



Ohio Business Gateway — File & Pay Business Taxes Online

File & Pay Business Taxes Online

————— **An Extended Guide · No. 1772** —————

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

Here is the whole guide in a nutshell. The Ohio Business Gateway is the State of Ohio's website for business owners to register, file, and pay certain taxes and fees, such as the commercial activity tax, unemployment contributions, and city income taxes. Start only at gateway.ohio.gov and type the address yourself. Sign in with your OH|ID, the state's one login. Some taxes, including sales tax and employer withholding, are handled through a sister system called OH|TAX eServices from the Department of Taxation, which uses the same OH|ID. Mark every due date on a calendar, file even when business is slow if your account requires it, and save each confirmation. The real state never asks for gift cards, your password, or a code by phone. If any of this feels tangled, that is exactly what I help neighbors with, and you can call me.

1. What the Ohio Business Gateway Is

The state's front door for business filings.

The Ohio Business Gateway is a State of Ohio website where business owners handle certain tax and filing chores online. The state describes it as a one-stop place to file and pay things like the commercial activity tax, unemployment compensation contributions, workers' compensation premiums, and city income taxes for hundreds of Ohio municipalities.

Think of it as a government counter that never closes. Instead of mailing paper forms or standing in a line, you sign in, pick the filing you need, fill in the numbers, and pay. You get a confirmation when you finish. I wrote this guide for shop owners, contractors, landlords, and anyone running a small business who is not an accountant.

- The real address is gateway.ohio.gov.
- It is run by the State of Ohio, so it ends in dot gov.
- Signing in uses your OH|ID, the state's one login.
- Using the site to file is free; any payment option that carries a fee tells you before you confirm.

GOOD TO KNOW

The Gateway is for businesses. Your personal state income tax return is a different task, handled by the Department of Taxation's individual services, not here.

2. Is This Guide for You?

A quick check before you dig in.

If you sell things, hire people, work as a contractor, rent property through a business, or run a shop or small company in Ohio, you will probably meet the Gateway sooner or later. Some owners use it every month. Others touch it once a year.

If you only have a regular job and file a personal return, this is not the place for you. You can set the guide aside and ask me about the personal tax tools instead. Nothing here is hard, but there is no reason to learn it if you do not need it.

- You collect sales tax from customers.
- You pay employees and hold back tax from their checks.
- You owe a city income tax on business profits.
- You pay unemployment or workers' compensation costs for staff.
- You are starting a new business and need to register it.

TIP

If you are unsure which of these apply to you, write down what your business does and bring it to your tax preparer or the Department of Taxation help line. They can tell you which accounts you need.

3. What to Have Ready First

Gather a few things and the rest goes smoothly.

Most trouble on any government website comes from being halfway through and realizing a number is in a drawer somewhere. A few minutes of gathering saves a lot of frustration. You do not need everything on day one, but the items below come up often.

- An email address you can open, since the state sends codes to it.
- Your mobile phone, if you want codes by text.
- Your business's legal name and mailing address.
- Your federal employer identification number, if your business has one.
- Past notices or account numbers from the state, if you have any.
- Your bank's routing and account numbers, if you plan to pay from a bank account.

Keep a pen and a notebook beside you. Write down any new account numbers the moment you see them. It is far easier than hunting them down later.

Do not worry if you are missing one of these. The Gateway will tell you what it needs, and you can stop and come back. Nothing is lost by pausing.

TIP

Sit down at a quiet time of day, not on the due date. A calm hour with a cup of coffee beats a panicked ten minutes on deadline day.

4. Getting to the Real Website

Type the address yourself.

The real Ohio Business Gateway lives at gateway.ohio.gov. Type that into the address bar at the top of your browser. Do not click a link in an email or a text message, and be careful with search results, where look-alike sites sometimes appear at the top.

Official Ohio sites end in dot gov. That ending is reserved for real government, so a private company or a scammer cannot simply buy it. When the page loads, you should see the words Ohio Business Gateway and a notice that it is an official State of Ohio site.

- 1 Open your web browser.
- 2 Click in the long address bar at the top, not the search box.
- 3 Type gateway.ohio.gov and press Enter.
- 4 Check that the page says Ohio Business Gateway and that the address ends in dot gov.
- 5 Find the Log In button on the page.

If you are ever unsure, close the page and start over by typing the address again. It costs you ten seconds and removes any doubt about where you are.

WATCH OUT

The real state never emails or texts you a link saying your account is suspended and you must sign in at once. Pressure and hurry are the giveaways. Go to gateway.ohio.gov yourself instead.

5. Signing In With Your OH|ID

One state login opens the door.

The Gateway uses OH|ID, the State of Ohio's single sign-in. The name is written O, H, a thin vertical bar, then I, D. If you already made one for the BMV or another state service, that same OH|ID works here.

When you choose Log In, the Gateway sends you to an OH|ID screen. You type your username and password there, and possibly a code, and then the state sends you back to the Gateway, signed in. It feels like one smooth step after you have done it a time or two.

- 1 On gateway.ohio.gov, choose Log In.
- 2 On the OH|ID screen, type your username and password.
- 3 Enter the one-time code if you are asked for one.
- 4 Wait to be returned to the Gateway.

The first time through, give yourself a little extra patience. The state may ask you to confirm your email or phone before it lets you continue. That is normal and is there to protect your account from strangers. Each later visit is quicker.

GOOD TO KNOW

I have a separate guide just on OH|ID. If you have never made an account, read that first or call me, and we can set it up together.

6. Using Your Own OH|ID, Not a Shared One

Why every person gets a personal login.

It is tempting for a small business to make one login and let everyone use it. Please do not. The Gateway is built so that each person signs in with their own OH|ID, and the business owner decides who gets to see and do what.

A personal login means you always know who filed what. It also means that when a bookkeeper or employee leaves, you simply remove their access. You do not have to change a shared password and worry about who still knows it.

- Each person makes their own OH|ID with their own email.
- The business owner or a designated person manages who has access.
- Never share your password or a code, even with someone you trust.
- If someone leaves, remove their access promptly.

I see this most with husband-and-wife shops, where one person does all the paperwork. Even then, each spouse should have a separate OH|ID, so either one can step in when the other is sick or away. It is a small bit of insurance for your business.

WATCH OUT

Sharing one login to save time is how small businesses end up locked out of their own accounts. It also makes it harder to find the cause if something goes wrong.

7. What You See After You Sign In

A first look around the screen.

After signing in you will see the Gateway's main page for your account. The exact layout can change as the state improves the site, so I will describe it in general terms. You should find a way to see your businesses, a place to file or pay, and a Help area.

If this is your first time, the page may ask you to add a business or connect to one you already own. Do not worry if it looks plain or unfamiliar. Take a breath and read each heading slowly. Nothing is filed until you press a final submit button and confirm.

- Look for your business name or a button to add one.
- Look for a section for filing or services.
- Look for a payments or account area.
- Look for a Help link, often at the top of the page.

Some owners tell me the first screen feels like a lot. Remember that you only need to use one small part of it for any given job. Ignore the rest until you need it, just as you ignore most buttons on a TV remote.

TIP

You cannot break anything by looking around. Clicking on headings only shows you information. Real changes happen only when you submit and confirm.

8. Two Doors: the Gateway and OH|TAX eServices

Why some taxes live in a different place.

Here is something that confuses almost everybody. The state has two online systems for business taxes. The Ohio Business Gateway handles things like the commercial activity tax, unemployment contributions, workers' compensation premiums, and city income taxes. A second system, OH|TAX eServices from the Department of Taxation, handles other taxes, including sales and use tax and employer withholding.

Both use OH|ID, so you do not make a second password. The Department of Taxation says a business generally sets itself up in the Gateway first and then connects to OH|TAX eServices. Which tax lives where can shift over time, so I keep this general on purpose.

GOOD TO KNOW

To see which system handles a specific tax, check the Services and Transactions page on gateway.ohio.gov or the business section of tax.ohio.gov. If a tax is not where you expect it, the other door is probably the right one.

If this sounds like extra work, here is the comforting part. Once both are bookmarked, the daily routine is simple: pick the door for the tax in front of you, sign in with the same OH|ID, and do the job. You never need two passwords.

TIP

Bookmark both gateway.ohio.gov and tax.ohio.gov after you confirm them yourself. Then you are one click from either door.

9. Registering a Brand-New Business

Two different offices, two different jobs.

Starting a business involves two separate kinds of registration, and people often mix them up. Forming the business itself, such as an LLC or a corporation, is done with the Ohio Secretary of State, whose site is OhioSoS.gov. That creates the legal business.

Registering for state taxes is a different job, handled through the Department of Taxation. The Department says you can register through the Gateway, through OH|TAX eServices, or on paper. Forming the business tells the state you exist. Tax registration tells it which taxes you will file.

- Form the business with the Secretary of State, if it needs to be formed.
- Get your federal employer identification number if you need one.
- Register for state taxes through the Department of Taxation's online options.
- Add city taxes where your business operates.

Take it one office at a time. Finish the Secretary of State part first if your business needs forming, then move to tax registration. Keep copies of what each office sends back, since you will need those names and numbers again.

TIP

A sole proprietor with no employees may have fewer steps. If you are unsure, ask the Department of Taxation or a tax preparer before you register for the wrong thing.

10. Setting Up Your Tax Accounts

Telling the state which taxes apply to you.

Once your business exists in the system, you add the tax accounts that fit what you do. A tax account is just the state's record that your business files a certain type of return. Sales tax is one, withholding is another.

The setup screens ask about your business activities, so answer plainly. If you are unsure whether a question applies, look for a help link beside it, or stop and ask. A wrong answer here can mean filing the wrong forms later.

- 1 Sign in and open the area for managing your business.
- 2 Choose the option to add or register for a tax.
- 3 Read the description of each tax and pick only those that fit.
- 4 Answer the questions about your business honestly.
- 5 Review everything, submit, and write down any account numbers you get.

After you submit, the state may take a little while to set things up, and some accounts need a follow-up step before they appear. Check back after a day or two before you worry. If nothing shows up, call the support line and ask. The people there handle this question daily.

WATCH OUT

Do not add taxes just in case. Each account you open comes with filing duties, and some require a return even in a month with no activity.

11. Sales Tax and the Vendor's License

For anyone who sells goods or taxable services.

If your business sells things to customers in Ohio, you usually need a vendor's license, which lets you collect sales tax. You then pass that tax along to the state on a regular return. The Department of Taxation says every sales and use tax filer must file electronically, no matter how small the business.

That means the old paper habit is gone for sales tax. You file online, or by the state's phone-in TeleFile system, which the Department lists at 800-697-0440 for sales tax returns. Sales tax is usually filed through OH|TAX eServices rather than the Gateway, so see the two-doors chapter.

- You collect tax from the customer at the time of sale.
- You report what you collected on a return.
- You send the tax you collected to the state.
- You file even in a slow stretch with no sales, if your account is open.

If you are not sure whether what you sell is taxable, do not guess. Some goods and services are taxed and others are not, and the rules have many exceptions. The Department of Taxation's sales tax pages and your preparer are the right places to ask.

GOOD TO KNOW

The Department's Finder tool looks up local sales tax rates for an address in Ohio, so you do not have to guess what rate to charge.

12. Employer Withholding

Holding back tax from your employees' pay.

If you pay employees, you hold back a portion of their pay for state income tax, and you send it to the state. This is called employer withholding. You are handling their money for them, so the state takes it seriously and the deadlines matter.

You file a return that reports what you held back and then you pay it. Withholding is among the taxes the Department of Taxation handles through its own online system, OH|TAX eServices. Your payroll company may do all of it for you, so ask before you start.

- Find out whether your payroll service already files for you.
- If you do it yourself, keep a clear record of each pay period.
- Hold back the right amount and set it aside.
- File and pay by the due date shown for your account.

If you are a very small employer with one or two helpers, withholding is still your job. A good habit is to move the withheld amount into a separate savings account each payday, so it is waiting for you when the return comes due.

WATCH OUT

Money held back from employees is not your money. Spending it and paying late is one of the costliest mistakes a small employer can make.

13. The Commercial Activity Tax

A business tax many owners do not expect.

The commercial activity tax, often called the CAT, is a tax on a business's gross receipts, meaning what the business takes in. It is not the same as sales tax. Many very small businesses do not owe it because of how it is set up, but larger ones must register and file.

The state's own description places the CAT among the filings you can make through the Ohio Business Gateway. Because the rules about who must file are detailed, I do not guess at them here. Read the Department of Taxation's commercial activity tax page or ask a preparer.

- Check the Department's page to see if your business must register.
- If you must, register through the state's online system.
- File on the schedule the state assigns to your account.
- Keep your sales records handy to support the numbers.

The numbers for this tax come from your total receipts, so a clean set of sales records makes it far easier. If you keep your books in a notebook or a simple spreadsheet, keep doing that, and add up the totals at the end of each period.

GOOD TO KNOW

Tax services can move between the two online systems over time. Always follow what the Department of Taxation page tells you to do for the CAT.

14. City Income Taxes

Local taxes on business profit.

Many Ohio cities and villages charge an income tax, and businesses operating in them may owe tax on their net profit. The Department of Taxation says the Gateway lets business owners file and pay municipal income taxes for nearly five hundred cities and villages.

This is good news for a business that works in more than one town, such as a contractor with jobs around Portage County and beyond. Instead of sending a paper return to each town, you can handle many from one place.

- 1 Find out which towns your business works or has an office in.
- 2 Check each town's rules on whether you owe.
- 3 Sign in to the Gateway and look for the municipal income tax filing option.
- 4 Select the city, enter your figures, and review.
- 5 Submit and pay.

Rules differ from town to town, so what you do in one place may not match another. Do not assume your home town is the only one. If you do work in a neighboring community, check whether that town expects a filing from you too.

TIP

The Department's Finder tool helps you look up local income tax rates for any address in Ohio. Use it to double-check which town applies.

15. Unemployment and Workers' Compensation Costs

Insurance-type payments for employers.

If you have employees, you probably owe contributions into the state's unemployment fund. That is how the benefits for laid-off workers are paid. The Gateway is one of the places the state names for filing unemployment compensation contributions.

Workers' compensation is a separate matter. It is insurance for job injuries, and the state describes the Gateway as a place to pay workers' compensation premiums too. Those premiums are billed through the Bureau of Workers' Compensation, so your bills and rules come from them.

- Unemployment contributions go to the state's unemployment program.
- Workers' compensation premiums go to the Bureau of Workers' Compensation.
- Both can show up in your Gateway account.
- Your payroll company may handle either one.

If you use a payroll company, these payments are often rolled into what they handle for you. Ask them to show you where the filings appear so that you know they are happening. A quick question now prevents an unpleasant surprise later.

GOOD TO KNOW

Do not mix these up with unemployment claims that a worker files for benefits. That is a different site, covered in my OhioMeansJobs and Unemployment guide.

16. Connecting a Bookkeeper or Tax Preparer

You do not have to do it all yourself.

Many owners hand the filing to a bookkeeper, CPA, or payroll company. That is perfectly fine, and the Gateway has a way to make it safe. The state has a section for service providers, such as CPAs and third-party administrators, to access their clients' business accounts.

The right way is for the provider to have their own OH|ID and for you to give them access to your business. Never hand over your own password. If they leave or you change preparers, you can remove their access without changing anything else.

- 1 Ask your preparer to make their own OH|ID if they do not have one.
- 2 Sign in and open the area for managing access to your business.
- 3 Follow the prompts to invite or approve them.
- 4 Tell them which taxes and filings they should handle.

I like this approach for owners who want the work done right but would rather spend their days in the shop. You stay the owner, you can look at your filings anytime, and your preparer does the typing. It is the best of both worlds.

WATCH OUT

Beware of anyone who contacts you out of the blue offering to fix your state tax account for a fee. Use people you already know or can verify.

17. Managing Who Can Use Your Account

The filing administrator and other users.

The Gateway has a role called the filing administrator. This person controls who can see and file for the business. The state has made changes over time to make administrator tasks simpler, so screens may differ a little from what I describe.

If you are the owner of a one-person business, you are probably the administrator. If you have staff, decide who should be. Choose someone steady and trustworthy, not just

whoever is least busy.

- Name one main administrator and, if possible, a backup.
- Give other users only the access they need.
- Review the list of users now and then.
- Remove people who no longer work with you.

Small businesses change. A part-time bookkeeper comes and goes, a son or daughter takes over some of the work, a partner retires. Keeping the access list tidy at each change means no one has more access than they should.

A quick review twice a year is plenty. Open the list, read each name, and ask yourself whether that person still needs access.

TIP

Write down who your administrator is. If that person moves away or becomes unavailable, you will need to know who to contact to regain control.

18. Knowing Your Due Dates

The calendar matters more than anything.

Each tax has its own due date, and they do not all land on the same day. The Gateway's home page lists upcoming deadlines for common filings, such as sales tax, the commercial activity tax, and employer withholding. That list is a good first stop.

Your own account will show the schedule that applies to you, because it depends on how the state set you up. When a due date falls on a weekend or holiday, the deadline generally moves to the next business day, but confirm that on the state's page instead of assuming.

- Put every due date on a wall calendar or phone reminder.
- Set a reminder several days ahead, not on the day.
- Note whether you file monthly, quarterly, or yearly.
- Mark city tax dates separately.

Late filings are the most avoidable problem in business taxes. The state is quite clear about deadlines, and a simple calendar habit is your best defense. Many owners find it helps to file on the same day each period, so it becomes routine.

TIP

I like to set two reminders for each deadline: one a week early to gather the numbers, and one two days early to file. That cushion covers a lost password or a slow internet day.

19. Filing a Return, Step by Step

The same basic pattern for most taxes.

The details differ for each tax, but filing a return follows a pattern. You choose the tax and the period, enter your figures, review a summary, and submit. The Gateway usually checks your entries for obvious problems before it lets you continue.

- 1 Sign in and open the filing area for the tax you need.
- 2 Choose the correct period, such as the month or quarter.
- 3 Enter your figures from your records, one box at a time.
- 4 Read the summary screen carefully.
- 5 Submit the return.
- 6 Move on to payment when it offers that option.

Go slowly on the numbers screen. A typo is the most common mistake, and it is easy to fix before you submit but harder afterward.

If the screen shows a warning in red or a message asking you to fix something, read it carefully and fix only what it names. These checks are there to help you. They catch missing boxes and numbers that do not add up before the return goes in.

GOOD TO KNOW

Many people file first and pay as the next step in the same visit. Others file first and pay later. Check how your tax works so you do not file and forget the payment.

20. Filing When You Had No Activity

A zero return still counts.

If your account is open but you had no sales, no payroll, or nothing to report in a period, you may still need to file a return showing zero. Skipping it because there is nothing to pay can bring a late-filing problem.

A zero return is quick. You open the filing, enter zero in the boxes that ask for amounts, and submit. It takes only a few minutes, and it keeps your account in good standing with

the state.

- Check whether your tax requires a return when there is no activity.
- Enter zero rather than leaving boxes blank.
- Submit and save the confirmation.
- If the business is closed for good, ask how to close the account instead.

Think of it like checking in. The state wants to hear from you regularly, even when the news is quiet. A few minutes of attention keeps your account out of trouble and spares you penalty notices that are annoying to straighten out later.

WATCH OUT

Do not just stop filing when business gets slow. Ask the Department of Taxation how to close or pause an account the right way.

21. Paying Your Business Taxes Online

Moving the money safely.

The Gateway lets you pay online after you file. The state describes electronic payment from a bank account, and card payment is an option for some payments through a processor. Which choices you see can depend on the tax, so look at the options your screen offers.

Paying from a bank account is often the simplest, because you enter your bank's routing number and your account number and the money moves electronically. You will review the amount and date before you confirm.

- 1 After filing, choose the option to pay.
- 2 Pick your payment method from those shown.
- 3 Enter your bank or card details carefully.
- 4 Check the amount and the payment date.
- 5 Confirm, and save the confirmation.

Before you pay, double-check your bank numbers digit by digit. A wrong digit can send a payment astray or cause it to fail, and a failed payment can leave you late. Read the numbers off a check or your bank statement, not from memory.

GOOD TO KNOW

Pay by the due date, not just file. A return can be on time while the payment is late, and both matter.

22. What Payments Can Cost

Fees explained in plain words.

Paying from a bank account is often the lower-cost choice, though your screen shows the details. Paying by credit or debit card normally carries a small convenience fee charged by the card processor, not by the state. The exact fee, if any, appears on the screen before you confirm.

I do not quote fee amounts here, because they can change. The rule of thumb is simple: if saving money matters, choose the bank payment. If you need the card, perhaps to earn rewards or because cash is tight that day, accept the fee knowingly.

- Look for a fee notice before you press confirm.
- Compare the bank option and the card option.
- Never pay a third-party site to file for you without checking it is the official one.
- Keep the receipt either way.

If you ever see a payment page that asks for more than you expected, or that sits on a website not ending in dot gov, stop. A real state payment screen will be reached from the official Gateway or Department of Taxation pages after you sign in.

WATCH OUT

The state never asks for payment by gift card, wire to a stranger, or cash app. Any request like that is a scam, even if it uses a real-sounding name.

23. Phone and Paper Options

When the computer is not your friend.

Not every task has to be done on a screen. For sales tax, the Department of Taxation offers a phone system called TeleFile, listed at 800-697-0440. It lets you file a sales tax return by telephone, which some owners prefer to a web page.

For help using the Gateway itself, the Department lists a support line at 1-888-405-4039. Calling lets you speak to a person who can look at your situation. Have your business

name and any account numbers ready.

- TeleFile for sales tax returns: 800-697-0440.
- Gateway support from the Department of Taxation: 1-888-405-4039.
- Paper forms exist for some taxes, but check first.
- Ask your preparer whether they can file for you.

Some people like a quiet phone call because they can ask a question out loud and hear the answer. That is a perfectly good way to work. Have a pen ready, ask the person to spell anything you did not catch, and write down their name and the date.

TIP

Confirm phone numbers on the state's own website before you dial. Numbers in this guide were taken from official pages, but numbers can change.

24. Saving Your Confirmations

Proof is your best protection.

After you file or pay, the Gateway shows a confirmation. This is your proof that you did the right thing on the right day. If anyone ever questions it, that record is what you will want in your hand.

- 1 On the confirmation screen, use your browser's Print button.
- 2 Choose Save as PDF to keep a digital copy, or print on paper.
- 3 Write the confirmation number and date in your notebook.
- 4 File it in a folder labeled by tax and year.

Make this a habit every time. Keep the folder where you keep your other business records. Ask your preparer how long to keep them; I suggest holding on for longer than you think you need.

One more useful habit is to keep a short log. A single line for each filing is plenty: the tax, the period, the date, the confirmation number, and the amount. After a year you will have a tidy history that takes ten minutes to read.

Two copies are better than one, so keep a paper copy in the folder and a saved file on your computer.

GOOD TO KNOW

Emails can get deleted or lost. A copy you saved yourself is sturdier than any message in an inbox.

25. Fixing a Mistake

Amending a return after you file.

Everyone makes a mistake with numbers at some point. If you notice an error after submitting, the Gateway generally has a way to amend, meaning to correct, a return. Do it as soon as you spot it rather than hoping nobody notices.

- 1 Sign in and find the filing history or list of past returns.
- 2 Pick the return and period that need correcting.
- 3 Choose the option to amend.
- 4 Enter the correct figures and review them.
- 5 Submit and save the new confirmation.

If you underpaid, send the difference promptly. If you overpaid, ask how a refund or credit works for that tax. The steps differ by tax, so check the state's help pages.

Mistakes are not a sign of failure. Even trained accountants correct returns. What the state cares about is that you notice, fix it, and pay what is truly owed. Acting quickly and honestly usually makes the whole thing much smoother.

Keep a note of what you changed and why, so your preparer can follow along if they help you later.

TIP

If you are not sure how to correct a return, call the support line before you try. A short call is cheaper than a second mistake.

26. If You Miss a Deadline

Stay calm and act quickly.

Missing a due date happens to good people. Illness, a busy season, or a lost password can all do it. The state may add a penalty or interest for a late filing or payment, and the longer you wait, the worse it tends to get.

The best move is to file and pay as soon as you can, then deal with any notice that follows. Ignoring it helps nothing. The Department of Taxation has information about late filing and about programs for businesses that have gotten behind.

- File the late return right away.
- Pay what you owe as soon as you can.
- Read any notice from the state completely.
- Call the Department of Taxation if you cannot pay in full.

If you got a notice, do not set it aside in a drawer. Open it, read it, and note the response date. Most notices explain what to do and where to call. Sign in to your own account to see whether the same message appears there.

WATCH OUT

Be wary of anyone who calls demanding immediate payment or threatening arrest. Genuine notices come in writing and can be checked by signing in to your own account.

27. Looking Up Local Tax Rates

The Finder tool.

One handy tool on the Department of Taxation's site is called the Finder. It lets a business owner look up local income tax rates and sales tax rates for any address in Ohio. That helps when a customer is in another county or you work in several towns.

Rates differ from place to place, and guessing is a common source of errors. Typing in the address of the sale or the job gives you the answer straight from the state. It is free to use.

- 1 Go to tax.ohio.gov and open the business section.
- 2 Look for the Finder or rate lookup tool.
- 3 Type the street address.
- 4 Read the rates shown for that location.
- 5 Use them on your records and returns.

The Finder is also good for checking a customer's complaint. If someone says you charged the wrong rate, you can look up the address and show them. It is the sort of small tool that saves arguments and keeps your records straight.

GOOD TO KNOW

Keep a note of the date you looked up a rate. If a rate changes later, you can show what the state's tool said when you used it.

28. Protecting Your Login

A few habits cover most of the risk.

Your Gateway login can reach your business's tax records and payments, so treat it like a bank login. The good news is that a handful of simple habits give strong protection.

- Start at gateway.ohio.gov by typing the address yourself.
- Use a long password you do not use anywhere else.
- Turn on two-step sign-in so a code goes to your phone.
- Sign out when you finish, especially on a shared computer.
- Keep your recovery phone number and email current.

Two-step sign-in means that even if someone guessed your password, they still could not get in without the code that lands on your phone. It adds a few seconds and can save a world of trouble.

Take a moment to check your phone number and email on your OH|ID now and then. If you change phones and forget to update it, the code goes to a number you no longer have, and that is how many people lock themselves out.

WATCH OUT

No real state worker will phone, email, or text asking for your password or a code. If someone does, hang up and sign in on your own.

29. Scams Aimed at Business Owners

They count on hurry and fear.

Small business owners get targeted because they are busy and handle money. The tricks are old ones, dressed up with official-sounding names. Knowing their shapes makes them easy to ignore.

- A text or email claiming your business account is locked and needs an immediate click.
- A caller saying you owe back taxes and must pay today by gift card.
- A website that looks like the Gateway but ends in dot com.

- A company offering to file your state taxes for a big upfront fee.
- An invoice for a state filing you never requested.

The common thread is pressure. Real government correspondence gives you time and arrives on paper or inside your own signed-in account. When in doubt, go to gateway.ohio.gov by typing it, and check whether anything matches.

If a message seems believable and you want to be sure, close it. Then type gateway.ohio.gov yourself, sign in, and look for any message or task there. A real problem with your account will be visible inside it, and a fake one will not.

TIP

If you ever read a code aloud to a caller, change your password right away and call me. That code is the key to your account.

30. Using a Library or Borrowed Computer

Public machines are fine with care.

You do not need a computer at the shop. Public libraries and many senior or community centers have computers you can use. Signing in to the Gateway on one is fine as long as you take extra care before you leave.

- Sign out of the Gateway and OH|ID completely when finished.
- Say no if the browser offers to save your password.
- Close the browser window before you walk away.
- Do not leave printed pages at the shared printer.

If the print is small, you can make any page bigger. Hold Ctrl, or Command on a Mac, and press the plus key. On a phone or tablet, spread two fingers apart on the screen. Press Ctrl and zero to return to normal size.

Libraries are also good places to ask for a hand with printing. Staff will often show you how to find the print button or save a file. Ask politely and you will find that most are glad to help.

TIP

Bring a USB drive or an email to yourself for saving confirmation copies, and delete anything personal from the shared machine afterward.

31. When You Cannot Sign In

Passwords and lockouts.

Forgetting a password is ordinary and fixable. OH|ID has a reset link on its sign-in screen, and the Gateway points to OH|ID account help for username and password issues, recovery options, and two-step verification. Your own phone number or email is what makes resetting simple.

- 1 On the OH|ID sign-in screen, choose Forgot Password.
- 2 Enter your username or email.
- 3 Get a code by text or email and type it in.
- 4 Choose a new password and confirm it.
- 5 Go back to gateway.ohio.gov and sign in.

Too many wrong tries may lock you out for a short while. That is a safety feature. Wait, check that Caps Lock is off, and use the reset instead of guessing again.

Write the answer to every account question on a card or in your notebook once you have set it up. Store that card at home, not in your wallet. If you ever need to prove who you are, you will have what you need, and nobody else will.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you can sign in to OH|ID but the Gateway does not show your business, you may simply need access. Ask your filing administrator, or call the support line.

32. Local Help in Portage County

You do not have to do this alone.

Plenty of help is nearby. Your own tax preparer, bookkeeper, or payroll company can handle most of this with you. Many business owners in Portage County have worked with the same preparer for years and simply tell them which tax accounts they have.

For the computer side, I help neighbors set up OH|ID, bookmark the right sites, and walk through a first filing at their own pace. You stay in control of the account, and the password stays yours. I do not file taxes or give tax advice, but I can make the website less scary.

- Your tax preparer or CPA for questions about what you owe.
- The Department of Taxation for questions about the rules.
- Public library staff for help using a computer.

- Bill's Home Tech for setting up and learning the website: (330) 200-8042.

When you reach out to anyone for help, have your business name and the exact words of any error message in front of you. It speeds up the conversation, whether it is with a preparer, the state, or me. Clear details turn a long problem into a short one.

TIP

Before a visit, write down your questions and gather your account numbers. It makes any appointment more productive, whether with me or your preparer.

33. Plain Questions and Answers

What business owners ask most.

Q: Does the Gateway cost anything? A: Using it to file is free. A card payment may carry a small convenience fee shown before you confirm.

Q: Is it the same as my personal tax login? A: It uses the same OH|ID sign-in, but business filings are separate from your personal return.

Q: Why can't I find my sales tax return? A: Sales tax is generally filed through the Department of Taxation's OH|TAX eServices. Both systems use OH|ID.

Q: Can my bookkeeper do this for me? A: Yes, with their own OH|ID and access granted by you. Never give them your password.

Q: What if I make a mistake? A: Amend the return as soon as you notice, and call the support line if you are unsure.

Q: Where do I find the official site? A: Type gateway.ohio.gov yourself, and look for dot gov. Q: Will the state ever ask for my code? A: Never. Anyone who does is trying to get into your account, so hang up and call me.

TIP

If your question is the one keeping you stuck, that is a perfect thing to call me about. A few minutes on the phone often clears it up.

34. Keeping a Simple Business Records Folder

A little organization goes a long way.

One plain folder makes every state website easier to live with. It does not need to be fancy. A labeled envelope, a binder, or a single folder on your computer is plenty. The goal is that when a question comes up, you can find the answer in under a minute.

- Your business name exactly as the state has it.
- Which email address your OH|ID uses (not the password).
- Each tax account and the day you registered for it.
- Confirmation numbers and dates for every filing and payment.
- A list of who has access to your Gateway account.

Keep passwords separate, such as in a notebook at home. The folder is for the harmless details that help you pick up where you left off. If you ever hand the business to a family member or a new preparer, this folder is the best gift you can leave them.

Once the folder exists, add to it right after each filing, while the details are fresh in your mind.

GOOD TO KNOW

Ask your preparer how long to keep tax records. The answer depends on the tax, and holding on a little longer than required costs you nothing.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

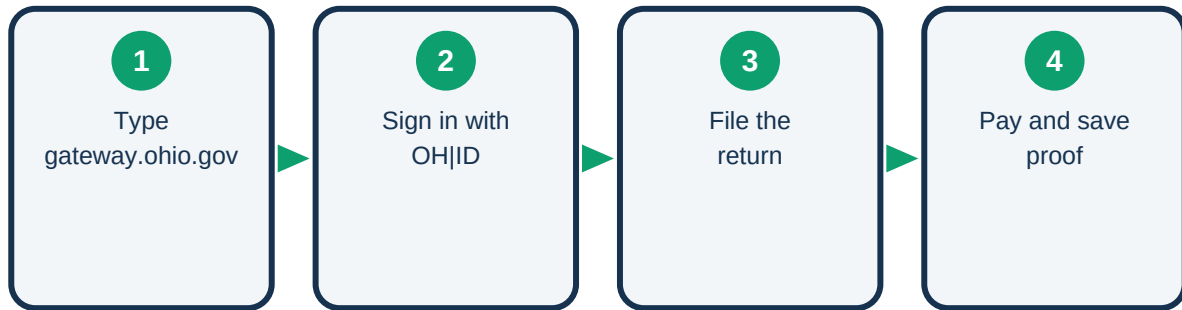
Keep this by the computer. I want to... Get to the site: type gateway.ohio.gov yourself. Sign in: use your OH|ID. File sales tax or withholding: use OH|TAX eServices from tax.ohio.gov. File a commercial activity or city income tax return: open the filing area in the Gateway. Pay: choose bank or card after you file, and check for a fee notice. Fix a mistake: amend the return. Look up a local rate: use the Finder at tax.ohio.gov. Gateway support line: 1-888-405-4039. Get help: call Bill at (330) 200-8042.

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

From Sign-In to Paid

The basic path for most business filings.



Same four moves for most business taxes.

Illustration - details vary by device, plan, and provider. Always check your own setup.

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

Which Door for Which Tax

Two state systems, one OH|ID login.



Taxes can move between doors, so confirm on the state's site.

Illustration - details vary by device, plan, and provider. Always check your own setup.

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.



HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

In-home visit — \$99 flat for your first visit. No contracts and no surprise charges, and a 30-day follow-up is included.

Remote Support — \$49 for a screen-share session. I only connect with your permission, you watch the whole time, and you can end anytime. If I can't fix it over the screen-share, I refund the \$49 — and if it turns out you need me in person, that \$49 goes toward your visit. It's included free for Support Plan members (\$39/mo).

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full \$99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Call or text **(330) 200-8042** · Book a visit: **billshometech.com/book** · **bill@billshometech.com**

This free guide is for general information only — not professional advice, and no substitute for your device's own manual. Any prices or outside products mentioned can change; please confirm current details before you buy. Please use your own good judgment and follow it at your own risk — for anything involving electricity, gas, water, or heights, stop and call a licensed professional. Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results. © 2026 Bill's Home Tech, LLC.