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Feb. 01, 2017



As millions of people begin filing their tax returns, the IRS is reminding taxpayers about some basic tips to keep in mind about their refunds.

During the early parts of the tax season, early filers are anxious to get details about their tax refunds. And in some social media, this can lead to misunderstandings and speculation about refunds. The IRS offers some tips to keep in mind.

Myth 1: All Refunds Are Delayed

While more than 90 percent of federal tax refunds are issued in the normal

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Myth 2: Calling the IRS or My Tax Professional Will Provide a Better Refund Date

Many people mistakenly think that talking to the IRS or calling their tax professional is the best way to find out when they will get their refund. In reality, the best way to check the status of a refund is online through the “[Where's My Refund?](#)” tool at IRS.gov or via the [IRS2Go mobile app](#).

Taxpayers eager to know when their refund will be arriving should use the “Where's My Refund” tool rather than calling and waiting on hold or ordering a tax transcript. The IRS updates the status of refunds once a day, usually overnight, so checking more than once a day will not produce new information. “Where's My Refund” has the same information available to IRS telephone assistants so there is no need to call unless requested to do so by the refund tool.

Myth 3: Ordering a Tax Transcript a “Secret Way” to Get a Refund Date

Ordering a tax transcript will not help taxpayers find out when they will get their refund. The IRS notes that the information on a transcript does not necessarily reflect the amount or timing of a refund. While taxpayers can use a transcript to validate past income and tax filing status for mortgage, student and small business loan applications and to help with tax preparation they should use “Where's My Refund?” to check the status of their refund.

Myth 4: “Where's My Refund,” Must be Wrong Because There's No Deposit Date Yet

[Where's My Refund?](#) on both IRS.gov and [the IRS2Go mobile app](#) will be updated with projected deposit dates for early EITC and ACTC refund filers a few days after Feb. 15. Taxpayers claiming EITC or ACTC will not see a refund date on Where's My

Refund? or through their software package until then. The IRS, tax preparers and tax

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refund since many financial institutions do not process payments on weekends or holidays.

See the [What to Expect for Refunds in 2017](#) page and the [Refunds FAQs](#) page for more information.

Myth 5: Delayed Refunds, those Claiming EITC and/or ACTC, will be Delivered on Feb. 15

By law, the IRS cannot issue refunds before Feb. 15 for any tax return claiming the Earned Income Tax Credit ([EITC](#)) or Additional Child Tax Credit ([ACTC](#)). The IRS must hold the entire refund, not just the part related to the EITC or ACTC. The IRS will begin to release these refunds starting Feb. 15.

These refunds likely won't arrive in bank accounts or on debit cards until the week of Feb. 27. This is true as long as there is no additional review of the tax return required and the taxpayer chose direct deposit. Banking and financial systems need time to process deposits, which can take several days. .

More Information About “Where’s My Refund”

“Where’s My Refund?” can be checked within 24 hours after the IRS has received an e-filed return or four weeks after receipt of a mailed paper return. “Where’s My Refund?” has a tracker that displays progress through three stages: (1) Return Received, (2) Refund Approved and (3) Refund Sent.

Users who access “Where’s My Refund?” on IRS.gov or the IRS2Go app must have information from their current, pending tax return to access their refund information. The IRS reminds taxpayers claiming the EITC or the ACTC that recent legislation requires the IRS to hold those refunds until mid-February. Keep in mind that only a small percentage of total filers will fall into this situation. The change

helps ensure that taxpayers get the refund they are owed by giving the IRS more time

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The IRS reminds taxpayers they have a variety of options to get help filing and preparing their tax return on IRS.gov. Taxpayers can also, if eligible, receive help from a community volunteer. Go to IRS.gov and click on the "Filing" tab for more information.

Seventy percent of the nation's taxpayers are eligible for IRS Free File. Commercial IRS partners offer free brand-name software to about 100 million individuals and families with incomes of \$64,000 or less.

Online fillable forms provides electronic versions of IRS paper forms to all taxpayers regardless of income that can be prepared and filed by people comfortable with completing their own returns.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) offer free tax help to people who qualify. Go to irs.gov and enter "free tax prep" in the search box to learn more and find a nearby VITA or TCE site, or download the IRS2Go smartphone app to find a free tax prep provider.

The IRS also reminds taxpayers that a trusted tax professional can provide helpful information and advice about the ever-changing tax code. [Tips for choosing a return preparer](#) and details about [national tax professional groups](#) are available on IRS.gov.

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