

Media Releases 2007

The Start of Filing Season 2007

31 July 2007, Pretoria – As from tomorrow, the South African Revenue Service (SARS) will start accepting income tax returns from South African taxpayers as 1 August 2007 marks the beginning of our annual Filing Season period.

1 August to 31 October 2007 is the period during which millions of taxpayers must hand in their tax returns to SARS. This year SARS has introduced significant changes to simplify and make the filing experience easier for taxpayers:

- The tax return has been reduced to two pages for most taxpayers
- The number of different returns have been reduced
- The process of submitting returns and the manner in which SARS will assess returns also change dramatically.

The majority of taxpayers should have received their income tax returns through the mail since SARS started issuing about 3.5 million returns since 16 July 2007. Since then SARS offices have been assisting taxpayers at branch offices to complete the returns.

To date over 67 000 returns have already been received by SARS. From today, taxpayers can submit returns through the following ways:

- It can be mailed to SARS
- It can be delivered to drop boxes at SARS offices
- It can be handed in at any South African Post Office across the country
- A taxpayer can come to any branch office for free assistance and electronic completion of their forms. Taxpayers are reminded to bring supporting documentation with if they use this option in order to complete their returns accurately

As from midday tomorrow SARS will have an electronic version income tax return available on the internet for individual taxpayers.

This is the first phase of an automated, new electronic submission system that SARS is introducing as part of the enhanced service initiatives.

Phase 1

As from 12:00 pm on 1 August 2007, individual taxpayers can access and download the income tax return (a PDF version in Adobe format) from the web address www.sarsefiling.co.za.

During this first phase the income tax return can be completed electronically from where a number of options become available to the taxpayer:

- Form can be completed electronically and saved on computer
- The taxpayer can send the return electronically between the taxpayer and his/her tax practitioner/accountant/bookkeeper
- The completed return can be printed, signed and be handed in at a SARS branch office manually, i.e. dropped off by hand or mailed through the South African Post Office.

If the forms are completed electronically, the taxpayer's information is captured on a 2-D barcode which can be instantly and accurately uploaded onto the SARS system; thus reducing the element of human error. This is a fully automated process which will effectively ensure that taxpayers will receive the outcome of the SARS assessment much faster.

Phase 2

The second phase of the automated filing system – eFiling – to be launched on Monday, 6 August 2007, will allow for taxpayers to also submit their returns on-line.

The additional benefit of eFiling will be that individual taxpayers will be able to submit tax returns electronically as opposed to manual submissions.

Both individual taxpayers as well as tax practitioners stand to benefit from this system.

Taxpayers can contact the SARS national call centre for assistance to complete their returns: 0860 12 12 18.

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