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## Hiring an unlicensed tax preparer can be risky

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Salem, OR—The income tax filing deadline, April 18 this year, is quickly approaching and you may be like many Oregonians: looking for someone to prepare your tax return. If so, make sure that person is properly licensed in Oregon. It's not only a legal requirement for filing returns, but it helps ensure the accuracy of your return and avoid errors that could end up costing you money.

JoAnn Martin, administrator of the Department of Revenue's Personal Tax and Compliance Division, recommends checking the credentials of anyone you're considering hiring to do your taxes. In Oregon, anyone you pay to prepare your tax returns must be licensed as a tax practitioner or certified public accountant (CPA).

"If you hire an unlicensed preparer, there's a real risk that they'll make potentially costly mistakes on your return," Martin said.

No matter who does your taxes, even if they're a properly licensed tax professional, you should check your return thoroughly before it's submitted.

"Ultimately, you're responsible for the accuracy of your return. It's up to you to check what's on it before it's sent."

In Oregon, anyone getting paid to prepare and file tax returns must have an active tax preparer or CPA license. Visit these websites to find out if the person you want to hire has an active license:

- [www.oregon.gov/OBTP](http://www.oregon.gov/OBTP) for tax preparers.
- [www.oregon.gov/BOA](http://www.oregon.gov/BOA) for Oregon CPAs.
- [www.cpaverify.org](http://www.cpaverify.org) for out-of-state CPAs.

You can report unlicensed tax preparers to the Board of Tax Practitioners.

Visit [www.oregon.gov/dor](http://www.oregon.gov/dor) to get tax information, check the status of your refund, or make payments. You can also email [questions.dor@oregon.gov](mailto:questions.dor@oregon.gov); call 503-378-4988 in Salem and outside Oregon; or call, toll-free, 800-356-4222. The department receives a lot of phone calls during tax season so you may experience long wait times.