

## Online Electronic Filing Facility Launched for Provident Fund Filings

*[Vikram Shroff](#) and [Veena Gopalakrishnan](#), Nishith Desai Associates, Mumbai/Bangalore/Delhi*

The Employee's Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has launched an online filing facility (Electronic Challan cum Return (ECR)) effective April 2012. The ECR facility has been introduced by the EPFO with a view to ensure greater transparency, better quality of service to employees and greater convenience to employers.

The EPFO manages India's largest social security system for employees as per the Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 (EPF Act), which provides for provident fund and pension benefits. As a result of this initiative, once the EPF Act applies, it is mandatory for the employer to register the establishment through the online portal [www.epfindia.com](http://www.epfindia.com). The new facility enables registered employers to upload electronic returns; such uploaded data will be displayed through a digitally signed copy in PDF format. Once the uploaded data is approved by the employer, a "challan" (invoice) is generated indicating the payment to be made by the employer. The employer has the option to make the payment either online through internet banking or at any designated branch of the State Bank of India, India's leading public sector bank.

With the introduction of the new ECR facility, employers:

- do not need to prepare and submit physical returns;
- do not need to file forms such as:
  - Form 5--Return of employees qualifying for membership to the EPFO for the first time;
  - Form 10--Return of members leaving service during the month;
  - Form 12A--Consolidated Statement of dues and remittance;
  - Form 3A--Member's annual Contribution card; and

- Form 6A--Consolidated annual contribution statement;
- will receive instant confirmation of payments via SMS; and
- will have the ability to view the annual accounts slip for accounting year 2011-12 online and can request for annual slips for the previous years through the portal.

The EPFO has also issued [detailed FAQs](#) (available online) so as to facilitate usage of the facility.

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321 N Clark | Chicago, IL 60654 | (312) 988-5813