

## **Former CRA employee fined and sentenced to 18-month conditional sentence for income tax evasion**

**Surrey, British Columbia, October 3, 2014...** The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) announced today that Maria Victoria Banhaw of Burnaby, British Columbia, was sentenced on October 3, 2014 in Vancouver Provincial Court, after pleading guilty to one count of income tax evasion. Banhaw was fined \$47,580, representing 75% of the total federal income tax evaded. She was also ordered to serve an 18-month conditional sentence, which includes 9 months of house arrest.

A CRA investigation determined that Banhaw, while employed at the CRA, prepared and filed personal income tax returns for herself, her husband and 34 family members and friends for the 2005 to 2009 tax years. On these 96 returns, Banhaw overstated the amount of Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) contributions in order to reduce taxable income and increase refund amounts payable. Banhaw's family and friends were unaware that she made false claims on their returns. In total, Banhaw reported \$389,417 in false RRSP contributions, resulting in \$63,438 in taxes evaded.

The preceding information was obtained from the court records.

When taxpayers are convicted of income tax evasion, they must still repay the full amount of taxes owing, plus interest and any civil penalties that may be assessed by the CRA. In addition, the court may fine them up to 200% of the taxes evaded and impose a jail term of up to five years.

If you have ever made a tax mistake or omission, the CRA is offering you a second chance to make things right through its Voluntary Disclosures Program (VDP). If you make a valid disclosure before you become aware that the CRA is taking action against you, you may only have to pay the taxes owing plus interest. More information on the VDP can be found on the CRA's website at [www.cra.gc.ca/voluntarydisclosures](http://www.cra.gc.ca/voluntarydisclosures).

Further information on convictions can also be found in the Media Room on the CRA website at [www.cra.gc.ca/convictions](http://www.cra.gc.ca/convictions).

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Date modified: 2014-10-06