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Employee Repayment of Gasoline Costs

Where an employer allows employees to use company credit cards for personal use subject to the employee repaying the employer for those personal expenses, is the repayment taxable to the employer as the gross income of the business? For example, an employer may allow employees to use company cars for personal purposes and company credit cards to purchase gasoline, subject to the employee repaying the employer for the costs.

In this situation the employer has loaned to the employee the value of the gasoline. Thus, when the employee pays the employer for the personal expenses, the employer is merely receiving the principle of the loan. Gross income of the business is defined in RCW 82.04.080 as including “gains realized from trading in stocks, bonds, or evidences of indebtedness, interest ...”

The return of principle of a loan is not taxable to the lender. Only the gain or interest is taxable.

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