



IRS Tax Tip 2016-42: Avoid Errors; File an Accurate Return

Internal Revenue Service (IRS) sent this bulletin at 03/17/2016 09:10 AM EDT



IRS Tax Tips

March 17, 2016

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Avoid Errors; File an Accurate Return

The IRS encourages you to file an accurate tax return. Take extra time if you need it. If you make an error on your return then it will likely take longer for the IRS to process it. That could delay your refund. You can avoid many common errors by filing electronically. IRS e-file is the most accurate way to file your tax return. Seven out of ten taxpayers can use IRS Free File software at no cost.

Here are nine common tax-filing errors to avoid:

- 1. Wrong or Missing Social Security Numbers.** Be sure you enter all SSNs on your tax return exactly as they are on the Social Security cards.
- 2. Wrong Names.** Be sure you spell the names of everyone on your tax return exactly as they are on their Social Security cards.
- 3. Filing Status Errors.** Some people use the wrong filing status, such as Head of Household instead of Single. The [Interactive Tax Assistant](#) on IRS.gov can help you choose the right status. If you e-file, tax software helps you choose.

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4. Math Mistakes. Math errors are common. Tax preparation software does the math for e-filers.

5. Errors in Figuring Tax Credits or Deductions. Many filers make mistakes figuring their [Earned Income Tax Credit](#), Child and Dependent Care Credit, and the standard deduction. If you're not e-filing, follow the instructions carefully when figuring credits and deductions. For example, if you're age 65 or older or blind, be sure you claim the correct, higher standard deduction.

6. Incorrect Bank Account Numbers. Choose direct deposit for your refund. It's easy and convenient. However, be sure to use the right routing and account numbers on your return. The fastest and safest way to get your tax refund is to combine e-file with direct deposit.

7. Forms Not Signed. An unsigned tax return is like an unsigned check – it's not valid. Both spouses must sign a joint return. You can avoid this error by e-filing your taxes since you must digitally sign your tax return before you send it to the IRS.

8. Electronic Filing PIN Errors. When you e-file, you sign your return electronically with a Personal Identification Number. If you know last year's e-file PIN, you can use that. If you don't know it, enter the Adjusted Gross Income from the 2014 tax return that you originally filed with the IRS. Do not use the AGI amount from an amended return or a return that the IRS corrected.

9. Health Care Reporting Errors. The most common health care reporting errors that taxpayers make involve failing to claim a [coverage exemption](#) and not reconciling advance payments of the [premium tax credit](#). If you don't have qualifying health care coverage but meet certain criteria, you might be eligible to claim an exemption from coverage and avoid an unnecessary payment when you file your tax return. If you enrolled in health coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace and received advance credit payments, you must file a tax return to reconcile the advance payments made on your behalf with the amount of your actual premium tax credit.

Each and every taxpayer has a set of fundamental rights they should be aware of when dealing with the IRS. These are your [Taxpayer Bill of Rights](#). Explore your

rights and our obligations to protect them on IRS.gov.

Additional IRS Resources:

- [IRS Free File](#)
- [IRS Tax Map](#)
- [IRS Tax Trails](#)
- [Get Your Electronic Filing PIN](#)

IRS YouTube Videos:

- *Welcome to Free File* – [English](#)

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