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Preparing taxes can be challenging, whether on your own or organizing information for your trusted tax professional. Electronic filing software helps make the process less complicated, but even one small error or omission can trigger problems you didn't expect and delays in getting a refund.

To ensure a smooth tax preparation process, the [Illinois CPA Society](#) recommends taking some simple steps that can make a huge difference this tax season.

When crunching the numbers and details, remember to double check for:

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forgetting to list numbers for you or your dependents can create unexpected problems. Social Security numbers serve as individual tax ID numbers.

- **Correct direct deposit information** – Having your refund direct deposited into one or multiple bank accounts is very convenient, but make sure your account numbers are correct on your return, especially if you're listing multiple accounts.
- **Changes in your filing status** – If you were married, divorced or your household situation changed, it may need to be reflected in your official filing status. But if you're unsure of your filing status, a tax professional can help you determine the correct and most beneficial status for your particular situation.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) lists five filing status options for all taxpayers:

- Single
- Married filing jointly
- Married filing separately
- Head of household
- Qualifying widow(er) with dependent child
- **Tax deductible charitable contributions** – If you donated cash or gifts to qualified charities and non-profit organizations in the last year, you may be able to deduct the value of your contribution – when itemizing your return. Make sure to list the total amount for all charitable contributions and check the math to see if the overall value is correct.
- **Signing and dating your return** – After all that hard work preparing your tax returns, they can't be filed until you've signed and dated the bottom line.
- **2017 tax deadline day** – Because the usual deadline day of April 15 falls on a weekend this year and the following Monday is a federal holiday in Washington,

D.C., taxpayers have a little more time to file. **All returns are due by midnight on**

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