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Your Money and Taxes Newsletter

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Top Five Reasons to E-file

IRS Tax Tip 2015-01, January 20, 2015

Are you still using the old school method of doing your taxes? Do you still mail paper forms to the IRS? If so, make this the year you switch to a much faster and safer way of filing your taxes. Join the nearly 126 million taxpayers who used IRS e-file to file their taxes last year. Here are the top five reasons why you should file electronically too:

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1. **Accurate and easy.** IRS e-file is the best way to file an accurate tax return. The tax software that you use to e-file helps avoid mistakes by doing the math for you. It guides you every step of the way as you do your taxes. IRS e-file can also help with the new health care law tax provisions. The bottom line is that e-file is much easier than doing your taxes by hand and mailing paper tax forms.
2. **Convenient options.** You can buy commercial tax software to e-file or ask your tax preparer to e-file your tax return. You can also e-file through IRS Free File, the free tax preparation and e-file program available only on IRS.gov. You may qualify to have your taxes filed through the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance or Tax Counseling for the Elderly programs. In general, VITA offers free tax preparation and e-file if you earned \$53,000 or less. TCE offers help primarily to people who are age 60 or older.
3. **Safe and secure.** IRS e-file meets strict security guidelines. It uses secure encryption technology to protect your tax return. The IRS has safely and securely processed more than 1.3 billion e-filed tax returns from individuals since the program began.
4. **Faster refunds.** In most cases you get your refund faster when you e-file. That's because there is nothing to mail and your return is virtually free of mistakes. The fastest way to get your refund is to combine e-file with direct deposit into your bank account. The IRS issues most refunds in less than 21 days.
5. **Payment flexibility.** If you owe taxes, you can e-file early and set up an automatic payment on any day until the April 15 due date. You can pay electronically from your bank account. You can also pay by check, money order, debit or credit card.



Houston-Latimore & Associates provides tax preparation and other tax resolution services year round. We are authorized by the Internal Revenue Service to provide e-file for tax payers.





"The IRS will never call to demand immediate payment without first having mailed you a bill".

IRS-Impersonation Telephone Scam

IRS-Impersonation Telephone Scam - Most Recent Scams

An aggressive and sophisticated phone scam targeting taxpayers, including recent immigrants, has been making the rounds throughout the country. Callers claim to be employees of the IRS, but are not. These con artists can sound convincing when they call. They use fake names and bogus IRS identification badge numbers. They may know a lot about their targets, and they usually alter the caller ID to make it look like the IRS is calling.

Victims are told they owe money to the IRS and it must be paid promptly through a pre-loaded debit card or wire transfer. If the victim refuses to cooperate, they are then threatened with arrest, deportation or suspension of a business or driver's license. In many cases, the caller becomes hostile and insulting.

Or, victims may be told they have a refund due to try to trick them into sharing private information.

If the phone isn't answered, the scammers often leave an "urgent" callback request.

Note that the IRS will never: 1) call to demand immediate payment, nor will the agency call about taxes owed without first having mailed you a bill; 2) demand that you pay taxes without giving you the opportunity to question or appeal the amount they say you owe; 3) require you to use a specific payment method for your taxes, such as a prepaid debit card; 4) ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone; or 5) threaten to bring in local police or other law-enforcement groups to have you arrested for not paying.

Alabama Department of Revenue Tax Guidance

The ADOR has announced that taxpayers who file electronically will be prompted to provide driver's license and date of birth information when filing their Alabama individual income tax returns. The ADOR requested this information to offer taxpayers a higher level of filing protection, aimed at reducing risk of identity theft and fraudulent return filings.

- The ADOR will NOT take action against any tax preparer who electronically files returns omitting the requested driver's license/date of birth information on behalf of a client.
- Alabama returns that are filed without the requested driver's license information/date of birth will be processed in a timely matter. However, Alabama returns filed without this information may be subject to additional or different anti-identity theft screening measures.

Identity theft and fraudulent return filings remain a serious concern for tax agencies at all levels. Because of this, the department remains committed to investigating and implementing security and screening measures that can offer taxpayers the greatest filing protection possible, equally coupled with filing convenience.

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