



Montana Tax News You Can Use

Receiving an extension on a Montana individual income return

To qualify for an automatic, six-month extension to file a Montana individual income tax return, taxpayers need to, by April 15, have paid either (1) 90% of their current year Montana income tax liability or (2) 100% of their prior year Montana income tax liability. Starting in tax year 2012, taxpayers also qualify for an extension if their 2012 [tax liability is \\$200 or less](#).

To ensure they have met the requirements listed above and to see if they need to make an extension payment, taxpayers should review and complete Montana Form [EXT-12](#), Extension Payment Worksheet. If an extension payment is necessary, they can [pay it online](#) or by using the tax payment voucher from the bottom of Form EXT-12.

Please remember that *filing a federal request for an extension does not have any bearing on receiving a Montana extension*.

A valid Montana extension gives taxpayers until October 15, 2013, to file. Unless taxpayers qualify for the extension because their tax liability is \$200 or less, an extension of time to file is not an extension of time to pay. Late pay penalties and interest begin accruing on April 15 until the tax liability is paid in full.

Tips to avoid processing delays when filing amended returns

When amending an income tax return, please remember to follow these guidelines in order to avoid a delay in the processing of the return.

1. Complete a new tax return that reflects the corrections being made. The return needs to be on the form that corresponds to the year being amended.
2. Make sure the "Amended Return" box in the upper left hand corner is marked.
3. Make sure the return is signed and includes any applicable third party designee information.
4. Include the following items:
 - Complete amended return
 - New schedules that are being filed for the first time
 - All schedules sent with the original filing
 - AMD Worksheet (this is optional, but it may help us better understand your amendments)

More information about amending individual income tax returns, including detailed instructions, is available on our [website](#) and on the [AMD Worksheet](#).

Message heard, changes made to TAP

Last year we received a good deal of feedback from tax preparers that signing up for Taxpayer Access Point (TAP) was a little confusing. We got the message. So we recently updated TAP's "Sign up Now!" feature. Signing up for TAP is now more straightforward for professional tax preparers, as well as for taxpayers. Here's how:

Signing up for third party account access: Go to revenue.mt.gov and click on TAP. Select either "Business" or "Individual." Then click on "Sign up Now!" and select "Account Type." We've made it easier on this page to distinguish between the fields you, as professional tax preparer or as a taxpayer, need to fill out. We have also added some question marks that you can click on to get a little more information about each sign up type.

Registering for an account ID with the department: We have also updated the "Request Account ID" feature, which allows you to register your clients for four types of accounts--Withholding, Lodging Facility Sales and Use, Rental Vehicle, and Mineral Royalty Withholding. You can access this feature on our website by clicking on TAP, selecting "Business" and then clicking on "Request Account ID." In step 1, select "business" or "individual" (depending on who your client is) and then select the account type. Step 2 asks for the FEIN or SSN. We have reformatted step 3, the registration information page, to be easier to read. This page also has some question marks that you can click on to receive instructions.

Thank you for your feedback, and please keep it coming to dore-services@mt.gov.

Legislative update

During every legislative session in Montana, legislators sponsor bills that would have an impact on Montana's tax system. This regular section of Tax News You Can Use keeps you up-to-date on some of those bills currently making their way through the 2013 legislative session.

[SB81](#) would allow tax credits for contributions to organizations that award grants and scholarships to children attending private schools in Montana. Similarly, [HB213](#) would provide a tax credit for tuition paid to a private elementary or secondary school.

To track the progress of or to read any 2013 bill, click [here](#).

Extended hours at the Call Center

Anyone who has questions about filing taxes can call the department's Call Center toll free at (866) 859-2254, or in Helena at 444-6900. Regular Call Center hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

We will be extending those hours during the last week of tax season. From Monday, April 8 through Friday, April 12, we will be available from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m. On Monday, April 15, we will be available from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m.

Target tax dates

- The deadline for real property owners and mobile home owners to apply for the **Property Tax Assistance Program** is April 15.
- The first **estimated individual income tax payment** is due on April 15.
- The deadline for the annual filing of Forms **PR-1, FID-3, 2, 2M, 2EZ** and **2EC** is April 15.
- The deadline for the annual filing of Form **CLT-4** is May 15.

Tax facts

As of March 29...

- Total number of individual income tax returns we've processed: 291,433
- Number of individual tax returns we've received electronically: 265,551
- Number of business returns we've received electronically: 21,483
- Number of refunds we've issued: 242,831
- Average amount of refunds: \$411.58
- Average number of days in which taxpayers have received a refund after filing an electronic return: 5.18
- Average number of days in which taxpayers have received a refund after filing a paper return: 22.28

Do you have suggestions for our income tax forms?

We continuously strive to provide tax forms that are easily completed and understood by everyone who uses them. To that end, we're now beginning the process of reviewing and updating the Montana tax forms for the next tax year, as we do every year around this time. As a preparer, you use many of these forms on a daily basis and see many different situations play out on them. For that reason, we would like to hear, and would value, any comments or suggestions you have regarding our tax forms.

Please feel free to [email](#) those comments or suggestions to Amanda Degenhardt, Income Tax Specialist.

New POA form for taxpayers

Did you know we have an updated Power of Attorney (POA) form that is now similar to the IRS form? You can access it [here](#). As with the IRS, we no longer allow spouses to file a joint POA. Each spouse now has to complete his or her own form.

Contact us

Visit us online at revenue.mt.gov or call us toll-free at (866) 859-2254 (in Helena, 444-6900).

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Montana Tax News You Can Use is published weekly during tax season and is for anyone who helps people file taxes and meet their tax responsibility. It keeps you posted on what's happening at the department, lets you know about new ways of preparing and filing taxes and brings you up-to-date on some of the issues and trends popping up during tax season in Montana. To subscribe, please visit www.revenue.mt.gov and click on "sign me up."

We welcome your suggestions and ideas for articles, as well as your questions and comments. Please send them to DORWritingProject@mt.gov.