

## News Release

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### **Department of Revenue offers tips for choosing the right professional tax preparer**

**ST. PAUL, Minn.** – Many Minnesotans hire a professional tax preparer to do their income taxes each year. Qualified tax preparers perform important services for taxpayers who have complicated tax situations or simply want to trust their taxes to a professional. Taxpayers should know the right questions to ask when choosing a preparer and that there is a process in place to make sure professional tax preparers perform their jobs ethically.

“It’s important for taxpayers to research any person they choose to trust with their personal tax information,” said Revenue Commissioner Cynthia Bauerly. “The department offers resources on our website for taxpayers to use when interviewing potential preparers.”

Though the department does not certify tax preparers, state law requires tax professionals who prepare income tax returns to follow standards of ethics and conduct. The majority of tax professionals abide by these standards and provide honest service and sound advice to their clients. In the event of a tax preparer not following these standards, they may be subject to penalties or criminal prosecution and may be ineligible to represent clients before the department.

Two recent cases involving professional tax preparers led to felony charges against the preparers.

- Read more on the [Hester case](#).
- Read more on the [Bettie case](#).

Taxpayers can report unprofessional preparers by [contacting the department](#).

**Before you hire a preparer, take the time to ask these questions. Qualified tax professionals should be able to provide you with complete answers to each of the questions below.**

- What kind of formal tax training do you have?

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- Do you hold any professional licenses or designations, such as certified public accountant (CPA), enrolled agent (EA), registered accounting practitioner (RAP), accredited tax advisor (ATA), or accredited tax preparer (ATP)?
- Do you belong to any professional organizations?
- Do you take continuing professional education classes each year?
- How long have you been preparing tax returns?
- Have you ever done a tax return dealing with my situation?
- Can I contact you year-round?
- Have you ever been disciplined by any organization or governmental authority?
- Will you represent me if I'm audited by the IRS or the Minnesota Department of Revenue?
- How much do you charge and how do you calculate your fees?

### Other things to consider

- Be careful of tax preparers who claim to know “the secrets” of obtaining unusually large refunds.
- Be cautious if someone charges fees based on a percentage of your refund.
- Never sign a blank tax form—even for your preparer.

More information on choosing a preparer is [available on our website](#) or by searching **Tax preparer** in the Search box.

Taxpayers can also [view our short video](#) highlighting things they should know when choosing a preparer.

Get the latest news and updates from the Minnesota Department of Revenue by following the department on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) or by signing up for our [email subscription list](#).

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