

Tax Deductions for Medical Professionals

Supplies & Expenses:

Generally, to be deductible, items must be ordinary and necessary to your medical profession and not reimbursable by your employer. Record separately items having a useful life of more than one year. Normally, the cost of such assets are recovered differently on your tax return than are other recurring, everyday business expenses such as business cards or medical supplies.

Other Expenses:

Expenses of looking for new employment in your present line of work are deductible – you do not have to actually obtain a new job in order to deduct the expenses. Out-of-town job-seeking expenses are deductible only if the primary purpose of the trip is job seeking, not pursuing personal activities.

Communication Expenses:

The basic local telephone service costs of the first telephone line provided in your residence are not deductible. However, toll calls from that line are deductible if the calls are business-related. The costs (basic fee and toll calls) of a second line in your home are also deductible if the line is used exclusively for business.

When communication equipment, such as a cell phone, is used part for business and part personally the cost of the equipment must be allocated to deductible business use and non-deductible personal use. Keep your bills for cellular phone use and mark all business calls.

Uniforms & Upkeep Expenses:

If you are required to wear a uniform in your medical profession, the cost and upkeep may be deductible if they aren't provided to you without charge by your employer. IRS rules specify that work clothing cost and the cost of its maintenance are deductible if: (1) the uniforms are required by your employer (if you're an employee); and (2) the clothes are not adaptable to ordinary street wear. Normally, the employer's emblem attached to the clothing indicates it is not for street wear. The cost of protective clothing (e.g., safety shoes or goggles) is also deductible.

Continuing Education:

Educational expenses are deductible under either of two conditions: (1) your employer requires the education in order for you to keep your job or rate of pay; or (2) the education maintains or improves your skills as a medical professional. Costs of courses that are taken to meet the minimum requirements of a job, or that qualify you for a new trade or business, are NOT deductible.

Auto Travel:

Your auto expenses are based on the number of qualified business miles you drive. Expenses for travel between work locations or daily transportation expenses between your residence and temporary work sites are deductible; include them as business miles. Expenses for your trips between home and work each day, or between home and one or more regular places of work, are COMMUTING expenses and are NOT deductible.

Document business miles in a record book as follows: (1) give the date and business purpose of each trip; (2) note the place to which you traveled; (3) record the number of business miles; and (4) record your car's odometer reading at both the beginning and end of the tax year. Keep receipts for all car operating expenses – gas, oil, repairs, insurance, etc. – and of any reimbursement you received for your expenses.

Out-of-Town Travel:

Expenses incurred when traveling away from "home" overnight on job-related and continuing-education trips that were not reimbursed or reimbursable by your employer are deductible. Your "home" is

generally considered to be the entire city or general area where your principal place of employment is located. Out-of-town expenses include transportation, meals, lodging, tips and miscellaneous items like laundry, valet, etc.

Document away-from-home expenses by noting the date, destination and business purpose of your trip. Record business miles if you drove to the out-of-town location. In addition, keep a detailed record of your expenses – lodging, public transportation, meals, etc. Always list meals and lodging separately in your records. Receipts must be retained for each lodging expense. However, if any other business expense is less than \$75, a receipt is not necessary if you record all of the information timely in a diary. You must keep track of the full amount of meal and entertainment expenses even though only a portion of the amount may be deductible.

Professional Fees & Dues:

Dues paid to professional societies related to your profession are deductible. These could include professional organizations, business leagues, trade associations, chambers of commerce, boards of trade and civic organizations. However, dues paid for memberships in clubs organized for business, pleasure, recreation or other social purpose are not deductible. These could include country clubs, golf and athletic clubs, airline clubs, hotel clubs and luncheon clubs.

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