

Tax Filing and Payment Relief for Harvey Victims

The Internal Revenue Service has announced that Hurricane Harvey victims in federally declared disaster areas have until Jan. 31, 2018, to file certain individual and business tax returns and make certain tax payments (IR-2017-135, Aug. 28, 2017).

The relief is available for taxpayers in any area designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as qualifying for individual assistance. Currently, 47 counties are eligible, but taxpayers in localities added later to the disaster area will automatically receive the same filing and payment relief.

The tax relief postpones various tax filing and payment deadlines that occurred starting on Aug. 23, 2017. As a result, affected individuals and businesses will have until Jan. 31, 2018, to file returns and pay any taxes that were originally due during this period. This includes the Sept. 15, 2017, and Jan. 16, 2018, deadlines for making quarterly estimated tax payments. For individual tax filers, it also includes 2016 income tax returns that received a tax-filing extension until Oct. 16, 2017. Since tax payments related to these 2016 returns were originally due on April 18, 2017, those payments are not eligible for this relief.

A variety of business tax deadlines are also affected including the Oct. 31 deadline for quarterly payroll and excise tax returns. In addition, the IRS is waiving late-deposit penalties for federal payroll and excise tax deposits normally due on or after Aug. 23 and before Sept. 7, if the deposits are made by Sept. 7, 2017.

The IRS automatically provides filing and penalty relief to any taxpayer with an IRS address of record located in the disaster area. Thus, taxpayers need not contact the IRS to get this relief. However, if an affected taxpayer receives a late filing or late payment penalty notice from the IRS that has an original or extended filing, payment or deposit due date falling within the postponement period, the taxpayer should call the number on the notice to have the penalty abated.

In addition, the IRS will work with any taxpayer who lives outside the disaster area but whose records necessary to meet a deadline occurring during the postponement period are located in the affected area. Taxpayers qualifying for relief who live outside the disaster area need to contact the IRS at 866.562.5227. This also includes workers assisting the relief activities who are affiliated with a recognized government or philanthropic organization.