

LAST-MINUTE TAX TIPS

WASHINGTON -- With the tax filing season in its final week, the Internal Revenue Service offered some tips for those still working on their tax forms. Double-check your numbers. Sign your form. Attach all required schedules. And send your return to the IRS by April 15.

As usual, most people won't need this last-minute advice, because they've already filed. As of April 3, the IRS had received more than 67 million of the 124 million returns it expects this calendar year.

One clear trend this year has been the increase in e-filing. The numbers for computer and telephone returns are each 25 percent ahead of this time last year and total over 21.4 million, surpassing the projection for the entire year.

The numbers to check most carefully are the identification numbers -- usually Social Security numbers (SSNs) -- for each person listed on your tax return. This includes yourself, spouse, dependents, and persons listed in relation to claims for the child care or earned income tax credits. Missing or incorrect SSNs -- the most frequent error last year -- can delay or reduce a tax refund. Also check that you have correctly figured the refund or balance due and have taken the right amount from the tax table.

Sign and date your completed return. Both spouses must sign a joint return, even if only one had income. Anyone who is paid to prepare a return must also sign.

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Staple Form W-2 wage statements, Form W-2G reports of gambling winnings, or Form 1099-R pension or annuity statements showing tax withheld, to the front page of the tax return. If you cannot pay the full balance due and want to set up an installment plan, attach Form 9465 to the front of the return. Put all other required forms and schedules behind the Form 1040 or 1040A, in the attachment sequence order listed in the upper right corner of each page.

If you report capital gains or losses on line 13 of Form 1040, you must complete and attach Schedule D this year, even if you had only capital gains distributions from mutual funds. You must use Schedule D to figure your tax and get the benefits of the reduced tax rates on capital gains.

Send your return by April 15. If you don't e-file, you may use the U.S. Postal Service or one of the designated private delivery services. The tax instructions list these private delivery services, which are offered by four companies: Airborne Express, DHL Worldwide Express, Federal Express and United Parcel Service.

The IRS tax help number -- 1-800-829-1040 -- is open 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Over 150 local IRS offices will be open Saturday, Apr. 11, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., for walk-in assistance.

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1998 FILING SEASON STATISTICS

Cumulative through the week ending 4/4/97 and 4/3/98

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Individual Income Tax Returns (electronic and paper)			
Total Receipts	66,873,000	67,426,000	0.8
Total Processed	56,366,000	59,282,000	5.2
E-filing -- Total Receipts:			
Standard E-file	13,007,000	16,306,000	25.4
TeleFile	4,072,000	5,116,000	25.6
Refunds Certified by the Martinsburg Computing Center:			
Number	50,916,000	52,703,000	3.5
Amount	\$66.919 billion	\$72.155 billion	7.8
Average Refund	\$1314	\$1369	4.2
Direct Deposit Refunds:			
Number	13,871,000	16,036,000	15.6
Amount	\$25.078 billion	\$29.551 billion	17.8