

# IRS News Release

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Media Relations Office

Washington, D.C.

Media Contact: 202.317.4000

[www.irs.gov/newsroom](http://www.irs.gov/newsroom)

Public Contact: 800.829.1040

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## Tax Time Guide: Automatic Tax-Filing Extensions Now Available; Use Free File to Get Six More Months to File

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*Need More Time to File Your Tax Return?* [English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [ASL](#)

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WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service today reminded taxpayers who are unable to file their tax returns on time that it's easy to get more time to complete their return. In fact, it can even be done online.

This is the eighth in a series of IRS tips called the Tax Time Guide. These tips are designed to help taxpayers navigate common tax issues as this year's tax deadline approaches.

For taxpayers who haven't yet filed their returns, the IRS has this advice: don't panic. Taxpayers who need more time to complete their return can request an automatic six-month extension.

The fastest and easiest way to get the extra time is through the [Free File](#) link on IRS.gov. In a matter of minutes, anyone, regardless of income, can use this free service to electronically request an extension on [Form 4868](#). Filing this form gives taxpayers until Oct. 17 to file a tax return. To get the extension, taxpayers must estimate their tax liability on this form and should also pay any amount due.

Another quick and easy way to get an extension is to make an electronic payment, such as through IRS [Direct Pay](#), and select Form 4868 to indicate that it is for an extension. Available anytime, Direct Pay offers individual taxpayers a free, secure way to quickly make a tax payment without having to write a check, buy a stamp or find a mailbox. No preregistration is required, and payments can be scheduled up to 30 days in advance. Anyone using this online tool receives instant confirmation that their payment has been submitted and they do not have to file a Form 4868.

Those enrolled in the Electronic Federal Tax Payment System ([EFTPS](#)) can get an extension by using this free system to make a payment online or by phone. Taxpayers can also get an extension by making a [credit or debit card](#) payment online or by phone, but fees charged by the card processor (not the IRS) apply.

Besides Free File and electronic payments, taxpayers can choose to request an extension through a paid tax preparer, by using tax-preparation software or by filing a paper Form 4868, which can be downloaded from IRS.gov.

The IRS reminds taxpayers that a request for an extension provides extra time to *file* a tax return, but not extra time to *pay* any taxes owed. Payments are still due by the original deadline.

Taxpayers should file even if they can't pay the full amount. By filing either a regular return or requesting an extension by the April 18 filing deadline (April 19 for residents of Maine and Massachusetts), they will avoid the late-filing penalty, which can be ten times as costly as the penalty for not paying. Taxpayers who pay as much as they can by the due date reduce the overall amount subject to penalty and interest charges.

The interest rate is [currently](#) four percent per year, compounded daily, the late filing penalty is generally five percent per month and the late-payment penalty is normally 0.5 percent per month.

Taxpayers who cannot pay the full amount of tax owed should try other options to pay, such as getting a loan or paying by [debit or credit card](#). The IRS will work with them to help resolve their tax debt. Most people can set up an installment agreement with the IRS using the [Online Payment Agreement tool](#) on IRS.gov.

Some taxpayers get more time to file their returns without having to ask for an extension. These include:

- [Taxpayers abroad](#). U.S. citizens and resident aliens who live and work abroad, as well as members of the military on duty outside the U.S., have until June 15 to file. Tax payments are still due April 18.
- Members of the military and others serving in Afghanistan or other [combat zone](#) localities. Typically, military taxpayers can wait until at least 180 days after they leave the combat zone to file returns and pay any taxes due. For details, see Extensions of Deadlines in [Publication 3](#), Armed Forces' Tax Guide.
- People affected by certain [recent natural disasters](#). Currently, taxpayers in parts of Arkansas, Mississippi and Missouri have until May 16 to file their tax returns and pay any taxes due, while those in parts of Louisiana, Texas and other parts of Mississippi have until July 15 to file and pay.

Other tax tips in the Tax Time Guide series are available on IRS.gov.