

Starting a business

1. Overview
2. [Registering your business](#)
3. [Do you need a tax agent?](#)
4. [Keeping records](#)
5. [Buying or leasing a business premises](#)
6. [Employing people](#)
7. [Mandatory payment and e-filing](#)
8. [Revenue audit](#)

Overview

When you start a business, you need to know whether you are [a sole trader, a partnership or a company](#). This is necessary to decide what Tax Reference Number you use and what taxes you [register](#) for.

See [What is a business?](#) for more information on what taxes you have to pay.

See [Employing people](#) for information on what you need to do when you employ staff.

See [Mandatory e-filing](#) for information on how to file your tax return.

Registering your business

Registering as a sole trader

See [registering for tax as a sole trader](#) for more information on registering your business with Revenue. Once you have registered, you will be using your own [Personal Public Service Number \(PPSN\)](#) for all correspondence with Revenue in relation to your business.

You may wish to trade under a business name that is different from your name or surname. If so, you may register this name with the [Companies Registration Office \(CRO\)](#) by completing and sending them a Form RBN1.

Registering as a trust or partnership

See [registering for tax as a trust or partnership](#) for more information on registering your business with Revenue. Once you have registered, Revenue will provide your partnership or trust with a Tax Reference Number. You will use this number for your trust or partnership business. You will use your own PPSN for your personal tax returns and the Partnership Tax Registered number for any employers, [Value-Added Tax \(VAT\)](#) or [Relevant Contracts Tax \(RCT\)](#) returns.

You may wish to trade under a business name that is different from your name or the names of you partners. If so, you must register this name with the [CRO](#) by completing and sending them a Form RBN1A.

Registering as a company

See [registering for tax as a company](#) for more information on registering your company with Revenue. Once you have registered, Revenue will provide your company with a Tax Reference Number. Your company will trade under this number. You should include this number on any invoices you issue. You will use your own PPSN for your personal tax returns.

When you register your company, you must also provide Revenue with a [Statement of Particulars](#) within 30 days of trading. This is done by completing a [\[PDF\] Form 11F CRO](#) and submitting it to Revenue's [National Companies Unit](#). You will need to include the reference number that you received from the [CRO](#) when you registered your company.

Do you need a tax agent?

It is not necessary to have a tax agent. However, it is not unusual for a new business to use a tax agent during its start-up period. An agent can advise you and submit returns on your behalf. An agent will also have access to your [Revenue Online Services \(ROS\)](#) account.

Should you tell Revenue that you have a tax agent?

If you want your tax agent to have access to your tax record, you must tell Revenue. You must complete an [\[PDF\] Agent link notification](#) and send it to your [Revenue office](#). You must include your Tax Reference Number and your tax agent's Tax Advisor Identification Number (TAIN) on the notification. This form allows Revenue to link your tax record to your agent, which lets your agent act on your behalf.

Should you tell Revenue if you stop using a tax agent?

You must tell Revenue if you stop using a tax agent. If you do not, the tax agent will continue to have access to your tax record.

Keeping records

If you run a business, [\[PDF\] you must keep certain records](#) for tax purposes. Your records can be used to confirm information contained in your tax returns and they should clearly show the accounting process.

If your accounts are prepared by an agent or accountant, they may keep your records on your behalf. However, you are ultimately responsible for your record keeping. If you are in a [partnership](#), the precedent partner is responsible for keeping records. You must keep the original of these documents for six years.

What types of records are kept?

You must keep anything that is used to calculate your [Income Tax](#), [Corporation Tax \(CT\)](#) or [Capital Gains Tax \(CGT\)](#). These records are known as 'linking documents' and can include:

- receipts for [expenses](#)
- receipts for purchases
- sales invoices
- nominal ledgers
- accounting books.

You should keep your records continuously for all transactions. It is possible to store a digital copy of your receipts through [Revenue Online Service \(ROS\)](#) on Receipts Tracker.

Buying or leasing a business premises

You may need to buy property for your business premises. See [Buying or transferring property](#) for more information on the tax that you may have to pay.

You may need to lease or rent property for your business premises. See [Signing or assigning a lease](#) for more information on the tax that you may have to pay when leasing a property.

Employing people

As an employer you will have to deduct Income Tax, [Pay Related Social Insurance \(PRSI\)](#) and [Universal Social Charge \(USC\)](#) from your employees' gross pay.

All new employees need to register with Revenue so that the correct amount of tax and USC will be deducted from their wages. Your employee is responsible for registering for tax.

You can find more information in the [Employing people](#) section.

Mandatory payment and e-filing

You should use the [Revenue Online Service \(ROS\)](#) to pay and file your tax returns electronically.

You can find more information on mandatory e-filing in the [Registering for tax](#) section.

Revenue audit

A Revenue audit is where your tax returns are compared to your tax records. There are generally three reasons for which we can decide to audit you:

- Screening tax returns - this is where we look at your returns and compliance history for any patterns or trends. This is the most common method of selecting a business or tax payer for audit.
- Projects on business sectors - Revenue might focus on a particular business sector, trade or profession when choosing businesses or tax payers for audit.
- Random selection - a small number of audit cases are selected using this method.

If we select you for an audit, you will be given written notice 21 days in advance. This letter will include:

- the date and time of the audit
- the accounting period that will be audited
- whether the audit will focus on one issue or several issues.

What happens during a Revenue audit?

A Revenue audit usually involves the following steps:

- The auditor explains the purpose of the audit and indicates how long it will take.
- You are given the opportunity to make a disclosure if you suspect you have avoided paying some tax.
- Your books and records are examined.
- If your return is largely correct, you will be informed as soon as this is certain.
- If your return will need to be adjusted, the auditor will discuss this with you and will also provide written notification.
- You will have a final interview where you will be asked to agree on the total settlement.
- After your agreement you should pay the auditor who will give you a receipt.

See the [Code of Practice for Revenue Audit and other Compliance Interventions](#) for more details on Revenue audits and how they are selected.