



**JULIE P. MAGEE**  
Commissioner

# State of Alabama Department of Revenue

([www.revenue.alabama.gov](http://www.revenue.alabama.gov))  
50 North Ripley Street  
Montgomery, Alabama 36132

**JOE W. GARRETT, JR.**  
Deputy Commissioner

**CURTIS E. STEWART**  
Deputy Commissioner

**BRENDA R. COONE**  
Deputy Commissioner

**MICHAEL D. GAMBLE**  
Deputy Commissioner

## ADOR Offers Tax Tips as 2017 Tax Season Kicks Off

MONTGOMERY, Jan. 13, 2017 – Are you ready to file your income tax return? Tax Season 2017 begins on Jan. 23, and the filing deadline this year is April 18. The Alabama Department of Revenue (ADOR) has a few tips and suggestions to help you file your return safely and get your refund as quickly as possible:

- **FILE EARLY!** As soon as a taxpayers receive their W-2s, 1099s and other documents, they should file as soon as possible. Filing early can help us get your refund approved earlier, plus it enables you to beat ID thieves to the punch.
- **SAFETY FIRST!** ADOR plays an important role in preventing state revenue and your money from ending up in the hands of criminals. Fraud detection reviews, accuracy checks, and matching against employer W2s does require a little extra time, but it helps ensure that you get your money rather than criminals.
- **WHERE'S YOUR REFUND?** The Alabama Department of Revenue will begin releasing 2016 income tax refunds on March 1, 2017. This will give us time to properly vet and process the returns of early filers, confirm the accuracy of legitimate returns, and filter out fraudulent returns. The best way to track the progress of your refund is our website My Alabama Taxes ([www.myalabamataxes.alabama.gov](http://www.myalabamataxes.alabama.gov)). It's available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you don't have internet access, you can track your refund progress by calling our automated refund system toll-free at 1-855-894-7391 or our call center at 1-800-535-9410.
- **TAKE A SELFIE – COMING SOON!** Want to speed up your refund AND protect your identity? You will soon be able to download the new Alabama eID mobile app, powered by MorphoTrust USA. Using a smart phone, you will easily enroll by scanning your driver's license, taking a selfie and following the guided process in the app. The photo and driver's license data will be compared to the driver's license database and authenticated by the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency to verify your identity. With the eID verified, you can go to My Alabama Taxes ([www.myalabamataxes.alabama.gov](http://www.myalabamataxes.alabama.gov)) to enroll in the "Opt-In" program. This program will notify you when a return is filed with the department by sending a notification through your eID app. The app will allow you to securely verify that you did file the return or decline the transaction because you did not file the return. **BONUS** – your eID-verified return will be processed more quickly!
- **FILE FOR FREE!** You can file state returns for free using My Alabama Taxes. Filing returns will require you to sign up for a MAT username to access your income tax account, file your return and make payments. Sign up for MAT at [www.myalabamataxes.alabama.gov](http://www.myalabamataxes.alabama.gov).
- **KEEP IN TOUCH!** After your return is filed, we may send you letters asking for more information. If you do receive a letter from us, you should respond quickly so we can review your information and get your refund to you as soon as possible.
  - **Fraud Detection.** To detect and combat tax identity theft, ADOR uses a variety of methods to validate your identity and tax return. To help protect your information and keep your dollars from going to criminals, we may send:

- An Identity Confirmation letter that asks you to take a short online quiz or provide copies of documents to verify your identity (<http://revenue.alabama.gov/idquiz/>)
  - A return verification letter that asks you to verify online whether you or your representative filed the tax return we received
- **Accuracy Checks.** We stop and review about 3 to 5 percent of individual income tax returns each year to resolve mathematical errors or request missing information. We want to be sure that your tax return correctly reflects your information and intent. To do this, we may send:
  - A Request for Information letter that asks for missing or additional information to support data reported on your tax return
  - A Tax Computation Change letter that provides an explanation of changes that were made to your tax return
- **HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?** The date your return is filed and how your return is filed largely determines when the refund can be issued. For example, electronically filed returns are received and processed significantly faster than returns that are mailed to ADOR. Also, if an error-free return is mailed in January or February, the taxpayer can expect to receive their refund sooner than if the return is filed in March or April. Last year, 20 percent of the income tax returns filed were received between April 1 and April 18. Returns filed this close to the deadline may require as many as 90 days to process.
  - **First-time filers:** It will take additional time for new filers to be validated and entered into our system. Until that time, our Refund Status website won't recognize these taxpayers and will report their returns as "not entered in system."
  - **E-filers:** Generally, e-filers can expect their refund about 8-10 weeks after the date they receive their filing acknowledgement from the state.
  - **Paper filers:** The return will take about 10-12 weeks to process. We must manually enter information from paper returns into our database.
  - If the taxpayer received a letter from us asking for more information or to verify identity, the refund will be delayed until we get the requested information and we've been able to review it.
- **STAY INFORMED!** Keep up-to-date with the latest ADOR news:
  - Sign up for our email newsfeeds at <http://revenue.alabama.gov/maillinglist/subscribe.cfm>
  - Follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/AlabamaRevenue/>
  - Follow us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/AlabamaRevenue>

For more information about Individual Income Tax returns, visit <http://revenue.alabama.gov/incometax/2016itforms.cfm>.

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**Media contact for more information:**

ADOR Communications/Publications Division

[Frank.miles@revenue.alabama.gov](mailto:Frank.miles@revenue.alabama.gov)

[Amanda.collier@revenue.alabama.gov](mailto:Amanda.collier@revenue.alabama.gov)

Telephone: 334-242-1390; FAX: 334-242-0550

Website: <http://www.revenue.alabama.gov/>