

Freelance Quarterly Tax Prep Checklist

A free reference from Ledgerline, Rahmanov.org, print it or keep it open next to your bookkeeping.

Before you estimate what you owe

- Total income received this quarter, from every client, add it up before you subtract anything.
- Every 1099 you expect, cross-check invoices sent against payments actually received.
- Prior quarter's estimated payment confirmation, keep the receipt or confirmation number.
- Any W-2 withholding from a side job, this can reduce what you owe quarterly.

Deductions worth tracking all year

- Home office, square footage used exclusively for business vs. total home square footage.
- Health insurance premiums paid out of pocket, if not subsidized by an employer plan elsewhere.
- Business mileage, log the date, purpose, and miles for every trip, not just a year-end guess.
- Software and subscriptions used specifically for the business.
- Retirement contributions, SEP IRA or Solo 401(k) deadlines are often later than you think, confirm them.
- Business-use percentage of phone and internet bills.
- Professional fees, accounting, legal, or contract review costs.
- Continuing education and certifications that maintain or improve your skills.

Documents to have on hand before filing

- Every invoice sent and every payment received, matched to each other.
- Bank and payment processor statements (Stripe, PayPal, etc.) for the full year.
- Mileage log or app export.
- Receipts for any single expense over \$75.
- Last year's return, for reference on carryovers and prior elections.

Common freelancer mistakes to avoid

- Estimating tax owed on gross income instead of net income after deductions.
- Missing a quarterly deadline, the IRS charges a penalty even if you pay in full by April.
- Mixing business and personal expenses in the same account, this makes deductions harder to defend.

- Forgetting state and local estimated taxes where they apply, not just federal.

This checklist is a general reference, not tax advice, and doesn't account for your specific situation, state rules, or filing status. For the real numbers, work with a CPA or enrolled agent, or use the free **Quarterly Tax Estimate** and **Self-Employment Tax Deduction Optimizer** tools at rahmanov.org/tax-estimate.html and rahmanov.org/self-employment-tax-deduction-optimizer.html. Every tool on Ledgerline runs in your browser, nothing you type is uploaded anywhere.

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