Gmail

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How to Write Off Travel (Legally)

1 message

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Hi Donna,

Have you ever thought, “I want to go to Bora Bora and write it off as a business expense”?

A lot of people posting tax advice online have too..

But what does the actual tax law say?

Here are the five steps you must meet to deduct business travel:

1. **You must have a real business.**
   Having an LLC does not automatically mean you have a business. For tax purposes, you only have a business if the activity is considerable, continuous, and regular with the primary purpose of earning a profit. If you are wondering whether you have a business after hearing that, you probably do not yet. And without a business, there is no business travel deduction.

2. **The trip must be ordinary, necessary, and primarily for business purposes.**
   Ordinary means common in your industry. Necessary means appropriate and helpful. The IRS looks at how much of the trip is spent on business versus personal activities, how directly the business activity ties to your revenue, and how significant the personal activities were. Courts have upheld travel when the work was central and substantial, and denied it when sightseeing or personal events outweighed the business purpose.

3. **Your documentation must be airtight.**
   Travel deductions require stricter proof than most expenses. You must record the amount spent, the time and place of travel, the business purpose, and the business relationship of anyone involved. This must be done at or near the time of the trip. If your records are incomplete, the IRS can deny the entire deduction.

4. **Family travel has stricter rules.**
   Your spouse or kids can only qualify if they are W-2 employees of your business, their travel serves a bona fide business purpose, and their costs would have been deductible even if they traveled alone. A board position or “helping out” does not qualify.

5. **International travel has additional restrictions.**
   You must allocate costs between business and personal days unless you meet narrow exceptions, and you must show that the foreign location itself was necessary. If the meeting could have reasonably been held in the U.S., the

necessary. If the meeting could have reasonably been held in the U.S., the deduction will not stand.

Here are the final takeaways to deduct travel correctly:

Most of what you hear online about writing off vacations is just not true. The law is clear, and the IRS enforces it.

If you want to hear me walk through these rules in more detail, I recorded a full breakdown here:👇

Watch the Full Video

Best,
Jasmine DiLucci