IRS privacy policy

Thank you for visiting the Internal Revenue Service's website, an official United States Government System, and reviewing our privacy policy. Our privacy policy explains how we handle the personally identifiable information (PII) that you provide to us when you visit us online to browse, obtain information, or conduct a transaction. PII includes information that is personal in nature and which might be used to identify you. The IRS uses this website to provide information about IRS services and programs. This website includes specific applications which provide more services or enable us to respond to specific questions from website visitors.

We won't collect personal information about you just because you visit this Internet site. Some applications on this website provide you with the opportunity to order forms, ask questions requiring a response, sign up for electronic newsletters, participate in focus groups and customer surveys, or learn the status of filed returns or anticipated payments. Using these services is voluntary and may require that you provide additional personal information to us. Providing the requested information implies your consent for us to use this data in order to respond to your specific request.

Information we may collect

Why we collect personal information

How we use your personal information

Text message and email subscriptions

Umbrella privacy notice for tax returns

The various inquiries made of individuals by the IRS during tax administration are part of a single process. Rather than include the same Privacy Act notice information in many forms or letters that are repeated contacts with the same individual about the same situation, the IRS has adopted an "umbrella" approach where the first contact of a series includes a notice that the individual may keep and that would apply to all future inquiries related to that situation. This approach spares the recipient from receiving repetitious and unnecessary identical notices.

Disclosure, Privacy Act, and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice

The IRS Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998, the Privacy Act of 1974, and the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 require that when we ask you for information, we must first tell you our legal right to ask for the information, why we are asking for it, and how it will be used. We must also tell you what could happen if we do not receive it and whether your response is voluntary, required to obtain a benefit, or mandatory under the law.

This notice applies to all records and other material (in paper or electronic format) you file with us, including this tax return. It also applies to any questions we need to ask you so we can complete, correct, or process your return; figure your tax; and collect tax, interest, or penalties.

Our legal right to ask for information is Internal Revenue Code sections 6001, 6011, and 6012(a), and their regulations. They say that you must file a return or statement with us for any tax you are liable for. Your response is mandatory under these sections. Code section 6109 requires you to provide your identifying number on the return. This is so we know who you are and can process your return and other papers. You must fill in all parts of the tax form that apply to you. But you do not have to check the boxes for the Presidential Election Campaign Fund or for the third-party designee. You also do not have to provide your daytime phone number or email address.

You are not required to provide the information requested on a form that is subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act unless the form displays a valid OMB control number. Books or records relating to a form, or its instructions must be retained as long as their contents may become material in the administration of any Internal Revenue law.

We ask for tax return information to carry out the tax laws of the United States. We need it to figure and collect the right amount of tax.

If you do not file a return, do not provide the information we ask for, or provide fraudulent information, you may be charged penalties and be subject to criminal prosecution. We may also have to disallow the exemptions, exclusions, credits, deductions, or adjustments shown on the tax return. This could make the tax higher or delay any refund. Interest may also be charged.

Generally, tax returns and return information are confidential, as stated in Code section 6103. However, Code section 6103 allows or requires the Internal Revenue Service to disclose or give the information shown on your tax return to others as described in the Code. For example, we may disclose your tax information to the Department of Justice to enforce the tax laws, both civil and criminal, and to cities, states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. commonwealths or territories to carry out their tax laws. We may disclose your tax information to the Department of Treasury and contractors for tax administration purposes; and to other persons as necessary to obtain information needed to determine the amount of or to collect the tax you owe. We may disclose your tax information to the Comptroller General of the United States to permit the Comptroller General to review the Internal Revenue Service. We may disclose your tax information to committees of Congress; federal, state, and local child support agencies; and to other federal agencies for the purposes of determining entitlement for benefits or the eligibility for and the repayment of loans. We may also disclose this information to other countries under a tax treaty, to federal and state agencies to enforce federal nontax criminal laws, or to federal law enforcement and intelligence agencies to combat terrorism.

Please keep this notice with your records. It may help you if we ask you for other information. If you have questions about the rules for filing and giving information, please call or visit any Internal Revenue Service office.

We welcome comments on forms

We try to create forms and instructions that can be easily understood. Often this is difficult to do because our tax laws are very complex. For some people with income mostly from wages, filling in the forms is easy. For others who have businesses, pensions, stocks, rental income, or other investments, it is more difficult.

If you have suggestions for making these forms simpler, we would be happy to hear from you. You can send us comments through IRS.gov/formscomments. Or you can send your comments to Internal Revenue Service, Tax Forms and Publications Division, 1111 Constitution Ave. NW, IR6526, Washington, DC 20224. Don't send your return to this address. Instead, see the addresses at the end of these instructions.

Although we can't respond individually to each comment received, we do appreciate your feedback and will consider your comments as we revise our tax forms and instructions.

Estimates of taxpayer burden

The following table shows burden estimates based on current statutory requirements as of November 2023 for taxpayers filing a 2023 Form 1040 or 1040SR tax return. Time spent and out-of-pocket costs are presented separately. Time burden is broken out by taxpayer activity, with recordkeeping representing the largest component. Out-of-pocket costs include any expenses incurred by taxpayers to prepare and submit their tax returns. Examples include tax return preparation and submission fees, postage and photocopying costs, and tax return preparation software costs. While these estimates don't include burden associated with post-filing activities, IRS operational data indicate that electronically prepared and filed returns have fewer arithmetic errors, implying lower post-filing burden.

Reported time and cost burdens are national averages and don't necessarily reflect a "typical" case. Most taxpayers experience lower than average burden, with taxpayer burden varying considerably by taxpayer type. For instance, the estimated average time burden for all taxpayers filing a Form 1040 or 1040SR is 13 hours, with an average cost of $270 per return. This average includes all associated forms and schedules, across all tax return preparation methods and taxpayer activities.

Within this estimate, there is significant variation in taxpayer activity. For example, nonbusiness taxpayers are expected to have an average burden of about 9 hours and $150, while business taxpayers are expected to have an average burden of about 24 hours and $560. Similarly, tax return preparation fees and other out-of-pocket costs vary extensively depending on the tax situation of the taxpayer, the type of software or professional preparer used, and the geographic location.

For more information on taxpayer burden see Pub. 5743. If you have comments concerning the time and cost estimates below, you can contact us at either one of the addresses shown under We Welcome Comments on Forms.

Estimated average taxpayer burden (in hours) for individuals by activity

Type of taxpayer	Percentage of returns	Total time*	Record-keeping	Tax planning	Form compl and submi
All taxpayers	100%	13	6	2	4
Nonbusiness taxpayers***	72%	9	3	1	3
Business taxpayers***	28%	24	12	4	6

*Detail may not add to total time due to rounding.

**Dollars rounded to the nearest $10.

***You are considered a "business" filer if you file one or more of the following with Form 1040 or 1040-SR: Schedule C, E, or F or Form 2106. You are considered a "nonbusiness" filer if you don't file any of those schedules or forms with Form 1040 or 1040-SR.

Your privacy rights

Privacy policy topics

Meeting recordings

Privacy compliance programs

Privacy and Civil Liberty Impact Assessments (PCLIA)

System of records notice (SORN)

Computer matching agreements

Publicly available privacy reports

Privacy Act implementation rules and exemptions

IRS Privacy Program Plan

Privacy Act requests

Overview

How to make a Privacy Act request

Privacy complaints

What is a privacy complaint?

Before you submit a privacy complaint

Where to write

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