

Tax Time Identity Safety Tips – Part Three

Eight Tax-Time Errors To Avoid

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Be careful with your personal information, especially at tax time! If you make a mistake on your tax return, it can take longer to process, which in turn, may delay your refund. Here are eight common errors to avoid.

1. **Incorrect or missing Social Security numbers** When entering SSNs for anyone listed on your tax return, be sure to enter them exactly as they appear on the Social Security cards.
2. **Incorrect or misspelling of dependent's last name** When entering a dependent's last name on your tax return, make sure to enter it exactly as it appears on their Social Security card.
3. **Filing status errors** Choose the correct filing status for your situation. There are five filing statuses: Single, Married Filing Jointly, Married Filing Separately, Head of Household and Qualifying Widow(er) With Dependent Child. See Publication 501, Exemptions, Standard Deduction and Filing Information, to determine the filing status that best fits your situation.
4. **Math errors** When preparing paper returns, review all math for accuracy. Or file electronically; the software does the math for you!
5. **Computation errors** Take your time. Many taxpayers make mistakes when figuring their taxable income, withholding and estimated tax payments, Earned Income Tax Credit, Standard Deduction for age 65 or over or blind, the taxable amount of Social Security benefits and the Child and Dependent Care Credit.
6. **Incorrect bank account numbers for direct deposit** Double check your bank routing and account numbers if you are using direct deposit for your refund.
7. **Forgetting to sign and date the return** An unsigned tax return is like an unsigned check – it is invalid. Also, both spouses must sign a joint return.
8. **Incorrect adjusted gross income** If you file electronically, you must sign the return electronically using a Personal Identification Number. To verify your identity, the software will prompt you to enter your AGI from your originally filed 2010 federal income tax return or last year's PIN if you e-filed. Taxpayers should not use an AGI amount from an amended return, Form 1040X, or a math-error correction made by IRS.