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Amanda Hammond • Apr. 16, 2019



Bookkeeping is one of the most important activities that successful owner-operators should be using to their advantage. The receipts and records you keep are often in areas of your business — income tax reporting and minimization, warranty issues, maintenance information, and monthly profitability, just to name a few.

The more organized and thorough you can be in your receipt gathering, the better (whether you hire a business services provider or not). You can simplify the bookkeeping task by following six simple practices that will translate into higher profit with less hassle.

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2. Open a separate checking account for your business.

If you are the sole owner of the business, open an additional personal account so simplicity purposes, not to mention that it will save you the extra fees that are associated with business accounts. Deposit settlement checks into this account, and then pay yourself out of these funds. Pay all business expenses from this account for easy recordkeeping purposes. Having a separate account will also give you easy access to necessary information in the event you are audited.

3. Use a separate credit card for business expenses.

Research credit cards and find one with a low-interest rate that doesn't have an annual fee, and ideally a generous rewards plan. Pay the balance in full every month to ensure you aren't racking up additional business debt. Having a credit card for business expenses is another way to make recordkeeping easy since you can often separate charges into categories (gas, food, maintenance, etc.).

4. Save all of your log books.

Your logbook and/or electronic log records are your best proof of entitlement to per diem expenses (primarily composed of meal costs). If you rely solely on your electronic logging device (ELD), make sure you can save and access your history (this is mandatory thing to know for inspections anyway).

5. Keep a notebook in your truck.

Use this notebook (in addition to your receipt envelop!), or a document on your computer or smartphone to record any expenses for which you cannot obtain a receipt. This includes things like when you wash your truck at a coin-operated facility and to record mileage for business use of your personal vehicle. Provide a

monthly record to your business services provider or tax accountant along with any

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warranty information (which should be available immediately to keep your truck on the road), registration information, settlement statements and bank statements, business credit card statements, and canceled checks.

How to Simplify Your Recordkeeping

Business services can help a great deal with the organization and reporting of your income, expenses, profit and loss reports, and taxes. But if you're an those owner-operator that wants to manage your business yourself, a surefire system is needed to keep recordkeeping as simple as possible.

Here is an example of a very simple recordkeeping system for an owner-operator.

- Purchase an expanding file folder, a stapler, and a desktop calculator with register tape from an office supply store. Fill out the pocket labels on the expanding file folder with various categories of expenses and incomes — things like maintenance, fuel, meals and entertainment, equipment, settlements, and office supplies.
- When you get a receipt or settlement statement, drop it in the corresponding pocket.
- At the end of each month, add together the receipts in each pocket. Label the calculator's register tape with the month and year, and staple the printout to each corresponding stack of receipts, then drop the bundle back into the corresponding slot. Since they are stapled together, they won't get mixed up with new receipts coming in. You'll have everything you need sorted correctly for the end of each quarter or at the end of each year.
- Supplement this system by noting your odometer reading on the first of every month allowing you to track your true cost per mile for each month. Better yet, record your odometer reading each time you start a new load so you know your cost per mile for each load!

- Using online software (such as [ProfitGauges](#) by Kevin Rutherford of Let's Truck and

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