









<b>Paid Preparer Use Only</b>	Print/Type preparer's name	Preparer's signature	Date	Check <input type="checkbox"/> if self-employed	PTIN
	Firm's name ▶	Firm's EIN ▶			
	Firm's address ▶	Phone no.			

Form **1040** (2012)

who charges a contingent fee. This is likely a violation of ethical standards (Circular 230) and gives the preparer incentive to falsify the return for his or her own benefit.

- If your situation doesn't change much from year to year, your refund or balance due shouldn't, either. Beware of a new preparer who generates a refund that sounds too good to be true.
- Legitimate preparers are available year-round and stand behind their work. If your preparer's office has wheels, or he uses a disposable cellphone and a free g-mail account, you might want to find someone else with whom to share your personal information.
- Finally, paid preparers are not to accept your refund. Under no circumstances should all or part of your refund be directly deposited into a preparer's bank account. If a preparer offers this service, run screaming from the room.

## CONCLUSION

Many people are surprised to learn that the tax preparation industry has been completely unregulated for 100 years. While EAs, CPAs and attorneys have long adhered to standards of ethics and practice, many tax preparers have not. Now that the IRS is regulating the entire industry, it's a good time to get to know your tax preparer a little

better and to make sure his or her credentials are a good match for your needs.

## ONE LAST THING

Even if you've done everything right and followed all the advice here, the most important thing to do is to review your tax return *before* you sign and submit. Ask as many questions as necessary to understand what it says and why. No matter how much help you receive preparing the return (or how much you pay for it!) *you* are ultimately responsible for the information on the return and *you* are the one who will hear from the IRS if they have any questions. DW

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