

IMPORTANT CONSUMER INFORMATION

***Need help
preparing
your taxes?***



In Oregon, qualified licensed tax professionals offer the services you need.

Questions and answers about working with a tax professional.

Why must tax professionals be licensed in Oregon?

Oregon is the only State that sets competency and ethics standards for tax professionals and regulates them through a licensing agency. The purpose of the law is to protect you from untrained and unethical practitioners. Take advantage of this important consumer protection by making sure the tax professional you choose is licensed and in good standing with the Board of Tax Practitioners.

Who must be licensed as a tax professional in Oregon?

Any person who prepares personal income tax returns for compensation must be licensed by the Oregon Board of Tax Practitioners. The only persons exempted from this law are:

- Certified Public Accountants and Public Accountants licensed by the Oregon Board of Accountancy, or their employees
- Attorneys at Law who are members of the Oregon State Bar Association and prepare returns for their law client's in the course of their duties as an attorney

How do I find a licensed tax professional to prepare my personal income tax return?

Many licensed professionals advertise in the telephone book yellow pages under "tax preparation." Referral by a friend or business associate, especially one with similar income sources, is also an avenue to consider.

How much will it cost and what additional services are offered by licensed tax professionals?

Fees will vary. The complexity of your return and the organization of your materials may affect the cost of preparing your income tax return. Most tax professionals can estimate the costs after reviewing your particular

circumstances. Some practitioners will include services, such as accompanying you to an audit, in the original preparation cost. Other practitioners will charge an additional fee. Be sure to ask these types of questions during your interview with the licensed tax professional.

When should I schedule my appointment with a licensed tax professional?

Schedule your appointment early in the year, as soon as you have received your income statements and other tax information. This gives you and your tax professional the time to resolve any questions and ensures your return(s) are completed accurately. Tax firms get very busy as the April 15th deadline nears.

What records and documents should be taken to my appointment with a licensed tax professional?

When you call for an appointment, ask what information you should bring, and in what form you should bring it in. Usually, this will include your income and withholding statements, interest statements and proof of deductible expenses. Timely preparation of an accurate return depends on the information you provide.

What should I do when I receive my completed income tax return?

Be sure your licensed tax professional has signed in the "Paid Preparer" space located on the last page of your return. Review all information on the returns to make sure it is accurate and complete. Mail the complete returns to the I.R.S. and the Oregon Department of Revenue as directed on the returns. Be sure to keep a complete copy of your return, including all forms, statements and schedules for your records. Remember, you as the taxpayer, are ultimately responsible for the return that is filed.

Will I receive my refund check directly?

Yes! Your licensed tax professional is prohibited from receiving or cashing a tax refund check issued in your name.

What if I have a problem later in the year after my return is filed?

If you discover information that would change your return, or if you are audited, you will be able to reach your licensed tax professional by contacting the Board office. Licensed tax professionals are required by the Board of Tax Practitioners to maintain a year-around address and telephone number where they can be contacted.

What is the Board of Tax Practitioners?

The Board licenses and regulates Tax Consultants and Tax Preparers operating in the State of Oregon. Contact the Board at the address, telephone number and/or Web site listed on the last page of this brochure. We welcome any inquiries you may have.

How does Oregon's law benefit and protect consumers?

- You are ensured that educational and testing requirements have been met and that professional competency standards are maintained by Licensed Tax Consultants and Licensed Tax Preparers.
- Licensed Tax Consultants and Licensed Tax Preparers agree by law to conduct their professional practices according to the Code of Professional Conduct written by the Board of Tax Practitioners.
- Licensed Tax Consultants and Licensed Tax Preparers must acknowledge responsibility for preparing a tax return by signing in the "Paid Preparer" space on the return.
- Original documents must be returned by a Licensed Tax Consultant or Licensed Tax Preparer if a client requests them.

- A year-around address and telephone number where clients can contact them must be maintained by Licensed Tax Consultants and Licensed Tax Preparers.
- You can contact the Board of Tax Practitioners for assistance if you have questions or a problem with a Licensed Tax Consultant or Licensed Tax Preparer.

What are the qualifications of licensed tax professionals?

Oregon law provides for two licensing levels:

TAX PREPARER

At this apprentice level, the Tax Preparer must work under the supervision of a Licensed Tax Consultant and have successfully completed the following:

- An 80 hour course on basic tax law and practice.
- Must pass the Board's preparer examination on state and federal income tax law.
- Must complete a minimum of 30 hours of professional continuing education annually for license renewal.

TAX CONSULTANT

At this advanced level, the Tax Consultant must have all the qualifications listed above, plus the following:

- A minimum of 780 work experience hours within two (2) of the last five (5) years as a Licensed Tax Preparer.
- Must pass the Board's consultant examination on advanced state and federal income tax law.
- Must complete a minimum of 30 hours of professional continuing education annually for license renewal.

We hope this brochure has answered many of your questions. For more information please contact the Board at:

Board of Tax Practitioners

3218 Pringle Road SE, Ste #120

Salem, Oregon 97302

Telephone: (503) 378-4034

Web site: www.oregon.gov/OTPB

