

Media Releases 2011

Launch of the 2011 Tax Season

Pretoria 30 June 2011 – Tomorrow, Friday 1 July 2011, marks the beginning of Tax Season 2011 when more than 4 million taxpayers will start submitting their annual income tax returns to the South African Revenue Service (SARS).

The tax return submission process is a reconciliation of all income, deductions and income tax already paid during the tax year 1 March 2010 to 28 February 2011.

Taxpayers should remember that SARS no longer sends out income tax returns to taxpayers unless requested. However, taxpayers don't have to wait to receive their return to submit it.

They can simply visit their nearest SARS branch with their tax documents and personal particulars and a SARS consultant will help them complete and submit their return then and there. Last year more than 1.5 million taxpayers were assisted to submit their returns at SARS branches countrywide.

Those registered for eFiling simply log on to www.sarsefiling and will receive their customised return on their eFiling profile. eFiling continues to grow as the preferred channel to file returns with more than 2.25 million submitted to SARS via eFiling during Tax Season 2010.

All tax returns are pre-populated with information which SARS has obtained from employers during the recently completed Tax season for employers which ended on 3 June 2011 during which a record number of 235 882 employers submitted almost 15 million employee tax certificates.

Taxpayers who still choose to submit a paper/manual return can request a pre-populated return to be posted to them by calling the SARS Contact Centre on 0800 00 7277 or at a SARS branch by completing a ITRR (Income Tax Return Request) form.

SARS Commissioner Oupa Magashula will publicly launch the 2011 Tax Season at the SARS Branch office in Durban tomorrow. From tomorrow SARS will also roll-out an extensive national communications campaign to complete various outreach initiative aimed at assisting million of taxpayers.

The theme of this year's Tax Season campaign is "Taking the 'eish' out of tax-eish-ion" and taxpayers will be encouraged to do this by following these Tax Season tips:

- File early: Don't wait for the last minute to submit your tax return. The earlier you do it, the less congestion you will experience – and the quicker you will receive any refund you may have due.

- File electronically: Last year more than 95% of all returns were submitted electronically either via a SARS branch or via SARS eFiling, the free internet service that allows you to file your return any time of the day or night from anywhere you want to. Electronically submitted returns are processed on average in just 24 hours.

- File honestly: It is a criminal offence to fail to declare all your income on your tax return or to misrepresent your allowable deductions. Make sure you are completely honest on your return...and avoid delays in processing your return and/or further investigation and action by SARS.

- Complete the return in full: Your return will have some information that SARS has already provided. You need to check that this is correct, make corrections where necessary and provide all relevant information about your personal details (including ID or passport number, name, addresses and banking details) as well as your income and deductions. If your return is incomplete SARS will not be able to process it...and you could receive a penalty.

- And don't miss the deadline: Eish! This is really important. If you submit your return after the deadline you face an administrative penalty of at least R250 per month that your return is outstanding!

The deadlines—

- The submission deadline for taxpayers who submit a paper / manual return via post or dropping it off at a SARS branch is Friday 30 September 2011.

- Taxpayers who use eFiling or come into a branch where SARS consultants capture their returns on computer have until Friday 25 November 2011.

- Provisional taxpayers who file via eFiling have until Tuesday 31 January 2012 to submit their returns.

Banking detail changes

The fraudulent changing of banking details is a serious matter and SARS is determined to prevent the payment of refunds into fraudulent bank accounts so as to safeguard taxpayers' money.

In line with this, SARS may require taxpayers who have recently changed their banking details, or want to change their banking details, to visit a SARS branch in person to provide proof of identity and proof of banking details in line with the requirements of the Financial Intelligence Centre Act (FICA). This also applies to taxpayers who want to change their banking details via eFiling.

Only taxpayers who are notified by SARS to visit a SARS branch are required to do so and must bring along the supporting documents indicated in the notification letter.

SARS has made available a number of guides and other documents to assist taxpayers file early, honestly and correctly. Please visit the SARS website at www.sars.gov.za or call the SARS Contact Centre on 8000 00 SARS (7277).
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