

DEAR ABBY: I work for a national tax preparation business, and I have some advice for customers to make the experience better and more efficient:

1. If at all possible, leave the kids at home. At the very least, don't allow them to run around the office. We have sensitive equipment and paperwork that is not there to keep your kids entertained.
2. This is our busiest time of year. Lines can be long and clients are impatient, so please don't hand us a bag of receipts to add up. Plan ahead and do the addition yourself.
3. Before your appointment, ask what's needed to make the process as efficient as possible. There are many resources online to help you get organized.
4. If you have business expenses and mileage, have that information organized and ready.
5. Be certain you have received all your tax-related paperwork (W-2s, 1099s, etc.) before coming in. Being in a hurry will result in your owing the IRS or the state because the income wasn't completely reported. This small step can avoid many problems.
6. And, please don't be angry if you have been waiting and your preparer needs to step away for a short time. It's not unusual for us to work 10 to 12 hours a day helping customers. Like everyone else we occasionally need a break to take our eyes off the computer screen for a little bit, so be understanding.

We want to give you the best service possible and making it easier on us will accomplish this task. –

JULIE IN KEARNS, UTAH DEAR JULIE: I hope readers will pay attention to your suggestions. Tax season is stressful for everyone involved, but particularly for tax preparation professionals. Being courteous, considerate and as organized as possible will relieve some of the strain not only for the person crunching the numbers, but also for the customer.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.