Newlywed Tax Tips

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Tips for Newlyweds

Updating your status from single to married may bring about some unanticipated changes, including changes relating to your taxes. As with any tax issue, contact your tax professional to help you navigate your own unique situation.

Notify the Social Security Administration (SSA)

If one of you has taken on a new name, report the change to the SSA by filing Form SS-5, *Application for a Social Security Card.* Form SS-5 is available on the SSA website at www.ssa.gov, by calling 800-772-1213, or by visiting a local SSA office. A copy of your marriage certificate and driver's license or passport will be required.

The IRS matches your information with SSA records. Therefore, if your name has not been changed with the SSA, you will need to show your former name on your tax return instead of your married name to avoid delays.

Notify the IRS If You Move

The IRS will automatically update your new address upon filing your next tax return, but any notices the IRS sends in the meantime may not get to you. The U.S. Postal Service does not forward certain types of federal and certified IRS mail. IRS Form 8822, *Change of Address,* is the official way to update the IRS of your address change. Download Form 8822 from www.irs.gov or order it by calling 800-TAX-FORM (800-829-3676).

Notify the U.S. Postal Service

To ensure your mail, including mail from the IRS, is forwarded to your new address, you'll need to notify the U.S. Postal Service. Submit a forwarding request online at www.usps.com or visit your local post office.

Most post offices will not forward refund checks so be sure the IRS has your correct address. Using electronic direct deposit for refunds can prevent delays due to address mix-ups.

Notify Financial Institutions

Financial institutions with which you do business need to be notified to ensure that any Forms 1099 are sent to the proper address. This would include banks and brokerage firms, as well as employer-sponsored retirement plans.

Notify Your Health Insurance Marketplace

If you or your spouse are receiving advance payments of the Premium Tax Credit, you should report changes in circumstances to your Health Insurance Marketplace as they happen. Changes to your household, income, and family size may affect the amount of the credit you qualify for.

Notify Your Employer

Report your name and/or address change to your employer(s) to make sure you receive your Form(s) W-2, *Wage and Tax Statement,* after the end of the year.

Check Your Withholding

It is important to make sure that withholding is high enough to cover your tax on a married return. The IRS Tax Withholding Estimator can help determine whether you need to give your employer(s) a new Form W-4, *Employee's Withholding Certificate.* Go to www.irs.gov/W4app.

In general, the tax rates and deductions double on a joint return. However, many married couples end up owing tax when they file even if they are not paying more tax overall.

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Example #1: *Jen and Zak are both single, earn $60,000 from employment, and withhold at the standard single rate in 2026.*

Federal tax $60,000 single $5,023
Single withholding (biweekly pay) $5,044

In this scenario, Jen and Zak would each receive a refund of $21 when they file their 2026 returns and pay combined tax of $10,046 ($5,023 × 2).

Example #2: *Assume the same facts as Example #1, except Jen and Zak are married, file a joint return, and each withhold at the standard married rate.*

Federal tax $120,000 filing jointly $10,043
Married withholding (biweekly pay) .... $2,860 each

In this scenario, even though their total tax is $3 lower on a joint return ($10,046 – $10,043), they would owe $4,323 when they file. The change from the standard single withholding rate to the married rate resulted in $2,184 less being withheld for each of them even though their total tax stayed roughly the same.

Choose the Best Filing Status

If you are married, you can no longer use the Single filing status on your tax return. Your marital status on December 31 each year determines whether you are considered married for the entire year for tax purposes. Generally, the tax law allows married couples to file their federal income tax returns either jointly or separately in any given year.

Married Filing Jointly. If you are married as of the last day of the year and both spouses agree, you can file a joint return. Joint returns include income and deductions for both spouses. For most married couples, filing jointly will result in a lower tax liability.

If a joint return is filed, both of you may be held responsible, jointly and individually, for the tax and any interest or penalty due on the joint return. One spouse may be held responsible for all the tax due even if all the income was earned by the other person. Once a joint return is filed for any tax year, it cannot be amended to file separately after the due date of the return.

Married Filing Separately. If you are married you can choose to file separately and report only your own income, credits, and deductions. Many credits and deductions are not allowed on married filing separately forms, which generally results in higher tax liability. However, it may be advisable for a married couple to file separately if:

- One spouse has messy or missing records, is taking a risky tax position, or is suspected of not reporting all of his or her income.
- One or both spouses have federal student loans and are on income-driven repayment plans.
- One spouse has not been filing his or her tax returns. Filing separately allows the other spouse to fulfill his or her own tax obligations.
- Both spouses have their own itemized deductions. Because of the percentage limitation for medical expenses on Schedule A (Form 1040), some spouses may be able to claim higher overall deductions.
- One spouse has past due debt from a government agency such as tax, child support, or student loans. If a joint return is filed, the other spouse's share of any refund may be used to pay debt for which he or she is not liable unless Form 8379, *Injured Spouse Allocation,* is filed.

A separate return can be amended within three years of the due date to change the filing status and file a joint return.

To determine which filing status is best for you, consult your tax professional or use the IRS Interactive Tax Assistant, available at www.irs.gov/help/ita.

Contact Us

There are many events that occur during the year that can affect your tax situation. Preparation of your tax return involves summarizing transactions and events that occurred during the prior year. In most situations, treatment is firmly established at the time the transaction occurs. However, negative tax effects can be avoided by proper planning. Please contact us in advance if you have questions about the tax effects of a transaction or event, including the following:

- Pension or IRA distributions.
- Significant change in income or deductions.
- Job change.
- Marriage.
- Attainment of age 59½ or 73.
- Sale or purchase of a business.
- Sale or purchase of a residence or other real estate.
- Retirement.
- Notice from IRS or other revenue department.
- Divorce or separation.
- Self-employment.
- Charitable contributions of property in excess of $5,000.