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MEMBER



*Special needs require special lawyers.*

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## ECONOMIC STIMULUS CHECK DEADLINE NEARS

The IRS has issued 76.1 million economic stimulus payments so far this year, based on 2007 tax returns filed. This equals approximately \$63.8 billion. The agency expects to issue 124 million payments by the end of the year. Eligible individuals are receiving up to \$600 (\$1,200 for married couples filing joint returns) plus \$300 for eligible children younger than age 17. Potential beneficiaries must apply for the payment by October 15, 2008. Those who have already filed a form 1040 for tax year 2007 do not need to do anything else to receive the one-time payment.

Those who do not normally need to file an income tax return, but received at least \$3,000 from Social Security benefits, veterans benefits, certain railroad retirement benefits, or earned income in 2007, must submit a simplified version of a form 1040A to the IRS in order to receive the stimulus payments. The minimum payment for this group is \$300 for an individual and \$600 for a couple filing jointly.

The IRS has identified 5.2 million retirees and veterans benefits beneficiaries who may be eligible for the economic stimulus payments. In July 2008, the IRS announced that it would send a second special mailing to those individuals who may be eligible but have not yet filed for the payment. The package includes a letter explaining eligibility for the stimulus payment and how to claim it. It also includes a sample income tax form plus an actual tax form that people can complete and mail to the IRS.

A recent AARP survey reveals that failure by many seniors to collect the economic stimulus payment is not due to lack of need, but by lack of knowledge regarding the payment and how to apply for it. AARP has taken steps to reach out to seniors and others who may not realize that they may qualify for this payment. They have an online form at [www.aarp.org/stimulushelp](http://www.aarp.org/stimulushelp) that contains a simplified form for basic information, which is then transferred to the correct places on the form 1040A.

AARP recognizes that many seniors do not use the Internet, but the purpose of the AARP outreach is to make seniors aware of their options.

Potential recipients of the economic stimulus payment should take care to protect their valuable personal information. The IRS will always communicate in writing; the agency will never call or e-mail asking for a person's Social Security number or bank account information. The IRS will never send a letter or e-mail asking for a response by telephone or e-mail, and IRS agents will not ask to come to a person's home for the purpose of the economic stimulus payment. Do not pay anyone or go through a third-party intermediary to apply for or speed up the payment process.

The attorneys at Oast & Hook can assist clients with their tax, estate, financial, long-term care and insurance planning needs.

### **Ask Allie**

O&H: Allie, what advice do you have for families on keeping a healthy pet and preventing illness?

Allie: Good question! There was an article in *Hampton Roads Monthly* that discussed preventative care for pets. Veterinarian Brian S. Hastings from the Independence Veterinary Hospital said, "Those taking on the responsibility of having a pet that is to be part of their family need to understand their role in providing basic training, nutrition and complete veterinary care for their own well-being as well as their pet's." Immunizations for both dogs and cats are important; you should consult with your vet for the type, timing and frequency of vaccines, which may depend on the pet's heredity, environment and lifestyle. Dogs should also be protected against heartworm (and we are hearing more about this for cats, too), and the heartworm preventative also kills parasites that could pose problems to humans as well as dogs. Heartworms are transmitted by mosquitoes, which appear in our area after only three consecutive days with temperatures above 55 degrees. Fleas can also appear in our area under the same weather conditions as mosquitoes, so flea prevention is also important. Dogs and cats should visit their vets annually until the ages of 6 and 8, respectively, and after that age you should schedule checkups for your cats and dogs every 6 months. My family here at Oast & Hook makes sure I see my vet on schedule – even though I don't like to ride in the carrier, I know they want to take good care of me.



Please feel free to e-mail your questions to Allie at: [allie@oasthook.com](mailto:allie@oasthook.com).

### **Speakers**

If you are interested in having an elder law attorney from Oast & Hook speak at an event, then please call Jennifer Lantz at 757-399-7506.

**Distribution of This Newsletter**

Oast & Hook encourages you to share this newsletter with anyone who is interested in issues pertaining to the elderly, the disabled and their advocates. The information in this newsletter may be copied and distributed, without charge and without permission, but with appropriate citation to Oast & Hook, P.C. If you are interested in a free subscription to the *Oast & Hook News*, then please e-mail us at [mail@oasthook.com](mailto:mail@oasthook.com), telephone us at 757-399-7506, or fax us at 757-397-1267.

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