

Taxes

What are taxes (Steuern)?

A tax is an amount of money. This is levied by government agencies on all taxable persons for the purpose of generating income, e.g. income tax. Almost all people in Germany pay taxes. A company also has to pay taxes.

The state gets the taxes because the state finances different things with it. In principle, the tax is there to finance the expenditure of public bodies (cities, federal states, federal government). All citizens of this country use public facilities such as roads or schools. They also benefit from the work of state employees, such as police officers or teachers. The state also helps people when they are out of work, for example, by paying unemployment benefit from the Job Centre. People seeking protection (refugees) also receive support in the form of cash benefits, accommodation and counselling. All this costs money and is financed by tax money. This also means that citizens in Germany are not solely responsible for themselves, but support each other. This is also called the solidarity principle. All this costs money and is financed by tax money.

Income tax return (Einkommensteuererklärung)

The income tax return shows the tax office (Finanzamt) your income situation. On the basis of this information, the tax office can determine the amount of income tax due each month. You can find out whether you have to file a tax return by contacting the relevant tax office.

Not all people pay the same amount of income tax. If someone earns a lot, they have to pay more tax. If someone earns little, they pay less.

The tax office calculates how much everyone has to pay. It can happen that taxpayers have paid too much tax in one year. With the help of the tax return, you can state your expenses to reduce your tax burden. In the ideal case, you get a part of the money back.

Of course, it can also happen that too little tax was levied. This then applies mostly to the self-employed. In order to be able to find out, several details must be reported to the tax office.

Further information on tax can be obtained from the [Federal Tax Office](#). Multilingual information on the German tax system can be found [here](#).

Deadlines

Tax returns cannot simply be submitted at some point. There is a deadline which should be met without fail.

An income tax return must always be submitted to the tax office by 31 May of the following year.

Help and support

Do you have any questions about taxes? Do you need help with your tax return?

Here you will find multilingual information: <https://handbookgermany.de>

Wage tax associations

Die Lohnsteuerhilfe für Arbeitnehmer e. V., Lohnsteuerhilfeverein“ is one of the largest wage tax aid associations in Germany. They become active for employees and Rentner... In now around 300 advice centres you can get individual answers from tax specialists in your region.

You can find further information [here](#)!