

## ***Where's My Refund?***

***Where's My Refund?***—one of IRS' most popular online features—gives taxpayers access to information about the status of their individual federal income tax refunds. This is regardless of whether they ask IRS to direct deposit their refunds to one, two or three accounts; apply any or all of their refund toward the purchase of U.S. Savings Bonds, or; mail them paper checks.

Taxpayers can access *Where's My Refund?* in English or Spanish at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). Taxpayers without internet access can get the same information by calling IRS' Refund Hotline at 1-800-829-1954.

### ***Where's My Refund? is convenient***

Taxpayers can use *Where's My Refund?* to verify when their refunds are scheduled for direct deposit or mailing. Taxpayers can also find out if their refund, or a portion of their refund, will be reduced to offset an outstanding balance with the IRS or other government agencies.

### ***How Where's My Refund? works***

Taxpayers can access *Where's My Refund?* from a link on the front page of IRS.gov. Easy online instructions and prompts guide taxpayers.

Search results include information about:

- "Refund" returns received and in processing;
- "Refund" returns received and under review;
- The expected mailing dates or direct deposit dates of refunds (in the case of split refunds, *Where's My Refund?* will confirm the refund was split but will not specify the amount deposited to each account or to which accounts deposits were made);
- Errors that changed the amount of refunds;
- Refund offsets to other government agencies;
- Processing delays due to other tax liabilities, SSN mismatches, etc; and
- Refunds returned to IRS as undeliverable.

*Where's My Refund?* only contains information about returns showing a refund due the taxpayer, i.e., taxpayers filing returns with balances due or credit-elects cannot obtain information.

### ***Refunds and Offsets***

Through *Where's My Refund?*, taxpayers have access to information about their tax refunds and any offsets. Electronic filers can access their refund information within 72 hours of submitting their returns; paper filers can use *Where's My Refund?* three to four weeks after mailing their returns.

In the case of refund offsets, *Where's My Refund?* advises taxpayers about any IRS or Financial Management Service (FMS) adjustments to refund amounts for math errors, offsets, etc., and provide telephone numbers if taxpayers want additional information. This is in addition to notices from IRS or FMS explaining in detail any refund adjustments or offsets. This information is available in both English and Spanish.

## Sample Refund and Offset messages

*“We are sorry. We cannot provide any information about your refund. It can take up to 3 weeks to process your return. Please wait at least one week before you log-on again to check the status of your refund.”* This message appears for all returns that have not progressed far enough in IRS processing for our system to provide a status. For e-filed returns, this message could appear up to 12 to 24 hours (or 48 hours on weekends) after taxpayers receive acknowledgements from their preparers, online transmitters, or the IRS.

*“You should receive your refund by (date).”* This is a projected date, providing there are no errors on the return or other delays. For e-filed returns, taxpayers should receive direct deposits the Friday before the projected date. E-filers expecting paper checks will receive their refunds a week after the projected date.

*“Your refund may be reduced to pay a past due obligation such as child support, another federal agency debt, or state income tax.”* This message is displayed when there is an indication from FMS that the taxpayer’s refund, or a portion of their refund, may be offset to pay a past due obligation to another governmental entity. If this applies, FMS will send a notice informing the taxpayer of any offset. The details of the debt are not provided to the IRS. Taxpayers should direct their inquiries regarding the offset or debt to the agency identified on the notice.

*“Your refund has been reduced by \$ [Offset Amount] to pay a past due obligation such as child support, another federal agency debt, or state income tax.”* This message is displayed when we receive an update from FMS that an offset has actually occurred. If this applies, FMS will send a notice informing the taxpayer of the offset. The notice will indicate to which agency debt the offset was applied. The FMS phone number is also provided in the case the notice has not been received by the taxpayer.

## Refund Date Projections

IRS projects the refund date using the best available information, but variances may occur due to the timing of direct deposits through the banking system and mail delivery for paper checks. Taxpayers may receive direct deposits on e-filed returns a few days earlier than the posted dates. Taxpayers checking their mailboxes for refunds may receive their checks a few days later.