

Media Releases 2009

New Operational procedures for 2009 Tax Season Deadline Week

Pretoria, 17 November 2009 – Branch offices of the South African Revenue Service (SARS) have since yesterday experienced very high volumes in the number of taxpayers who require assistance in filing their income tax returns.

In order to assist these taxpayers SARS must inform taxpayers that our services between now and the end of business on Friday will primarily be focussed on assisting those taxpayers who come to file a tax return.

Other enquiries from taxpayers – like enquiries on the progress of tax assessments, enquiries about refunds, requests for tax clearance certificates, etc – will be referred to Monday 23 November 2009 when operations at branch offices return to normal.

Our experience is that the long waiting periods in queues are compounded by large numbers of taxpayers with general enquiries that may be resolved through other channels of communication.

Only high priority cases will be dealt with if there is a need to do so and SARS managers at branch offices will apply their discretion in such circumstances.

SARS branch offices have already extended their hours of operation from today from 07am to 6pm until the deadline on Friday.

The SARS contact centre is also available to assist taxpayers with enquiries and has extended its operating hours to 08:00 pm on weekdays. However, it must be understood that the call centre is experiencing large volumes of calls similar to that at branch office level.

Yesterday 47 595 calls were answered by contact centre staff, a 19% increase from the previous Monday when 40 019 calls were attended to. Queries related to eFiling represent 45% of calls with the most common requests for assistance being

- Reset password
- How to register on e-filing
- Completing and submitting a return on e-filing

Passwords can be reset using the Contact Centre's IVR system or the eFiling website Self-Help service and would save taxpayers time.

To date SARS has received more than 3.2 million returns as part of the 2009 Tax Season.

The number for the SARS National Contact Centre is 0800 00 7277

ENDS.