



Rhode Island Division of Taxation

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
Department of Revenue

April 3, 2012

ADV 2012-08

Advisory:

Two weeks 'til deadline

The deadline for filing Rhode Island personal income tax returns is two weeks away. The Rhode Island Division of Taxation today urged taxpayers to complete their returns as soon as possible – and to file them electronically – in order to avoid the last-minute crunch and to ensure that returns are received and processed as promptly as possible. Today's advisory provides details, resources, updated statistics, and other information.

Free preparation and e-file

Returns must be e-filed or postmarked by midnight on April 17. If you still haven't done your taxes yet, consider this: [The Rhode Island Division of Taxation now offers links to four independent tax-preparation companies through which you can prepare and file both your federal and Rhode Island returns online at no charge.](#)

The offers aren't for everyone; you must meet certain qualifications. "Taxpayers should check to see if they're eligible, and then read each program's rules to make sure the program suits their needs," Tax Administrator David M. Sullivan said. To take advantage of the offers, you must go through [the links on the Tax Division's website](#) -- where you'll also find details about each offer. The companies behind the offers are part of the Free File Alliance, a consortium of tax software providers that make versions of their free-file products available [through the Internal Revenue Service](#).

Forms, instructions

Looking for forms, instructions, booklets, and additional information in advance of the deadline? You have several options:

- Download forms from the Tax Division's website, <http://www.tax.ri.gov>;
- Use the following e-mail address to request a form or booklet: TaxForms@tax.ri.gov;
- Visit the Tax Division's first-floor lobby at One Capitol Hill, Providence; or
- Call the Tax Division's forms request line at (401) 574-8970.

The Tax Division has also issued [a special edition of its newsletter, Rhode Island Tax News](#), to provide tax preparers, taxpayers, and others with helpful information about what's new for this filing season. If you have questions about your taxes, call the Tax Division at (401) 574-8829 from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. business days. (When calling, please select option 3.)

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Deadline for other forms

April 17 is the final deadline for property-tax relief claims on [Form RI-1040H](#), and for the residential lead abatement credit on [Form RI-6238](#). Even if you plan on filing your regular return on extension, you still must file your claims for property-tax relief and for the residential lead abatement credit by April 17. Also, April 17 is the deadline for calendar-year limited liability companies (LLCs) that file their annual return on [Form RI-1120S](#).

Avoid penalties

If you can't file your Rhode Island personal income tax return by the April 17 deadline, you can file for an extension. You may use [Form RI-4868, "Rhode Island Application for Automatic Extension of Time to File a Rhode Island Individual Income Tax Return,"](#) available on the Tax Division website. It is good for both resident and nonresident returns. It will push your filing deadline out to October 15, 2012.

Remember, though, that it is an extension of the deadline for filing, not for paying, said Peter McVay, associate director of revenue services. "You still must pay what you owe by April 17, or face penalty and interest charges," McVay said.

Note that if you are not required to make a payment by April 17 -- because your calculations show that you paid in a sufficient amount last year, for example -- you need not file the Rhode Island extension form; you'll qualify for the six-month extension automatically.

If you must file Form RI-4868, follow the instructions carefully and use the form to make a proper estimate. If you fail to make a proper estimate, your extension request won't be considered valid. Also please note that the deadline for filing your Rhode Island extension is April 17.

If you can't pay what you owe by the April 17 deadline, file anyway to avoid the failure-to-pay penalty. You can then enter into an agreement to pay what you owe over time, in installments. To learn more about such payment plans, call the Tax Division's Compliance & Collections section, at (401) 574-8941. (Have a copy of your return handy when you call.)

E-filing still tops

E-filing remains, by far, the most popular way for taxpayers to file their Rhode Island personal income tax returns. For the filing season to date, more than 86 percent of all returns have been e-filed, up from about 82 percent at the same point last year, new Tax Division figures show. E-filing is faster, more accurate, and provides refunds more quickly.

	Filing season 2011	Filing season 2012	Difference
E-filed returns	282,993	309,430	+ 9.3%
Paper returns	45,880	33,386	- 27.2%
2-D barcode returns	17,767	15,821	-10.95%
Total returns:	346,640	358,637	+ 3.46%

Filing season figures through March 30, 2011, and March 28, 2012.
Figures are cumulative for each filing season to date, do not include refunds for prior years, and are before interest and offset.

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Estimated tax payments

If you make quarterly estimated payments of Rhode Island personal income tax, don't forget that the deadline for the first such payment of 2012 is April 17.

If you didn't receive a booklet in the mail, you may [use the payment coupons and instructions available on the Tax Division website, on Form RI-1040ES.](#)

Avoid errors

The Tax Division typically issues 98.5% of all personal income tax refunds within 30 days after the returns are received. Still, that always leaves some taxpayers who have not received their refunds. Often, refunds are delayed because of errors involving the returns themselves. Before you file, remember to check for errors. To help you in your effort, the Tax Division recently issued an [advisory listing the top five errors that delay refunds.](#)

Refund statistics

So far this season, the Tax Division has issued more refunds than at the same point last year, and in greater amounts, new Tax Division figures show. The average refund so far is \$514.

	Filing season 2011	Filing season 2012	Difference
Number of refunds	276,040	292,052	+ 5.8%
Total amount refunded	\$ 129,170,777	\$ 150,153,764	+ 16.2%
Average refund	\$468	\$ 514	+ 9.9%

Filing season figures through April 1, 2011, and March 30, 2012.
Figures for each filing season do not include amended returns or prior-year returns.

To find out the status of your refund, use the ["Where's My Refund"](#) tool on the Tax Division's website. The tool is updated once a week, usually by Saturday, with fresh figures. Or call the Tax Division's main number, at (401) 574-8829, and press option 3.

Keep in touch . . .

Don't forget that there are different ways you can keep current with Rhode Island Division of Taxation developments:

- Find us on [Facebook](#);
- Get updates on [our blog](#);
- Follow us on [Twitter](#); or
- Get updates via e-mail by joining our bulk e-mail list (listserv). To subscribe, send an e-mail to Susan.Galvin@tax.ri.gov with the word SUBSCRIBE in the subject block.

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