



Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): Tax Return Preparation Process

Firm Philosophy: We don't just "plug in the numbers and file." Every tax return we prepare is an opportunity to plan ahead, uncover tax-saving strategies, and protect your financial future.



Overview: What Makes Us Different

Some firms prepare your return by entering numbers into software and filing the return as fast as possible. We reject that approach. Here's what you can expect from our process:

- **Strategic focus, not just form-filling**
 - **Clear communication and education**
 - **Tax planning woven into the return preparation**
 - **Post-filing insights to guide future decisions**
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Step-by-Step Process

1. Initial Document Request

We begin by providing a **customized checklist** to help you gather and upload all relevant documents to your secure client portal (ShareFile).

We ask for:

- Prior year tax returns (if not already on file)
- W-2s, 1099s, K-1s, and other income forms
- Business or rental income records
- Deductible expenses and certain receipts
- Other relevant financial documents

Note: If your situation has changed since last year, we'll ask additional questions to ensure accuracy.

2. Preliminary Review & Gap Analysis

Once we receive your documents, we:

- Review for completeness
- Identify missing items or red flags
- Ask follow-up questions when clarification is needed

We also check for:

- Major changes from prior years
 - A review of your prior year tax returns for any errors or missed opportunities
 - Potential deductions or credits you might have missed
 - Planning opportunities based on trends in your documents
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3. Return Preparation

Your return is prepared by a **tax *accounting* professional** who not only has a strong working knowledge of tax law, but also understands how specific tax decisions impact your overall business and investment strategy.

During this stage:

- We cross-check source documents with prior year returns to ensure consistency
- We verify that all deductions and credits are properly calculated
- We evaluate your business and investment activity in the broader context of your financial goals and tax strategy

We don't just enter numbers — we think strategically through every line item.

4. Quality Assurance Review

After your return is prepared, it undergoes a **dedicated quality assurance review**.

During this review:

- We ensure the return aligns with your current financial objectives (e.g., minimizing tax liability, optimizing deductions, qualifying for future credits or financing)
- We confirm that the return complies with all relevant IRS and state regulations
- We verify that no planning opportunities or reporting inconsistencies were overlooked
- We verify that all numbers and source documents related to the return are accurate and safely stored and readily available

This extra layer of scrutiny ensures your return is both accurate and strategically prepared.

5. Strategic Tax Analysis

This is where our firm adds significant value.

After preparing the return, we:

- Provide a **detailed analysis of the key takeaways**
- Highlight **important tax planning opportunities** (missed deductions, safe harbor payments, income planning, etc.)
- Help you understand **why your taxes look the way they do**, not just what's owed or refunded

You'll receive a document with an analysis walking you through:

- Year-over-year comparisons
 - Tax bracket and marginal rate exposure
 - Business performance (if applicable)
 - Any changes or concerns we noticed
 - A list of opportunities to implement strategies for future years
 - A discussion of why the numbers look the way they do on the return we just filed
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6. Client Review & Signature

You'll be given time to:

- Review the tax return and the strategic analysis
- Ask questions and get clarifications
- Electronically sign once you're comfortable

We don't move forward until you understand what's being filed and why.

7. Filing

Once authorized, we:

- E-file your federal and state returns securely
- Confirm receipt and acceptance from tax agencies
- Provide you with a **final copy of your return for your records**

8. Post-Filing Guidance

This is where we set ourselves apart again.

After filing, we:

- Recommend **estimated tax payments** (if needed)
- Discuss **next steps** for the current year (retirement contributions, entity considerations, large purchases, etc.)
- Schedule a **follow-up consultation** if deeper planning is needed (subject to additional fees)

9. Proactive Outreach

We don't wait until next tax season to reconnect. You'll hear from us throughout the year with:

- Tips and alerts for law changes
- Opportunities for tax savings
- Business tips and discussions

Your Information is Safe

All of your data is handled securely using encrypted document storage and professional-grade software. We never outsource your tax information.

Still Have Questions?

We're here to help. Our goal is to make sure you understand the “why” behind every number and feel confident that your taxes are being handled with your best interest in mind.