

How To File a Tax Return

A checklist with tips on how to complete your annual tax return.

General Tips

- Note that as soon as the tax return arrives, an extension of the deadline can be filed. Filing an extension eases pressure and stress, especially in the case of unforeseen events.
- Good preparation is the key. This means collecting all relevant documents throughout the year and storing them in a separate folder. Doing so makes it significantly easier to fill out the tax return and ultimately saves time.
- Keep a copy of last year's tax return handy; a comparison with the previous tax return ensures that no information is left out.
- Be sure to adjust any changes in personal details if this is relevant (e.g. new address, marital status, separation status, etc.).
- After filing out your tax return, write down the provisionally calculated tax amount due. It is advisable to include these figures in your budget. This calculation helps prevent nasty surprises in the current and following year, and it also helps with liquidity planning. Remember that you will receive a state and municipal tax as well as a Direct Federal Tax bill.
- Always check through the filled out assessment and the corresponding tax bill.

Checklist

Income

- All salary statements, incl. side and part-time earnings.
 - Careful: payments in kind (i.e. remuneration not in monetary form) are also subject to taxation.
- Pension certificates (AHV, IV, pension fund, etc.).
- Statements on daily allowance or substitute income.
- If self-employed: a balance sheet, income statement and a basic list of income/expenses ('back of the envelope' calculations) in the case of sole proprietorship and companies with simple bookkeeping.

Care Provisions

- Insurance certificates for capital benefits which have been paid out (2nd/ 3rd pillar).
- Confirmations of contributions into the 2nd pillar.
- Certificates of contributions paid into Pillar 3a.
- Certifications of AHV contributions for persons who are not gainfully employed.

Estate and Gifts

- Gifts received or made, inheritances or advance payments on an inheritance.
- Shares in a currently existing inheritance community.

Children and Maintenance Contributions

- Receipts for third-party care costs.
- List of maintenance contributions received.
- Payments to a separated or divorced spouse and to minor children.

Professional Expenses

- Travel expenses to the place of work (season ticket for public transport, mileage on vehicle, etc.).
- Statement and receipts pertaining to business expenses if they are greater than the standard amount to be deducted.
- Receipts for education and (further) training costs, if self-paid.

Real estate

- Revaluation or last official appraisal of any property.
- Invoices or receipts for the maintenance, insurance and management cost of property.
- For condominiums: statements on additional maintenance and operating costs (incl. administration).
- List of rental income and imputed rental value.
- Management accounts for apartment buildings.

Debts

- ❑ Certificates of debts as of December 31, as well as interest certificates (mortgages, loans, personal credit, credit card, etc.).

Securities

- ❑ Attestations and interest certificates from bank and postal accounts as of December 31.
- ❑ Confirmation of the balance of accounts which were closed during the year.
- ❑ List of securities accounts with any dividend statements, purchase and sale receipts for securities or a tax list.
- ❑ Details of dividends and credit balances vis-à-vis one's own public limited company/ limited company, including interest credit (current account).
- ❑ Lottery winnings.

Assets

- ❑ Other assets (cash, precious metals, art, etc.).
- ❑ Information about private motor vehicles (purchase price, year).

Insurance Policies

- ❑ Repurchase (buy-back) certificates for life and pension insurance policies
- ❑ Repurchase (buy-back) receipts from current life insurance policies (year of conclusion/ expiry, the sum insured, premium).

Miscellaneous Deductions

- ❑ Details on self-paid medical expenses such as health insurance deductibles, dental expenses, medications, etc.
- ❑ Contributions to political parties.
- ❑ Contributions to Non-Profit Organizations (donation receipts).
- ❑ Grants to persons in need of support.

Important

Assets abroad are also relevant for the tax return. Even if it is not taxed in Switzerland, they must be declared because this will influence the tax rate determination. These assets cannot be omitted.