

Imports of Goods into Missouri: Watch for Use Tax Audits

July 2026

Online Tax Strategies

The Missouri Department of Revenue (hereafter “MO DOR”) is currently conducting an audit campaign targeting businesses that have imported goods from abroad into the state.

The notices issued rely on data obtained from the U.S. Customs Service regarding certain goods that entered Missouri without the applicable use tax having been reported or paid. Many businesses may already have received, or may receive, a similar notice in the coming weeks.

RECEIVING A NOTICE DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY MEAN TAX IS DUE

It is important to emphasize that receiving a notice does not automatically mean that tax was due or that a return was necessarily required to be filed. Each situation must be analyzed in light of its specific facts.

SPECIFIC YEARS ARE BEING TARGETED, BUT THE RISK MAY EXTEND FURTHER

To date, the notices received appear to focus primarily on tax years 2022 and 2023, but the initiative could be extended to earlier and later years. It is also important to remember that failure to register or to file returns generally results in there being no statute of limitations.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK AS SOON AS A NOTICE IS RECEIVED

Before concluding that use tax was payable, several elements should be reviewed promptly to determine whether a tax obligation actually existed. In particular, it is important to verify whether the goods were actually used, consumed, or stored in Missouri, whether Missouri was their final destination, whether they were delivered to an exempt customer, whether they were acquired for resale or intended for use in manufacturing, and whether sufficient documentation exists to demonstrate that they were not subject to use or sales tax.

A careful factual review is essential in order to determine the appropriate tax position and prepare an adequate response.

A SHORT DEADLINE SHOULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED

If no response is submitted within the prescribed time limit, generally 30 days, the MO DOR may issue an estimated assessment, including tax, interest, and applicable penalties, and may then begin collection actions.

A prompt response is therefore essential whether to reply to the notice or to request additional time.

PREVENT RATHER THAN REACT: REDUCING RISK IN THE UNITED STATES

Other U.S. states also occasionally undertake similar initiatives. Businesses that import goods into the United States should therefore proactively review their obligations and documentation in order to confirm the applicable tax treatment and assess appropriate corrective or risk-mitigation measures.

Depending on the circumstances, it may sometimes be possible to regularize a situation, including through a voluntary disclosure program. However, it is important to act quickly, since that option is generally no longer available once a tax authority has already contacted the taxpayer regarding the issue.

Your Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton advisor can assist you in analyzing such a notice, assessing your situation, and preparing the response to be submitted to the relevant tax authorities. Please do not hesitate to contact your advisor for the assistance needed in connection with these matters.

For additional information, please visit our website at [rcgt.com](https://www.rcgt.com).