



An Extended Guide · No. 1906

Ohio Sales Tax in Your Point of Sale — Rates, Exempt Items and Reports

Set the right county rate, handle exempt sales,
and pull clean numbers to file — in plain English

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✓ You collect it, you hold it, you hand it over

Sales tax isn't your money — you collect it for the state and pass it along. Your job is to charge the right rate, keep clean records, and file on time. Your POS does most of the heavy lifting once it's set up right, and that's what this guide is for.

Let's get sales tax right in your register

Sales tax sounds intimidating, but for most small shops it comes down to three things: set the right rate, handle the exempt sales, and pull the report when it's time to file. We'll take them one at a time.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. For 30-plus years I've helped folks get comfortable with their technology, and a lot of that now is helping small shops and market vendors set up a register that charges the right tax without them having to think about it every sale.

Let me be straight up front: I'm a tech helper, not an accountant. I can get the rate set correctly in your POS and show you where to pull your reports. For what's taxable, what's exempt, and how to file, I'll point you to your accountant and to the Ohio Department of Taxation — the official source always wins.

★ Get it set once, forget it mostly

The good news is this is mostly a set-it-once job. We get your county rate in, mark your exempt items, and from then on the register does the arithmetic. You just pull the report and file. Let's get there.

The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these things, you've got the shape of sales tax in your POS. (Rates as of late 2026 — confirm current.)

- ❑ Ohio's state rate is 5.75%; each county adds its own on top.
- ❑ Portage County's combined rate is 7.00% (the county adds 1.25%). Neighboring counties differ — some reach around 8%.
- ❑ Always look up the exact rate for the county where the sale happens, on the Ohio Department of Taxation rate tables.
- ❑ Set the tax rate in your POS once; for shipped goods, tax is based on the destination.
- ❑ Mark exempt items and exempt customers, and keep their exemption certificates on file.
- ❑ Pull your POS tax report each filing period and file through the Ohio Business Gateway at gateway.ohio.gov.

✓ One rule to hold onto

The rate follows the sale, not your home address. Look up the right county rate for where the sale actually happens, set it in your POS, and let the register do the math from there.

How Ohio sales tax is built

Ohio's rate comes in two layers stacked together. Once you see the two pieces, the number on your receipt stops being a mystery.

The first layer is the **state rate**, which is 5.75% as of late 2026. That part is the same everywhere in Ohio. The second layer is the **county rate**, which each county sets for itself and adds on top. Put the two together and you get the combined rate you actually charge.

Here in **Portage County**, the county adds 1.25%, which brings the combined rate to 7.00%. Cross into a neighboring county, though, and the number changes — some combined rates in the area reach around 8%. Same state, different county, different total.

That's why you can't just memorize one number and move on. The rate depends on the county where the sale happens, and the only reliable place to get it is the Ohio Department of Taxation's rate tables, which they keep current.

! Rates change — always confirm current

Every rate in this guide is as of late 2026 and can change. Before you rely on a number, check the Ohio Department of Taxation rate table for the county you need. It's the official source, and it's the one that's right.

Finding the right rate for your county

Before you touch your POS settings, get the exact combined rate for where your sales happen. Here's how, and where.

Go to the Ohio Department of Taxation's rate tables and look up your county. The table gives you the combined rate — state plus county — in one number. That combined figure is what you set in your register. For a shop with a fixed address, it's simply your county's rate.

Rate layer	As of late 2026
Ohio state rate	5.75% (everywhere)
Portage County adds	1.25%
Portage County combined	7.00%
Some nearby counties	Reach around 8%

If you sell in more than one county — a shop here and a market a county over — you may need more than one rate. Most POS systems let you set tax by location, so the register charges the right rate wherever you've set up that day.

✓ **Write the date next to the rate**

When you look up your rate, jot down the date you checked it. Rates move, and a dated note tells you at a glance when it's time to confirm the number is still current.

Setting the tax rate in your POS

Every major system — Square, Clover, Toast, Shopify — has a tax setting. The wording differs, but the idea is the same.

You'll find a tax or sales-tax section in your settings. Enter your combined county rate as one number — for a Portage County shop, 7.00% as of late 2026 — and the register applies it to taxable sales automatically from then on. You don't recalculate it each sale; the POS does.

Most systems also let you assign tax by location or by item, which matters if you sell in more than one county or carry a mix of taxable and exempt goods. Set it up once, carefully, and the day-to-day takes care of itself.

If you ever change the rate — because the county's rate changed, or you added a location — update it in your settings right away. The register only knows what you told it, so a stale rate quietly undercharges or overcharges every sale until you fix it.

★ I'll set it with you in a few minutes

Punching in a tax rate is quick, but getting it right — the correct county rate, the right items marked taxable — is worth a careful once-over. I'll sit with you and set it, whichever system you run. Call (330) 200-8042.

When you ship: the destination decides

Selling something and shipping it changes which rate applies, and it's a common place to get tripped up.

For goods you ship to a customer in Ohio, the tax is generally based on where the item is going — the **destination** — not where your shop sits. Ship an item to a customer in a county with a higher combined rate, and that county's rate is the one that applies.

If you sell online as well as in person, your POS or online platform usually handles destination-based tax for you once it's set up, calculating the right rate from the shipping address. Confirm it's switched on and working before you lean on it.

This is also where the details get genuinely tricky — what's taxable when shipped, how shipping charges themselves are treated. That's a question for your accountant and the Department of Taxation, not for me. I'll make sure the system is set to use the destination; they'll tell you the fine points.

✓ Test a shipped sale before you trust it

Ring up a pretend shipped order to an address in another county and check that the tax changes to match. A two-minute test now beats discovering a wrong rate across hundreds of orders later.

Exempt items and exempt customers

Not every sale is taxable, and not every customer pays tax. Your POS can handle both — once you tell it which is which.

Exempt items

Some goods are exempt from sales tax, and your POS lets you mark an item as non-taxable so it rings up without tax every time. What's taxable and what's exempt is a tax question — check it with your accountant and the Department of Taxation — but once you know, marking the item is a simple setting.

Exempt customers

Some customers — a reseller, certain nonprofits — can buy without tax when they give you a valid **exemption certificate**. Your POS can mark a sale or a customer as exempt. The crucial part is keeping that certificate on file, because it's your proof for why you didn't collect the tax.

! Keep every exemption certificate

If you ring a sale tax-free, you need the exemption certificate to back it up. No certificate, and the state may treat the tax as owed — by you. Keep them filed and findable. Your accountant will tell you exactly what a valid certificate needs.

Pulling the numbers to file

At the end of each period, your POS can hand you the tax figure you need. Knowing where to find it turns filing from a chore into a few minutes.

Every major system has a **tax report** — sometimes under sales reports or a tax summary. It shows how much tax you collected over a date range, which is the number your filing is built around. Pull it for the period you're filing and you've got your starting figure.

Match the report's date range to your filing period exactly. If you file monthly, pull a clean calendar month; if quarterly, the quarter. A report that runs a few days short or long throws your numbers off, so line the dates up carefully.

Save or print each period's report and keep it with your business records. Those reports are also what you'll lean on at tax time and if a question ever comes up — the same habit our end-of-day-reports guide builds into your nightly close.

✓ Reconcile tax with sales

The tax you collected should line up with your taxable sales times your rate. If it doesn't, something's off — an item marked wrong, a rate that changed. Catching it at report time is far easier than after you've filed.

Filing and paying through the state

Once you have your number, Ohio has one main place to register, file, and pay. Here's the lay of the land.

You register, file, and pay sales tax through the **Ohio Business Gateway** at gateway.ohio.gov, using an OHID account. It's the state's online front door for business filings, and it's where your sales-tax returns live.

To collect sales tax at all, you need a vendor's license, which ties into this same system — our farmers-market-kit guide covers the vendor's license for folks selling at shows and markets. Once you're registered, you file on the schedule the state assigns you and pay what you collected.

How often you file, which form, and the fine points of what to report are things your accountant handles best. I'll point you to the Gateway and make sure your POS gives you clean numbers to put into it; your accountant makes sure the return itself is right.

★ I'll get you to the right door

I can't file your return for you — that's accountant territory — but I can help you find your way around the Ohio Business Gateway and pull the right report from your POS to take there. Call (330) 200-8042.

Two kinds of small business, two setups

Where your sales happen shapes how you handle the rate — one county for a fixed shop, possibly several for a vendor who travels.

If you sell from a fixed counter or shop

You sell from one address, so you have one combined county rate to set and forget. Set your county's rate in your POS, mark your exempt items, and the register handles tax the same way every day.

- Set one combined rate — for a Portage County shop, 7.00% as of late 2026.
- Mark your exempt items and keep exemption certificates for exempt customers.
- Pull the tax report each filing period; the numbers barely change shape month to month.
- If you add shipping, switch on destination-based tax and test it.

If you sell on the go — markets, trucks, house calls

You sell at markets, shows, or on the road, so the county — and the rate — can change with the venue. You need your POS to charge the right rate for wherever you've set up that day.

- Look up the combined rate for each county you sell in, on the Ohio Department of Taxation tables.
- Use your POS's per-location tax setting so the right rate applies at each venue.
- A transient vendor's license may apply when you sell around the state — see our farmers-market-kit guide.
- Keep each event's tax report so filing covers every county you worked.

★ Selling in more than one county?

If you work a shop here and markets elsewhere, I'll help you set each county's rate so the register charges the right one automatically wherever you are. Tell me where you sell. Call (330) 200-8042.

You need a vendor's license to collect

Before the tax settings even matter, you need the state's permission to collect tax at all. That's the vendor's license.

A vendor's license makes you a trustee of the state for collecting, reporting, and paying sales tax. A fixed shop gets a regular **County Vendor's License** from the county auditor (or through the Ohio Business Gateway). A seller who travels to shows and markets around the state may need a **Transient Vendor's License** from the Department of Taxation.

Our farmers-market-kit guide goes into the vendor's license in depth for folks selling on the go, so I'll keep it short here: know which license fits how you sell, and get it before you start collecting. Your accountant can confirm which one you need.

✓ License first, then settings

Getting your POS tax rate perfect does you no good if you're not registered to collect. Sort the vendor's license first, then come back and set the rate — in that order.

Tax on top, or tax included?

Most shops add tax at checkout, but some — especially market vendors — prefer round, tax-included prices. Your POS can do either.

The usual way is **tax on top**: your price is the price, and the register adds tax at checkout. The receipt shows the sale, the tax, and the total separately. This is cleanest for your records because the tax line is right there.

The other way is **tax-included** pricing: you charge a round number — say \$5.00 even — and the system works backward to figure the tax that was built into it. Vendors like it at a busy market because there's no change to count. Your POS still records the tax portion for your report.

Either way, the tax still gets collected and reported — you're just choosing whether the customer sees it added or baked in. Pick whichever suits your counter, and make sure your POS is set to match so the reports come out right.

✓ Tax-included still needs the right rate

Even when you price in round numbers, your POS needs the correct county rate set so it can pull the right tax back out. Don't skip the rate just because the customer never sees it added.

The records to keep, and for how long

Clean records make filing painless and protect you if a question ever comes up. It's a small habit with a big payoff.

Keep your period tax reports, your exemption certificates, and your sales records together, period by period. If you file monthly, that's a tidy monthly set; if quarterly, a quarterly one. Digital is fine — most POS systems let you export or save reports as files.

How long to keep them is a question for your accountant and the state's rules, but the safe instinct is longer than you think you need. Storage is cheap; reconstructing a year of sales after the fact is not.

★ A simple system beats a shoebox

You don't need fancy software — a labeled folder on your computer, one per period, with the report and certificates inside. I'll help you set up a tidy routine so tax time is a non-event. Call (330) 200-8042.

What to do when a rate changes

County rates do change from time to time. When yours does, a few minutes of attention keeps every future sale correct.

When you hear a county rate is changing — the state announces these ahead of the effective date — confirm the new combined rate on the Department of Taxation table, then update it in your POS settings on or before the day it takes effect. The register charges whatever you last told it, so the timing matters.

If you have more than one location or county set up, check each one. It's easy to update your main rate and forget a second venue, and then that venue quietly charges the old number for weeks.

! A stale rate is wrong every single sale

An out-of-date rate doesn't throw an error — it just quietly charges the wrong tax on every sale until you catch it. That's money you either owe the state or overcharged your customers. Update promptly when a rate changes.

Your sales-tax setup checklist

Run through this once when you set up, and glance at it each filing period. If every box is checked, you're in good shape.

- ☐ I have the right vendor's license for how I sell.
- ☐ I looked up my combined county rate on the Ohio Department of Taxation table, and noted the date.
- ☐ The correct rate is set in my POS for each location I sell from.
- ☐ My exempt items are marked, and I keep exemption certificates for exempt customers.
- ☐ Destination-based tax is switched on and tested if I ship.
- ☐ I pull and save a tax report each filing period, dated to match.
- ☐ I'm registered to file and pay on the Ohio Business Gateway.

✓ Review it when the calendar turns

Rates and rules drift over a year. A quick run down this list each January — or whenever you file — catches a changed rate or a lapsed habit before it becomes a filing headache.

Where my help ends and your accountant's begins

I want to be plain about my lane, because sales tax has a tech side and a tax side, and they're not the same job.

The **tech side** is mine: setting the right rate in your POS, marking items, switching on destination tax, pulling and saving reports, and finding your way around the Ohio Business Gateway. That's what I do, and I'm glad to.

The **tax side** belongs to your accountant and the Department of Taxation: what's taxable, what qualifies as exempt, how often you file, which form, and what to do about an unusual situation. I won't guess at those, because a wrong guess costs you more than my visit saves.

★ The two of us make a good team

Your accountant tells you what to collect and when to file; I make your register do it correctly and hand you clean numbers. Between us, sales tax stops being something you dread. Call me at (330) 200-8042 and loop in your accountant for the rest.

Common mistakes people make

Most sales-tax trouble comes from a short list of avoidable slips. Here they are, so you can steer around them.

- **Using the wrong county rate** — charging your home county's rate on a sale that happened somewhere else.
- **Letting a changed rate go stale** in the POS, so every sale is off until it's noticed.
- **Ringing exempt sales without the certificate** — no paper, and the tax can land back on you.
- **Forgetting destination tax on shipped goods**, charging the shop's rate instead of the delivery county's.
- **Mismatched report dates** at filing time, so the numbers don't line up with the period.
- **Collecting before registering** — no vendor's license, no business collecting tax.

! The one that compounds

A wrong rate is the mistake that quietly multiplies — it's wrong on every sale, not just one. Confirm your rate against the official table, and check it again whenever you hear of a change.

A word on selling online

If you sell online as well as in your shop, sales tax gets a little bigger — but your platform handles most of it once it's set up.

For online orders shipped within Ohio, the destination rule we covered applies: the rate follows where the order is going. Platforms like Shopify and the online side of Square calculate this from the shipping address once you've turned it on and entered your details.

Selling to customers in other states opens a bigger question about where you might owe tax, and that's squarely an accountant's topic — the rules turn on how much you sell and where. Don't try to work it out from a guide; ask your accountant once your online sales start to grow.

✓ Turn it on, then verify

Switching on automatic tax in your online platform is the easy part. The step people skip is verifying it — place a test order to an Ohio address in another county and confirm the tax matches that county's rate.

Building a filing rhythm you won't dread

The owners who find sales tax painless aren't smarter — they just have a small, steady routine. Here's one you can borrow.

Tie your tax task to a date you won't forget. When your filing period ends, pull the tax report that same week while the numbers are fresh, reconcile it against your sales, and file through the Gateway. Then file the report away and you're done until next time.

If you file monthly, make it part of your month-end close — the same sitting where you look at the month's totals. Our end-of-day-reports guide builds the nightly habit; this is the monthly cousin of it. Little and often beats a frantic catch-up.

✓ Put it on the calendar now

Set a recurring reminder for a few days after each period ends. The task takes far less time than the worry about forgetting it does — so let the calendar carry the remembering.

Setting honest expectations

Your POS is a huge help with sales tax, but it's a tool, not your accountant. Knowing what it does and doesn't do keeps you out of trouble.

It will charge the right rate once you set it, keep a running tally of tax collected, and hand you a clean report each period. It will not decide what's taxable, file your return, or know that a county rate changed — you have to feed it the right rate and keep it current.

Expect a careful setup at the start, a two-minute report each period, and an occasional rate update. Do those, keep your records, and lean on your accountant for the tax questions, and sales tax becomes routine rather than a source of dread.

✓ Right rate in, right tax out

The whole thing hinges on the rate you set. Get that right from the official table, keep it current, and the register does the rest. Everything else is just tidy records and a steady filing habit.

Common Questions

The sales-tax questions I hear most from Ohio shop owners, answered plainly.
(Rates as of late 2026 — confirm current.)

Q: What rate do I charge in Portage County?

As of late 2026, the combined rate here is 7.00% — Ohio's 5.75% state rate plus the county's 1.25%. Always confirm the current figure on the Ohio Department of Taxation table before you rely on it.

Q: What rate do I use if I sell in another county?

The rate for the county where the sale happens, which can differ from Portage's — some nearby counties reach around 8%. Look each one up on the official table and set it in your POS by location.

Q: Which rate applies when I ship an order?

Generally the destination's rate — where the item is going, not where your shop is. Most POS and online platforms handle this automatically once you switch it on. Test it with a sample order.

Q: A customer says they're tax-exempt. What do I do?

Get a valid exemption certificate and keep it on file, then mark the sale exempt in your POS. No certificate means no proof, and the tax can fall back on you. Your accountant can confirm what a valid certificate needs.

Q: Where do I actually file and pay?

Through the Ohio Business Gateway at gateway.ohio.gov, with an OHID account. You'll need a vendor's license to collect in the first place. Your accountant can guide the return itself.

★ Want a hand setting it up?

Getting your county rate in, your exempt items marked, and your reports flowing is a quick job done right the first time. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and I'll set it with you — then your accountant takes it from there.

You don't have to figure this out alone

You just have to remember that a friendly, patient person who speaks plain English is one call away.

I hope this guide made Ohio sales tax in your point of sale feel a little less daunting and a lot more doable. Keep it with your other business papers, come back to a page whenever you need it, and don't feel you have to memorize a thing.

When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your shop or your kitchen table, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee. I don't sell payment processing and I earn no commission from any company — so the advice you get is just honest advice. For the tax and legal fine points, I'll point you to your accountant or attorney.

★ Bill's Home Tech — real help, close to home

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, or visit BillsHomeTech.com. Serving Atwater and all of Portage County. 30+ years of patient, plain-English tech help — and if you're ever not 100% happy with a visit, I'll make it right or refund it. That's a promise. — Bill

How Ohio's Rate Is Built

State plus county -- as of late 2026, confirm current

	Rate
Ohio state	5.75%
Portage County adds	1.25%
Portage combined	7.00%
Some nearby counties	Up to ~8%

Look up your county's exact rate on the Ohio Dept of Taxation table.

Sales Tax in Four Steps

Set it once, then it's a short routine each period



Register first with a vendor's license, then set the rate.

Which Rate Applies?

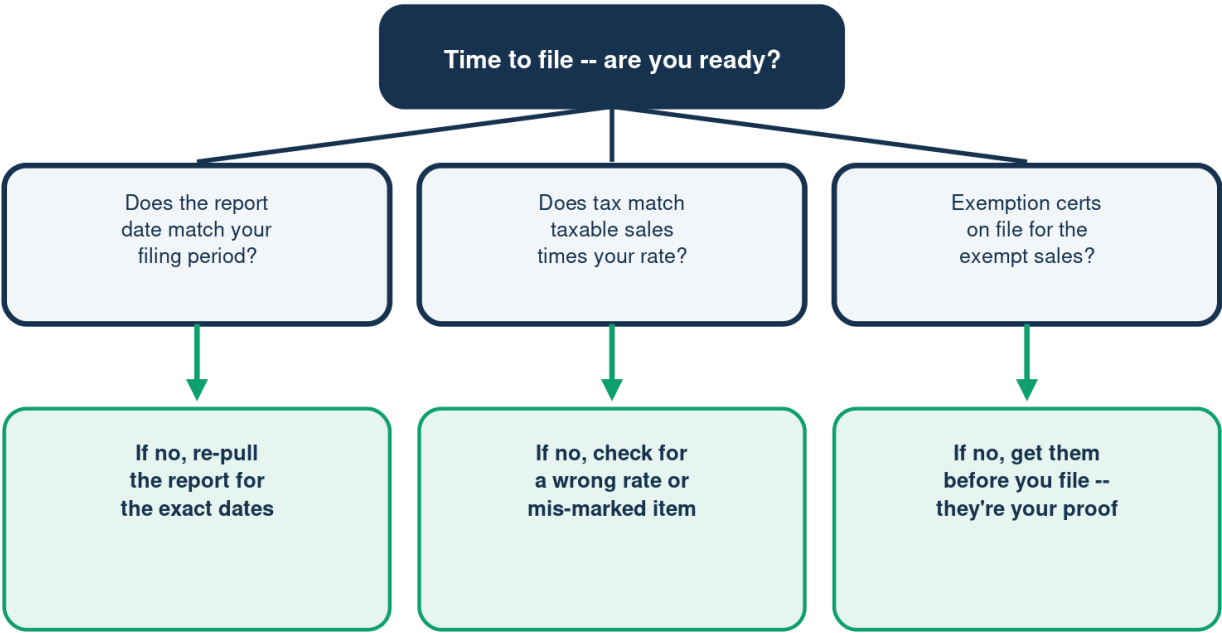
The sale's location decides, not your home address

Use this rate	
In-shop sale	Your county
Market, other county	That county
Shipped in Ohio	Destination
Tax-exempt buyer	None -- keep cert

Confirm every county's current rate on the official table.

Getting Ready to File

A few checks before you submit on the Gateway



How and when to file is your accountant's call -- these are just the tech checks.

Illustration - a schematic, not to scale. Your setup may differ.



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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 comes from using these guides. Thanks for reading, and stay safe out there.

— *Bill*



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