

# **On what date will the IRS begin to allow taxpayers to e-file their tax returns for Tax Season 2015?**

The Internal Revenue Service (hereinafter the "Service") announced that it will commence accepting tax returns electronically filed on January 20th of 2015. Hard copy tax returns will also be accepted and processed starting on this date as well.

The Service's decision follows the passage of the tax extenders package into law on December 19, 2014 which retroactively reinstated over 50 tax incentives that had previously expired on December 31, 2013. "We have reviewed the late tax law changes and determined there was nothing preventing us from continuing our updating and testing of our systems," said IRS Commissioner John Koskinen in a prepared statement. "Our employees will continue an aggressive schedule of testing and preparation of our systems during the next month to complete the final stages needed for the 2015 tax season."

The Service reminded taxpayers that the e-filing of tax returns is the most accurate way to file a tax return and the fastest way to get a refund, adding that there is no advantage to taxpayers filing tax returns on paper in early January, instead of waiting for e-filing to commence on January 20th.

The IRS has set later electronic filing dates over the past several years to curtail the false documents made up by criminals who file fraudulent tax returns for large refunds before the end of month requirement to mail information returns by employers, banks, mortgage companies, etc. The IRS has developed an algorithm to deter criminals from filing fraudulent returns as well as criminals who steal valid social security numbers (identity theft) to file fraudulent returns for large refunds.

Thankfully, there is better control over fraudulent returns; however, it would be better if the Service would discontinue the issuance of paper documents and allowed taxpayers as well as preparers to access the electronically filed information filed by payers. The idea was set in motion early on, but has never been fully implemented over the last 30 years that IRS has allowed electronic filing of tax returns. It is understandable that the government may be slow in development, but at this point it seems that they need a good overhaul especially if they continue to lay off personnel. Computer to computer information would help save them time and money. It's time to move to a higher level of technology and this time they must make a giant leap to catch up.

By Caran Ebert, CPA  
former tax auditor  
Topanga Canyon, CA