Retirement

Ready, Set, Retire—8 Deadlines You Need to Know

This guide to important dates for Medicare, Social Security and retirement may help minimize taxes and maximize income.

☑️ AGE 50

**Tax-advantaged “catch-up” contributions** to 401(k)s and other employer-sponsored retirement plans, as well as to IRAs, can begin at this age. Amounts are subject to change each year. Visit irs.gov for the most up-to-date amounts.

☐ AGE 55

**You may be eligible to take an income distribution** from your workplace 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan when you reach age 55 — without paying a 10% early withdrawal tax (on top of regular income taxes). But that applies only if you’ve left the employment of the company sponsoring the plan.

☑️ AGE 59½

**Withdrawals from 401(k)s or an IRA** are no longer subject to the 10% early withdrawal tax once you reach age 59½, though you’ll still owe income tax on distributions from traditional 401(k)s and traditional IRAs.

☐ AGE 62

**You can choose to begin receiving Social Security income** at this age. But for each year you postpone taking this benefit (until age 70), the greater your annual payment for the rest of your life.

☑️ AGE 65

**Eligibility for Medicare**, the federal government’s retirement health insurance program, begins at age 65 for most Americans. This is also when you may want to consider purchasing a private “Medigap” insurance policy to help with copayments and deductibles not covered by Medicare.

☐ AGE 66

**Age 66 is your “full retirement age”** for Social Security if you were born between 1943 and 1954. Your “full retirement age” is the age at which you may first become entitled to full or unreduced retirement benefits. For those born after 1954, full retirement age increases by two months a year until reaching the current maximum of age 67. For those born in 1960 and later, full retirement age is 67.

☐ AGE 70

**You’ll get the biggest possible monthly benefit** for Social Security if you’ve waited until age 70 to begin receiving payments, and your benefit may be as much as 76% larger than if you had started receiving payments at age 62.

☐ AGE 70½

**Required minimum distributions** from traditional retirement plans such as 401(k)s or IRAs must begin at this age. If you don’t begin these distributions within the required time frame, you’ll incur a significant tax penalty.