

Filing season starts soon

DOR will begin accepting electronic returns on January 21, 2020. If the IRS moves their opening date for electronic returns, DOR will adopt the new date. As we do every year, we will test a variety of returns during the first week before fully opening up the system. Super early birds might experience a slight delay before receiving a confirmation receipt. Keep an eye on the [filing season information page](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/important-information-for-the-tax-filing-season) for important updates. The page is currently being updated and we’ll add information as it is available.

Software vendors have started testing

The testing process has already started this year, a little earlier than usual. You can follow the vendor testing process for both electronic filing and 2-D forms (printed from tax preparation software). Track the [progress](https://www.mass.gov/lists/dor-approved-software-developers-and-transmitters) of your vendor on the DOR website.

Important withholding form changes for Mass employers

As you may already know, there are changes to the federal Form W-4 for 2020 that reflect the elimination of the personal exemption and increase in the standard deduction resulting from tax reform enacted in 2018. You [can learn more about the form changes](https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/faqs-on-the-2020-form-w-4) at the IRS website. Massachusetts personal exemption amounts do not rely on federal law and the process for calculating the correct Massachusetts withholding amount has not changed. Here’s what employees and employers need to do.

* New employees as of January 1, 2020 will complete both the Massachusetts [Form M-4](https://www.mass.gov/lists/dor-withholding-tax-forms) and the new IRS [Form W-4](https://www.irs.gov/forms-pubs/about-form-w-4) to give employers an accurate withholding picture. The Form W-4 can no longer be used as a substitute for the Form M-4.
* Current employees do not have to do anything unless they want to adjust their withholdings. Employers can rely on the most recently completed form for withholding information if the employee does not want to make adjustments. If an employee does want to revise withholdings, s/he should complete both the new IRS Form W-4 and the Massachusetts Form M-4 to make the changes.

*Draft* instructions for personal income tax forms posted

Take a look at the [instructions](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/dor-personal-income-tax-forms-and-instructions) for personal income tax forms, and the draft forms themselves if you haven’t already. Be sure to let us know of suggestions or comments for how to make improvements by contacting the Forms Manager at dorforms@dor.state.ma.us.

New stuff!

You can request an income tax return transcript for FY2018 after logging in to MassTaxConnect. Just log in, choose Personal Income Tax, select the return year, and choose *Request a return transcript* under I Want To. You will be mailed a line item printout of the information on your return, with the exception of any changes made as the result of an audit. If you are requesting a prior year, it will be done manually by DOR and sent to you.

Wait, there’s more. You can now upload a response to a *Notice of Change in Tax Return*. If you agree with the change, do nothing. If you owe tax, you’ll receive a bill [Notice of Assessment] that you can pay online at [MassTaxConnect](https://mtc.dor.state.ma.us/mtc/_/). If you disagree, respond online through MassTaxConnect. Just go to Quick Links, choose Submit documentation and enter the letter ID number on the notice. You can attach an explanation of why you think it’s incorrect and any supporting documents.

You can find previous [DOR News](https://www.mass.gov/lists/dor-news) on the DOR website.

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