168.htm>.

Debtors with suspended driver’s licences are encouraged to contact the program to set up a payment arrangement. When the terms of a payment arrangement are followed, MEP can reduce and/or remove collection actions.

## **Making Payments**

Two of the most convenient ways for a debtor to make payments to MEP is through payments automatically withdrawn from a debtor’s bank account or through automatic deductions from a debtor’s paycheque.

Effective March 1, 2010, MEP is introducing new forms for these two convenient methods of payment. These forms will be found on MEP’s website at [www.albertamep.gov.ab.ca](http://www.albertamep.gov.ab.ca).

The Authorized Bank Withdrawal form will allow debtors to arrange for payments to be withdrawn directly from their bank accounts. Also, debtors will be able to authorize MEP to automatically change the maintenance amount withdrawn if a new order changes the maintenance amount, a Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustment changes the amount of the ongoing maintenance, or a Child Status Review (CSR) changes the amount of the ongoing maintenance. This will help debtors avoid default penalties and interest charges upon the amount of their payment changing. If the amount of maintenance to be paid changes for any other reason (e.g. a payment arrangement is established), a

new form will be required in order for MEP to change the amount to be withdrawn from a debtor's bank account.

The Debtor Voluntary Pay Deduction form allows debtors to make arrangements with MEP to deduct their payments directly from their paycheck. A debtor's employer will then send the money to MEP. Debtors choosing this option may wish to speak with program staff to create a credit situation in their file should their maintenance be paid on a different day from the date maintenance is due under their maintenance order. Penalties and interest charges will be applied even if the maintenance is paid, but not by the required due date.

Debtors that are already paying through automatic bank withdrawal will not be affected but will be asked to complete a new form should the amount of their maintenance payment change.

### **Receiving Payments**

Creditors who register with MEP are required to provide the program with direct deposit information. In order to ensure that funds are received, it is the creditor's responsibility to advise MEP of their banking information and of any changes to banking arrangements that may affect the direct deposit of support funds (e.g. a new account number, closing and re-opening the account at a different branch or bank). If banking information changes, please complete a Creditor Direct Deposit form, located on MEP's website at [www.albertamep.gov.ab.ca](http://www.albertamep.gov.ab.ca). Effective April 1, 2010, MEP will no longer be paying creditors by cheque if they have not made arrangements to have current direct deposit information on file.

### **Telephone Application**

MEP has introduced a new automated service to keep in contact with clients during and after normal business hours. Clients will be contacted by MEP's Autodialer, which will deliver generic messages. Clients will be requested to verify information, and the Autodialer will provide a client with information about their MEP file. For example, the Autodialer can call a client and request verification of their telephone number, confirm that an adjustment was made to a client's file, a payment was not received, or request that the client contact MEP to discuss an important matter affecting their file.

### **The Child Support Recalculation Program is Now Open!**

The new Child Support Recalculation Program is now accepting registrations! The Recalculation Program (RP) recalculates child support in eligible court orders based on changes in the parents' incomes.

For a yearly service fee of \$75 per client, RP recalculates future monthly child support based on the *Child Support Guidelines* tables, as well as proportionate shares of expenses. Either a recipient or payor of child support can choose to register with RP. RP uses income tax information provided by clients to set the new child support amount, so there is no need for clients to go to court or a government office. Recalculations are done on a yearly schedule tied to the anniversary of when the court order was granted.

If both parents live in Alberta and your child support was based on the tables in the *Child Support Guidelines*, you may be eligible to register with this exciting new program. For more information, visit [www.recalculation.gov.ab.ca](http://www.recalculation.gov.ab.ca) or phone RP at 780-401-1111 (dial 310-0000 first for toll-free access anywhere in Alberta).