

TITS AND SASS

SERVICE JOURNALISM BY AND FOR SEX WORKERS

It's A Good Idea To File Your Taxes

By **Bubbles** - April 13, 2017



Schedule C and an example of a deductible expense.

The filing deadline for your IRS tax return is Tuesday, April 18. You can file for an automatic extension with [this form](#).

In the last couple of weeks I've read sex workers on Facebook and Twitter talking about the difficulties they had in getting an apartment, qualifying for a car loan, and signing up for health care because they didn't have any proof of income. "I don't get paychecks," the sex worker might say (unless she is an employee), "So how can I prove how much money I make?" I read dancers telling other dancers to get a strip club manager to write a letter estimating what she makes in a week, and while that might work to buy a car at You Work—You Ride! it won't help with big leasing companies or the bank.

What will help is having a copy of your tax return. Even before you file it, make a copy of your completed return to have on hand for any occasion that requires proof of income. It doesn't have to be complicated; if you take a look at the Schedule C and panic at all the deduction categories, if you don't save receipts for anything, if you haven't filed in years, if you've never filed during your sex working career, just remember this: don't panic. You can do this. All it is is counting money and adding and subtracting it.

Well. And paying it. That part is no fun. But if you're filing as a self-employed person, you're supposed to pay quarterly estimated taxes, which is somewhat better than paying one chunk in April, and hey, at least you don't have to get depressed looking at a deduction on a paycheck every couple of weeks. OK, it's unpleasant. There's really nothing less fun to do with your money than send it to the IRS other than using it to pay for car repairs or dental work.

We are not accounting or tax professionals here at Tits and Sass but I, for one, am a career stripper who had her own tax missteps in the past (the part where I pretty much forgot to file the entire time I was in college) (and I was in college for a long time). If I could get straightened out, so can you. Let me be clear that I'm not urging anyone to pay taxes for

any other reason than to make their own life easier. I do, however, want to emphasize how it can make your life easier:

- 1) Tax returns are the only proof of income you have if you're self-employed and paid mostly, if not entirely, in cash.
- 2) It's far better for the IRS to have your numbers to start with than to let them come up with their own.
- 3) If you get caught after not paying taxes for a number of years and get hit with a five-figure bill, it really sucks.

For expansion on this, you can refer to [this old post here](#), and this Awl post, "[Here's What Happens If You Don't Do Your Taxes](#)" (it's a TurboTax sponsored post but it's also right on). There's even a whole book specifically targeted towards sex workers, *[The Tax Domme's Guide for Sex Workers and All Other Business People](#)*.

If you're confused about how to pay your taxes as a self-employed person, any tax guide for freelance writers, who are in a similar situation except with less money and probably none of it in cash, will help. [This one on The Billfold](#) is pretty good.

Or find an accountant. They aren't that expensive and they're worth it. One who's experienced with musicians or other kinds of performers and freelancers will probably be able to do a good job for you. But if you can't afford to pay someone, do the best you can and file even if you can't pay right now. Every time you decide not to, you're giving the IRS more power should they ever decide to check up on you.

If you just need some general assistance, almost every community offers free or reduced-priced tax preparation assistance. Check libraries, senior centers, and community centers for listings. Or use the IRS's handy dandy tax prep locator tool [here](#).

A word of warning, especially for strippers: Beware of anyone coming into the club telling you they'll get you a fat refund even if you haven't paid anything. At one Dallas club, a woman got a lot of dancers to give her their information and then committed mass identity theft/tax fraud and absconded with the checks from the IRS. Tell your girls in the dressing room to verify anyone they decide to work with and not to give their information to sketchy independent tax preparers.

This post originally appeared in 2014.





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Susan, formerly known as Bubbles Burbujas/StripperTweets, is a career stripper who started dancing while Clinton was in office. She has a B.A. in English and enjoys playing totally inappropriate obscure music at work. [twitter dot com tumblr](#) susaneshepard at gmail dot com

