

 News Release

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Tax Time Guide: Get an Automatic Six More Months to File; Free File Now Available for Extensions

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WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service reminded taxpayers today that if they are unable to file their tax returns by this year's April 18 deadline there is an easy, online option to get more time to complete their return.

The advice for those who cannot complete their tax return by April 18: Do not panic. Taxpayers who need more time to complete their return can request an automatic six-month extension. An extension allows for extra time to gather, prepare and file paperwork with the IRS, however, it does not extend the time to pay any tax due.

The fastest and easiest way to get an extension is through [Free File](#) on IRS.gov. Taxpayers can electronically request an extension on Form 4868. This service is free for everyone, regardless of income. Filing this form gives taxpayers until Oct. 16 to file their tax return. To get the extension, taxpayers must estimate their tax liability on this form and should pay any amount due.

Other fast, free and easy ways to get an extension include using IRS [Direct Pay](#), the [Electronic Federal Tax Payment System](#) or by paying with a [credit or debit card](#). There is no need to file a separate Form 4868 extension request when making an electronic payment and indicating it is for an extension. The IRS will automatically count it as an extension.

Direct Pay is available online and on the IRS2Go app. It's free, does not require preregistration and gives instant confirmation when taxpayers submit a payment. It also provides the option of scheduling a payment up to 30 days in advance. Taxpayers using a [credit or debit card](#) can pay online, by phone or with the IRS2Go app. The card processor charges a fee, but the IRS does not charge any fees for this service.

Besides Free File and electronic payments, taxpayers can request an extension through a paid tax preparer, by using tax-preparation software or by mailing in a paper [Form 4868](#). Tax forms can be downloaded from IRS.gov/forms.

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, they will avoid the late-filing penalty, which can be 10 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.

The IRS will work with taxpayers who cannot pay the full amount of tax they owe. Other options to pay, such as getting a loan or paying by credit card may help resolve a tax debt. Most people can set up an installment agreement with the IRS using the [Online Payment Agreement tool](#) on IRS.gov.

When the President makes a disaster area declaration, the IRS can postpone certain taxpayer deadlines for residents and businesses in the [affected area](#). Taxpayers who are victims of a [natural disaster](#) may apply for automatic filing and payment relief. Taxpayers outside the covered disaster area but whose tax records required for filing or payment are located in a covered disaster area may also be eligible for this tax relief. Taxpayers who have been affected by recent severe weather should check [Around the Nation](#) on IRS.gov for disaster tax relief for their state.

Other taxpayers who get more time to file without having to ask for extensions include:

- [U.S. citizens and resident aliens](#) who live and work outside of the United States and Puerto Rico get an automatic two-month extension to file their tax returns. They have until June 15 to file. However, tax payments are still due April 18.
- Members of the military on duty outside the United States and Puerto Rico also receive an automatic two-month extension to file. Those serving in [combat zones](#) have up to 180 days after they leave the combat zone to file returns and pay any taxes due. Details are available in the Armed Forces' Tax Guide [Publication 3](#).

This is the 10th in a series of 10 IRS tips called the [Tax Time Guide](#). The tips are intended to help taxpayers as they get closer to the April 18 income tax filing deadline.