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they have all the documents before they file their return, including their 2016 tax return. This includes Forms W-2 from employers, Forms 1099 from banks and other ...

Nov. 07, 2017



Tax season is always around the corner, and now that it's almost Thanksgiving, now is the time to take steps to ensure smooth processing of your 2017 tax return and avoid a delay in getting their refund next year. This is the first in a series of reminders from the IRS to help taxpayers get ready for the upcoming tax filing season. Additionally, the IRS has a [special page](#) on its website with steps to take now for the 2018 tax filing season.

Gather Documents

The IRS urges all taxpayers to file a complete and accurate tax return by making sure

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Taxpayers should keep a copy of their 2016 tax return and all supporting documents for a minimum of three years. Doing so will make it easier to fill out a 2017 return next year. In addition, taxpayers using a software product for the first time may need the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) amount from their 2016 return to properly e-file their 2017 return. Learn more about verifying identity and electronically signing a return at [Validating Your Electronically Filed Tax Return](#).

Renew Expiring ITINs

Some people with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) may need to renew it before the end of the year. Doing so promptly will avoid a refund delay and possible loss of key tax benefits.

Any ITIN not used on a tax return in the past three years will expire on Dec. 31, 2017. Similarly, any ITIN with middle digits 70, 71, 72 or 80 will also expire at the end of the year. Anyone with an expiring ITIN who plans to file a return in 2018 will need to renew it using [Form W-7](#).

Once a completed form is filed, it typically takes about seven weeks to receive an ITIN assignment letter from the IRS. But it can take longer — nine to 11 weeks — if an applicant waits until the peak of the filing season to submit this form or sends it from overseas. Taxpayers should take action now to avoid delays.

Taxpayers who fail to renew an ITIN before filing a tax return next year could face a delayed refund and may be ineligible for certain tax credits. For more information, visit the [ITIN](#) information page on IRS.gov.

Refunds Held for Those Claiming EITC or ACTC Until Mid-Feb

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As always, the IRS cautions taxpayers not to rely on getting a refund by a certain date, especially when making major purchases or paying bills. Though the IRS issues more than nine out of 10 refunds in less than 21 days, some returns require further review.

For a Faster Refund, Choose e-file

Electronically filing a tax return is the most accurate way to prepare and file. Errors delay refunds and the easiest way to avoid them is to e-file. Nearly 90 percent of all returns are electronically filed. There are several [e-file](#) options:

- [IRS Free File](#),
- [Volunteer Income Tax Assistance and Tax Counseling for the Elderly programs](#),
- Commercial tax preparation software, or
- Tax professional.

Use Direct Deposit.

Combining direct deposit with electronic filing is the fastest way for a taxpayer to get their refund. With direct deposit, a refund goes directly into a taxpayer's bank account. There's no reason to worry about a lost, stolen or undeliverable refund check. This is the same electronic transfer system now used to deposit nearly 98 percent of all Social Security and Veterans Affairs benefits. Nearly four out of five federal tax refunds are direct deposited.

Direct deposit saves taxpayer dollars. It costs the nation's taxpayers more than \$1 for every paper refund check issued but only a dime for each direct deposit.

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