

Where's My Income Tax Refund?

We understand that you want your Vermont personal income tax refund as quickly as possible. Perhaps you've already received your federal tax refund from the IRS and wonder when you'll receive your refund from Vermont. There are a number of factors that can add days and even weeks to normal processing time. This fact sheet will cover the most common factors and provide guidance on what you can do to make processing your refund go more smoothly.

What is *normal* processing time?

The normal amount of time for a return, electronic or paper, to be processed and refund issued is 8-10 weeks.

First, check the status of your refund online

An easy and convenient way to check the status of your refund is to visit the use our Filing and Refund Status Service at www.bit.ly/vtcheckrefund on the Department's website.



Simply enter your Social Security Number and zip code to find out if your refund has been issued.

This service will tell you either 1) your tax return has been received and is being processed or 2) your refund has been issued. It will not provide the date the refund has been issued or deposited directly into your account. If you have not received your refund within six weeks after it has been issued, please call us using the number listed at the end of this fact sheet.

Factors that add time to processing your refund

Most common factors

The most common factors that affect processing of tax returns and refunds include the following:

- Math errors
- Incorrect Social Security Numbers
- Missing forms and schedules

- Missing information
- Missing signatures
- Illegible handwriting
- Wrong color ink
- Forms printed improperly
- Wrong mailing address
- Name change
- You are a first-time filer in Vermont
- Your filing status has changed

If your return is missing information, forms, or schedules, we will send you a letter with details of what we need to continue processing your return. Your prompt response with the requested information will help us process your refund more quickly.

Filing for a tax credit or refund claim

Filing for a Vermont tax credit, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, Vermont Higher Education Credit, or a Renter Rebate Claim, may require additional verification of the information by our tax examiners, thus adding time to processing. For example, the form that accompanies the Renter Rebate Claim, Form HI-144, Household Income, requires detailed financial information from the taxpayer and must be reviewed carefully by our examiners.

Please note: Tax return refund checks and Renter Rebate checks are usually distributed separately, and there may be up to several weeks between them.

Fraud is growing—and so are our efforts to stop it

The IRS and state tax and revenue departments have seen an increase in tax refund fraud in the past few years, and we believe it will continue to grow. We have set up a special unit to detect, investigate, and

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stop tax refund fraud. We also have implemented new procedures and standards of practice. For example, even though you may request direct deposit for your refund, we may mail you a paper check. This measure is designed to keep refunds from fraudsters who often request direct deposits to prepaid debit cards.

Many of these additional precautions have resulted in increased processing time, but we believe they are worth it. The Department takes our job of protecting taxpayer money and state revenues very seriously. In 2013-2015, we detected and stopped more than \$3 million in fraudulent refunds.

If you believe you have become a victim of identity theft and/or tax refund fraud, contact the Department and IRS immediately. If we suspect fraud is being committed against you, we will send you a letter requesting verification of your identification, and we ask that you respond to the letter as soon as possible. More details about how to report identity theft and fraud can be found at www.tax.vermont.gov and on the IRS website at www.irs.gov.

What you can do to smooth processing

Accuracy counts

Errors will slow processing and delivery of your refund, so be sure to double check the following before submitting your return:

- Math—Check your addition and subtraction, making sure the totals are on the correct lines.
- Social Security Number—Check for transposed numbers.
- Signature—Sign all forms requiring a signature.
- Mailing address—Provide your mailing address, not your physical or 911 address. If you move, notify the Department in writing of your new mailing address.

- Financial institution account and routing numbers for direct deposit—if in doubt, verify your account and routing numbers with your financial institution.
- Print legibly—Poor handwriting? Use the fillable PDF forms to type in your information.

Follow form printing instructions

Submitting forms in other than their original formats only slows processing and may lead to an additional fee. We may send the return back to you if our scanners and tax examiners cannot read your return. Follow these tips to complete and print forms:

- When printing forms from our website, follow instructions carefully. Do not shrink or enlarge forms.
- Print forms on 20# or 24# white paper.
- Use only blue or black ink to complete forms.

A word of caution: Refund processing and delivery times vary for the reasons stated in this fact sheet. We recommend that you do not rely on your tax refund to meet your financial obligations, such as paying bills, or making major purchases.

Contact Us

Please call us if you have questions. It is better to make inquiries before you submit your return than after it's submitted.

Phone: 802-828-2865
866-828-2865 (toll-free)
Email: tax.individualincome@vermont.gov
Website: www.tax.vermont.gov

Save time and get your refund faster by e-filing!

E-filing can help you avoid mistakes on your tax returns and increase accuracy, potentially saving you a lot of “wait” time for your refund. How? E-filing does the math for you. Plus, you don't have to worry about whether your handwriting makes a “5” look like a “2” or a “7” look like a “1.” Finally, sending your electronic return to the Department via the internet takes less time than mailing a paper form via the post office, decreasing total processing time.

