

Tax deadline: Clock ticking for those filing online for the first time

Individuals filing their self-assessment tax returns online for the first time have less than two weeks to register for HM Revenue & Customs' (HMRC) online services.

Taxpayers have until midnight on 31 January to file their tax returns online. However, those who are new to online filing will first need to register for HMRC's online services, the deadline for which is 21 January.

"Once registered, you will be sent a code to activate your account," explains Andrew Shaw, a tax partner at Kingston Smith LLP, a top 20 accountancy firm. "This is sent to your home address and will usually arrive within seven working days. However, with just under two weeks to register and with Royal Mail struggling to make postal deliveries in some parts of the country as a result of the bad weather, taxpayers would do well to sign up for the service sooner rather than later.

"To register, you need your Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR) and either your postcode or National Insurance number," says Andrew. "Your UTR can be found on your correspondence from HMRC; otherwise you will need to request it from your Tax Office. However, it can only be sent to your home address via post, so again, you will need to factor this in."

31 January is also the date by which individuals will need to pay any remaining tax due for the 2008/09 tax year, as well as the first of two 'payments on account' for 2009/10 where appropriate.

"Taxpayers should be aware that HMRC will charge a late filing penalty of £100. Interest will also be charged where individuals fail to pay the remaining tax owed from 2008/09 and/or their first payment on account," says Andrew. "If your balancing payment is still not made by 28 February, you may be charged a 5% surcharge in addition to the amount you already owe and any interest you have been asked to pay. In the same way, if you haven't paid all of the tax due on 31 January by 31 July, you may be charged a second 5% surcharge in addition to what you already owe."

For more information on filing self-assessment tax returns online, visit:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/sa/understand-online.htm>

For further information, contact:

Andrew Shaw is a tax partner at Kingston Smith LLP
Tel: 020 7566 3807
Email: ashaw@kingstonsmith.co.uk

PR enquiries:

Layisha Laypang
Tel: 020 7566 3574
Email: llypang@kingstonsmith.co.uk

Follow us on:

