

# Tax Tips



## Factors To Consider When Preparing Your Taxes

(NAPSA)—If there is one thing that's constant about tax laws, it's that they change. What was permissible last year may not be legal this year, which can add to your confusion and anxiety when filing this year's return.

Changes in your personal life can also complicate matters. Often, marriage, adoption, job loss, foreclosure and business-related decisions can mean more-complicated tax returns and the need to consult a qualified tax professional.

That's one reason it's wise to consider a number of factors before deciding to seek the guidance of a professional or to use a do-it-yourself approach when filing. Whichever method is right for you, here are some tips.

### **Pick the right pro**

When it comes to selecting a professional to work with, it's important to find one who is qualified and trained. The proposed IRS training and education standards would require paid tax preparers who are not EAs, attorneys or CPAs to pass a one-time competency exam and complete 15 hours of continuing education annually.

Some professionals continue their preparation well beyond the minimum. For example, H&R Block tax professionals complete 24 hours of continuing education annually. On average, their clients are served by a tax professional with more than eight years' experience and 450 hours of training.

When selecting a tax preparer, here are some additional tips:

- Look for a preparer who is available year-round. Taxes are typically prepared January

through the April filing deadline, yet the IRS corresponds with taxpayers all year about audits and other concerns, making it important to have access to a professional in the "off-season."

- Only trust tax preparers committed to helping taxpayers claim the maximum amount entitled by law. Unsubstantiated claims may save taxpayers money up front but will likely cost them in the long run.

- Seek reputable tax professionals who guarantee their work, and understand what happens if an error is made on the return. Will they pay the resulting penalties and interest?

For instance, H&R Block guarantees accurate calculations; if IRS penalties and interest charges result from an error on its part, the company will pay these expenses.

### **The right software**

For taxpayers who'd rather handle the filing on their own, H&R Block At Home offers multiple online and software products based on tax complexity.

For example:

Its At Home Free product is for taxpayers filing simple returns and seeking a no-cost federal tax preparation online option.

The At Home Premium & Business product is for business owners seeking a solution that allows individual and business tax returns to be prepared with the same product.

Remember, regardless of who prepares tax returns, taxpayers are legally responsible for their contents. To learn more, visit [www.hrblock.com](http://www.hrblock.com) or call 800-HRBLOCK.