



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Taxpayers To Expect Process Changes During 2017 Income Tax Filing Season

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Due to the continued threat of tax fraud, the Department of Revenue (DOR) is taking action to protect taxpayer's sensitive identity information and precious tax dollars in the State of Georgia. In addition to implementing a state-of-the-art fraud management system, which has blocked over \$70 million in fraudulently filed refund requests from being released in 2016, DOR will implement process changes that will go into effect beginning with the 2017 income tax filing season.

Changes for Individuals:

- DOR will begin processing 2016 individual income tax returns on **February 1, 2017**.
- It may take more than **90 days** from the date of receipt by DOR to process a return and issue a refund.
- All first-time Georgia income tax filers, or taxpayers who have not filed in GA for at least five years, will receive their refund in the form of a paper check.

Changes for Businesses:

- Businesses must now file employee W-2 information with DOR by **January 31**, instead of prior years' filing due date of February 28.
- Employers who file late may face penalties, and will slow the processing of their employees' tax returns.

"It is important for Georgia taxpayers to be aware of these significant changes," said DOR Commissioner Lynne Riley, "To combat tax fraud, taxing agencies are taking every action necessary to protect taxpayer dollars and confidential taxpayer information. The Department wishes to inform individuals on the upcoming procedural changes, so they may plan accordingly."

The DOR is also encouraging taxpayers to take these additional steps to prepare for the 2017 tax season and assist DOR in the fight against fraud:

- Adjust Federal and State income tax withholdings to realize the immediate benefit of higher paychecks throughout the year.
- Register with DOR's Georgia Tax Center (GTC) to check the status of a tax return.
- Once a taxpayer has registered with GTC, they may opt in to alerts to notify them when a return has been filed with their Social Security Number.

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