

Tax Tips You Can Use



The IRS educates
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The IRS is issuing a number of articles to educate taxpayers. Here are excerpts of two to help taxpayers:

The IRS' Four Reasons to Use Direct Deposit for a Tax Refund

As taxpayers prepare to file their 2017 returns, they should consider a [direct deposit](#) of any refunds due. It's easy, safe, fast — and the best way to get a refund. That's why 80 percent of taxpayers choose it every year.

IRS Direct Deposit:

- **Is Fast.** The quickest way for taxpayers to get their refund is to [electronically file](#) their federal tax return and use direct deposit. Taxpayers who file a paper return can also use direct deposit.
- **Is Secure.** Since refunds go right into a bank account, there's no risk of having a paper check stolen or lost. This is the same electronic transfer system that deposits nearly 98 percent of all Social Security and Veterans Affairs benefits into millions of accounts.
- **Is Easy.** Choosing direct deposit is easy. With e-file, just follow the instructions in the tax software. For paper returns, the tax form instructions serve as a guide. Make sure to enter the correct bank account and routing number.
- **Has Options.** Taxpayers can [split a refund](#) into several financial accounts. These include checking, savings, health, education and certain retirement accounts. Use IRS [Form 8888](#), Allocation of Refund (including Savings Bond Purchases), to deposit a refund in up to three accounts.

The IRS' Ten Tips for Choosing a Tax Preparer

It's the time of the year when many taxpayers choose a tax preparer to help file a tax return. These taxpayers should choose their tax return preparer

wisely. This is because taxpayers are responsible for all the information on their income tax return. That's true no matter who prepares the return.

Here are ten tips for taxpayers to remember when selecting a preparer:

1. **Check the Preparer's Qualifications.** Use the [IRS Directory of Federal Tax Return Preparers with Credentials and Select Qualifications](#). This tool helps taxpayers find a tax return preparer with specific qualifications. The directory is a searchable and sortable listing of preparers.
2. **Check the Preparer's History.** Check for disciplinary actions and the license status for credentialed preparers. For CPAs, check with the State Board of Accountancy. For attorneys, check with the State Bar Association. For Enrolled Agents, go to the [verify enrolled agent status](#) page on [IRS.gov](#) or check the [directory](#). Note, In Oregon go to the Oregon Board of Tax Practitioners.
3. **Ask about Service Fees.** Avoid preparers who base fees on a percentage of the refund or who boast bigger refunds than their competition. When asking about a preparer's services and fees, don't give them tax documents, Social Security numbers or other information.
4. **Ask to E-File.** Taxpayers should make sure their preparer offers IRS e-file. The quickest way for taxpayers to get their refund is to [electronically file](#) their federal tax return and use direct deposit.
5. **Make Sure the Preparer is Available.** Taxpayers may want to contact their preparer after this year's April 17 due date. Avoid fly-by-night preparers.
6. **Provide Records and Receipts.** Good preparers will ask to see a taxpayer's records and receipts. They'll ask questions to figure things like the total income, tax deductions and credits.
7. **Never Sign a Blank Return.** Don't use a tax preparer who asks a taxpayer to sign a blank tax form.
8. **Review Before Signing.** Before signing a tax return, review it. Ask questions if something is not clear. Taxpayers should feel comfortable with the accuracy of their return before they sign it. The preparer should give you a copy of the completed tax return.
9. **Ensure the Preparer Signs and Includes Their PTIN.** All paid tax preparers must have a Preparer Tax Identification Number. By law, paid preparers must sign returns and include their PTIN.

10. Report Abusive Tax Preparers to the IRS. Most tax return preparers are honest and provide great service to their clients. However, some preparers are dishonest. Report abusive tax preparers and suspected tax fraud to the IRS. Use [Form 14157](#), Complaint: Tax Return Preparer. If a taxpayer suspects a tax preparer filed or changed their return without the taxpayer's consent, they should file [Form 14157-A](#), Return Preparer Fraud or Misconduct Affidavit.

This is all helpful information for taxpayers to keep in mind.

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The fine print: This article is for information only. Please see your tax professional for questions about your individual tax situation.