



IRS Warns Taxpayers of Common Federal Tax Refund Myths

Once you complete and file your tax return, many of us eagerly await any refund we may be owed. No matter how a taxpayer plans to use their tax refund, knowing fact from fiction can help manage expectations as they wait for their money. The IRS has shared some wisdom that dispels some of the federal tax refund myths that many people believe to be fact, but they are pure fiction.

Myth: Calling the IRS, a tax software provider or a tax professional will provide a more accurate refund date

Many people think talking to the IRS or to their tax software provider or tax professional is the best way to find out when they will get their refund. The best way to check the status of a refund is through the “Where’s My Refund?” tool or the IRS2Go app.

Taxpayers can also call the automated refund hotline at 800-829-1954 to get their refund status. This hotline has the same information as “Where’s My Refund?”. There is no need to call the IRS unless “Where’s My Refund?” says to do so.

Myth: “Where’s My Refund?” must be wrong because there’s no deposit date yet

Updates to “Where’s My Refund?” and to the IRS2Go mobile app are made once a day, usually overnight. Even though the IRS issues most refunds within 21 days, it’s possible a refund may take longer. If the IRS needs more information to process a tax return, the agency will contact the taxpayer by mail. Taxpayers should also consider the time it takes for the banks to post the refund to the taxpayer’s account. People waiting for a refund in the mail should plan for extra time.

Myth: “Where’s My Refund?” must be wrong because the refund amount is less than expected

There are several factors that could cause a tax refund to be less than expected. The IRS will mail the taxpayer a letter of explanation if it makes adjustments. Some taxpayers may also receive a letter from the Department of Treasury’s Bureau of the Fiscal Service if their refund was reduced to offset certain financial obligations. Before calling, taxpayers should check the “Where’s My Refund” tool or wait for the letter to understand why the change occurred. This can help taxpayers know how to respond.

Myth: Getting a refund this year means there’s no need to adjust withholding for tax year 2023

To avoid a surprise next year, taxpayers should make changes now. One way to do this is to adjust their tax withholding with their employer. The “Tax Withholding Estimator” tool can help taxpayers determine if their employer is withholding the right amount. Taxpayers who experience a life event such as marriage, divorce, or the birth or adoption of a child, or are no longer able to claim a person as a dependent, are encouraged to check their withholding. Taxpayers can use the results from the “Tax Withholding Estimator” to complete a new Form W-4, Employee’s Withholding Certificate, and submit it to their employer as soon as possible. Withholding takes place throughout the year, so it’s better to take this step as soon as possible.