

# Friday deadline for tax returns

By [Amanda Visser](#)

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Taxpayers who have not submitted their returns for the 2012 tax year have until Friday (23 November) to do so if they want to avoid penalties.



The South African Revenue Service (SARS) said 3.8m returns had been submitted by Monday (19 November), of which 1.7m were done at branch offices countrywide and 2.05m submitted using the electronic filing system, eFiling.

SARS spokesman Adrian Lackay said that the total number of submissions, including outstanding returns from previous years, was more than 4.7m.

Submissions for 2012 were 19%, or 599,470, more than for the same period last year.

"Some 936,726 outstanding returns from previous years have been submitted, which is a very encouraging indicator of better compliance," he said.

Last Tuesday (13 November) a total of 27,213 returns were filed and on Friday (16 November) another 26,182 returns were submitted.

The daily submission rate was expected to increase over the next few days leading up to the deadline, Lackay said.

"With the deadline approaching, SARS wants to urge all taxpayers who have not yet submitted their tax returns to do so as soon as possible, to avoid being caught in the final rush and to avoid penalties for late submission which start at R250 per month for each return which is outstanding," Lackay said in a statement.

Last year, in the week leading up to the deadline for the 2011 tax year, submissions at branches and on eFiling had increased to more than 100,000 a day.

Anticipating a similar rush, SARS has extended operating hours at its contact centre. For the rest of the week, the centre will be open from 8am till 8pm.

SARS introduced the *Help-You-eFile* system this year, which allows taxpayers to file their return on their own computer

with the assistance of a SARS agent.

Provisional taxpayers who use eFiling have until January 31 next year to submit their returns.

Lackay noted the steep decline in the submission of tax returns in the traditional paper format. Only 5,422 returns had been submitted manually, a 75% decrease compared with the 2011 tax season.

Source: *Business Day* via I-Net Bridge

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