

**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE  
DIVISION OF INCOME, SALES, AND EXCISE TAX**

**NOTICE OF PROPOSED GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS**

Pursuant to sec. 227.112, Wis. Stats., the Wisconsin Department of Revenue, Division of Income, Sales, and Excise Taxes hereby seeks comment on the proposed guidance document listed in the table below.

**SUBMITTING PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Public comments on proposed or adopted guidance documents may be submitted online at: <https://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/contactUs/proposed-Guidance.aspx>.

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION**

The period for public comment for proposed guidance documents ends 21 days after publication in the Administrative Register, unless the Governor approves a shorter commenting period.

<b>Document Number</b>	<b>Document Title</b>
<b>100054</b>	Electronic Filing - Basic Information - Common Questions

State of Wisconsin  
Department of Revenue

# Electronic Filing - Basic Information

**This is a proposed guidance document. The document has been submitted to the Legislative Reference Bureau for publication in the Administrative Register for public comment as provided by sec. 227.112(1), Wis. Stats.**

## (En Español)

1. What is electronic filing?
2. Why should I electronically file my tax return?
3. What are the costs involved in electronic filing?
4. How long does it take to prepare and transmit an electronic tax return?
5. Is electronic filing secure?
6. Will my chances of being audited increase if I electronically file?
7. Do I have to electronically file my federal and state income tax returns at the same time?
8. Can all income tax forms and schedules be filed electronically?
9. Can sales and use tax returns be electronically filed?
10. Is electronic filing completely paperless?
11. When can I electronically file my 2018 income tax return?

## 12. What payment alternatives are offered?

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### 1. **What is electronic filing?**

Electronic filing is a method of filing tax returns where the taxpayer information is transmitted to the revenue agencies electronically over the internet, a modem, or a phone line.

### 2. **Why should I electronically file my tax return?**

Electronic filing offers you many benefits that you cannot get through paper filing, such as:

- Faster refunds using direct deposit
- Accuracy -- tax preparation software does calculations for you
- Receipt so you know your tax returns have been filed
- Reduces costs for the Department of Revenue which saves you tax dollars
- Secure transfer of your personal information
- If you owe, you can choose direct debit/withdrawal from your financial institution and choose the date you want to pay (up to April 15) without having to worry about writing and mailing a paper check.

### 3. **What are the costs involved in electronic filing?**

The costs will vary depending on your choice of electronic filing method. Many tax professionals prefer e-filing and encourage their clients to use it by not charging an additional fee. Other tax professionals incorporate the e-filing fee into their cost of doing business. Off-the-shelf software can vary in price from approximately \$20 to \$75. Online filing will also vary in price from approximately \$10 to \$75. You may be eligible for free or reduced rate online filing using the [Free File Alliance](#) or [Wisconsin e-file](#).

### 4. **How long does it take to prepare and transmit an electronic tax return?**

Simple returns can be prepared in approximately 20 minutes. More complicated returns can take up to 2 hours or more to prepare. Transmitting an electronic tax return usually takes a few minutes.

### 5. **Is electronic filing secure?**

Yes. No one sees your tax information except you, your tax professional (if applicable), the IRS, and the Wisconsin Department of Revenue. There are no worries about mail delivery or paper shuffling or inappropriate people seeing your personal or financial information. Internet companies that provide online tax preparation use the industry standard Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) protocol to encrypt your personal data.

### 6. **Will my chances of being audited increase if I electronically file?**

No. If there are certain mistakes on your electronic return you will be notified within 24-72 hours. For example, the IRS will reject a tax return if the name on the return does not match with the social security number.

### 7. **Do I have to electronically file my federal and state income tax returns at the same time?**

Wisconsin is a "piggyback" state. That means Wisconsin's electronic filing program works with the federal electronic filing program. If you file online or through a tax preparer, you normally file both your federal and state income tax returns together.

If you e-file your federal return, you can still e-file your Wisconsin return at a later time, if your software supports state-only returns. Or you can use the department's free Wisconsin [e-file](#) application to file your Wisconsin individual income tax return electronically.

#### 8. **Can all income tax forms and schedules be filed electronically?**

Wisconsin forms and schedules can be electronically filed with the exception of a few. Please see "[Can I use Wisconsin e-file](#)" for a complete list of the forms and schedules that are not supported.

#### 9. **Can sales and use tax returns be electronically filed?**

Yes. The Department of Revenue currently has three options available for electronic filing of your sales and use tax return.

- **My Tax Account** is the department's free online business tax service that allows businesses access to their accounts to file and amend returns, make payments, view current account status and manage and update account information. It's simple, secure and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. See [My Tax Account](#) for more information.
- **Sales TeleFile** allows businesses to file Wisconsin Sales and Use Tax Returns using the telephone. The TeleFile program does not require a personal computer. For more information see the [Sales TeleFile](#) website.
- **File Transmission** is a secure process for sales tax registrants and/or their representatives to transmit their sales/use tax return data to DOR via an electronic file over the internet. See [File Transmission](#) for more information.

#### 10. **Is electronic filing completely paperless?**

Yes, normally, e-filing is completely paperless\*.

After you have submitted your electronic return, you should:

- Print and/or save a copy of your return;
- Keep copies of the W-2s, 1099s and other documents used to complete your return; and
- Keep all tax records and documents at least four years (the department may request these documents at a later date).

**\*Exception:** If you claim homestead credit or one of the other credits or deductions listed on the [Form W-RA](#), you must submit required documents within 48 hours of your notification that the department has received your tax return.

You have different options to submit the required documents (two electronic and one paper). You may:

- Submit them through the department's [My Tax Account data file transmission](#) (paperless filing);
- Attach them to your e-filed return (see instructions from your software-paperless filing); or
- Mail them to the address listed on the Form W-RA.


### 11. **When can I electronically file my 2018 income tax return?**

The Internal Revenue Service and the Wisconsin Department of Revenue will accept electronically filed income tax returns for tax year 2019 on January 27, 2020.

The department's free [Wisconsin e-file](#) application is available for use on or after January 27, 2020. This option e-files your Wisconsin individual income tax return.

If you e-file after April 15, 2020, you must have an extension of time to file with the IRS to prevent being charged a late filing fee (to prevent interest charges, you must pay any amount owed on or before April 15, 2020, even if you have a valid extension of time to file). If you e-file after October 15, 2019, you will be charged a late filing fee, plus charged interest on any amount owed.

### 12. **What payment alternatives are offered?**

- **Direct Debit/Withdrawal** (For electronic filers only) - This option allows you to pay the amount owed from your checking or savings account, on the date you want, through the software.
- **Pay Online** - This option allows you to pay the amount owed from your checking or savings account, on the date you want, through the Wisconsin Department of Revenue.
- **Credit Card** - This option allows you to pay by these credit cards: American Express, Discover, MasterCard, or VISA. There is a convenience fee charged. Wisconsin Department of Revenue does not receive any portion of the fee.
- **Pay by check**
  - If you e-filed, enclose your check with  [Form EPV](#) (Electronic Payment Voucher) and mail to the address listed on the voucher.
  - If you file on paper, enclose your check with your tax return. If you do not enclose a check with your return, you will be sent a bill once your return has been processed. Note: Processing will take several weeks and may result with interest being charged, in addition to the amount owed.
- **My Tax Account** - This option allows you to pay an amount owed for most [business taxes](#).

## Applicable Laws and Rules

This document provides statements or interpretations of the following laws and regulations in effect as of February 11, 2020: Sections 20.566, 71.03, 71.55, 71.80 and 71.83, Wis. Stats., and secs. Tax 1.12, 2.08, 11.01 and 14.01, Wis. Adm Code.

Laws enacted and in effect after February 11, 2020, new administrative rules, and court decisions may change the interpretations in this document. Guidance issued prior to February 11, 2020, that is contrary to the information in this document is superseded by this document, pursuant to sec. 73.16(2)(a), Wis. Stats.

## FOR QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS CONTACT:

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Email additional questions to [DORElectronicFiling@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DORElectronicFiling@wisconsin.gov)

Guidance Document Certification: <https://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/Certification-Statement.aspx>

Guidance Document Number: 100054

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### Related Links

- [Basic Information | En Español](#)
- [Advanced Information](#)
- [Paying Your Taxes or Receiving Your Refund](#)

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