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IRS: Many Tax-Exempt Organizations Must File with IRS By May 15 to Preserve Tax-Exempt Status.

A key deadline of May 15 is facing many tax-exempt organizations that are required by law to file annual reports with the Internal Revenue Service. Organizations will see their federal tax exemptions automatically revoked if they have not filed reports for three consecutive years.

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 mandates that most tax-exempt organizations file annual Form 990-series informational returns or notices with the IRS. Under this law, organizations that fail to file reports for three consecutive years automatically lose their federal tax-exempt status. The law, which went into effect at the beginning of 2007, also imposed a new annual filing requirement on small organizations. Churches and church-related organizations are not required to file annual reports.

Form 990-series information returns and notices are due on the 15th day of the fifth month after an organization's fiscal year ends. Organizations that need additional time to file may obtain an extension.

Many organizations use the calendar year as their fiscal year, which makes May 15 the deadline for them. Organizations that fail to file annual reports for three consecutive years will see their tax exemptions automatically revoked as of the due date of the third required filing.

Small tax-exempt organizations with average annual receipts of $50,000 or less may file an electronic notice called a Form 990-N (e-Postcard), which asks organizations for a few basic pieces of information. Tax-exempt organizations with average annual receipts above $50,000 must file a Form 990 or 990-EZ, depending on their receipts and assets. Private foundations file a Form 990-PF.

The IRS began to publish the names of organizations identified as having automatically lost their tax-exempt status for failing to file annual reports for three consecutive years. Organizations that have had their exemptions automatically revoked and wish to have that status reinstated must file an application for exemption and pay the appropriate user fee.

The IRS offers an online search tool, Exempt Organizations Select Check, to help users more easily find key information about the federal tax status and filings of certain tax-exempt organizations, including whether organizations have had their federal tax exemptions automatically revoked.

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