

Journal of Accountancy

Business tax quick guide — tax year 2020

Print this quick guide for use during tax season, and look for our quick guide for individual taxpayers in the January 2021 issue.

C CORPORATION INCOME TAX

- Taxable income of a C corporation: Taxed at a flat rate of 21%.

QUALIFIED PERSONAL SERVICE CORPORATION TAX

- Taxable income of a qualified personal service corporation is no longer subject to tax at a flat rate of 35% but is taxed at the regular corporate tax rate of 21%.

ACCUMULATED EARNINGS TAX

- 20% of accumulated taxable income (in addition to regular corporate income tax).

PERSONAL HOLDING COMPANY TAX

- 20% tax on undistributed personal holding company income.
- No foreign tax credit allowed against personal holding company tax.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT TAX

- Tax rate: 15.3% (12.4% OASDI tax plus 2.9% Medicare tax).
- Surtax: 0.9% Medicare surtax on self-employment income in excess of \$200,000 (single), \$250,000 (married filing jointly), or \$125,000 (married filing separately).
- Wage base: \$137,700 of self-employment income for OASDI (maximum OASDI tax of \$17,074.80; no ceiling on Medicare tax).

SOCIAL SECURITY TAX

- Tax rate: 7.65%, imposed on both employer and employee (6.2% OASDI tax plus 1.45% Medicare tax).
- Wage base: \$137,700 of wages for OASDI (maximum OASDI tax of \$17,074.80; no ceiling on Medicare tax).

FEDERAL UNEMPLOYMENT TAX

- Tax rate: Employers pay 6% on first \$7,000 of wages paid to each employee.

- Credit: Maximum amount of 5.4% for contributions paid to state unemployment insurance funds.

ESTIMATED TAX

- Corporations owing \$500 or more in income tax for the tax year must make estimated tax payments equaling the lesser of 100% of the prior-year or current-year tax liability. Large corporations must base the last three payments on the current-year tax liability.
- Due on the 15th day of the fourth, sixth, ninth, and 12th months of the corporation's tax year (April 15, June 15, Sept. 15, and Dec. 15 for calendar-year corporations).

CORPORATE ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM TAX (AMT)

- AMT no longer applies to corporations.

NONRESIDENT AND FOREIGN CORPORATIONS

- Taxed on U.S.-source investment income at 30% (or lower under treaty).
- Net income effectively connected with a U.S. trade or business taxed at regular U.S. tax rates.
- Accumulated earnings tax of 20% of accumulated taxable income.
- Branch profits tax of 30% on dividend equivalent amount.
- 4% tax on U.S.-source gross transportation income that is not effectively connected with a U.S. trade or business.

FILING DEADLINES

- Form 1120, *U.S. Corporation Income Tax Return*: April 15 for calendar-year corporations (extension to Oct. 15 available (Form 7004, *Application for Automatic Extension of Time to File Certain Business Income Tax, Information, and Other Returns*)); 15th day of the fourth month following the close of the corporation's tax year for fiscal years ending other than June 30 (six-month extension available); Sept. 15 for corporations with a June 30 fiscal year end (extension to April 15 available).



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- Form 1065, *U.S. Return of Partnership Income*: 15th day of the third month following the close of the partnership's tax year (six-month extension available (Form 7004)).
- Form 1065, Schedule K-1, *Partner's Share of Income, Deductions, Credits, etc.*: Due to partners on or before the date the partnership files Form 1065.
- Form 1120-S, *U.S. Income Tax Return for an S Corporation*: 15th day of the third month following the close of the corporation's tax year (six-month extension available (Form 7004)).
- Form 1120-S, Schedule K-1, *Shareholder's Share of Income, Deductions, Credits, etc.*: Due to shareholders on or before the date the S corporation files Form 1120-S.

STANDARD MILEAGE RATE

- For business use of auto: 57.5 cents per mile (note that unreimbursed employee business expenses are no longer deductible as a miscellaneous itemized deduction).
- Deemed depreciation: 27 cents per mile.

GLOBAL INTANGIBLE LOW-TAXED INCOME

- U.S. persons owning 10% or more of the stock (by vote or value) of a controlled foreign corporation (CFC) must include in currently taxable income "global intangible low-taxed income" (GILTI), effective with the CFC's first tax year beginning after Dec. 31, 2017, regardless of whether any amount is distributed to the shareholder.
- Corporations may claim a deduction of 50% of GILTI.

FOREIGN-DERIVED INTANGIBLE INCOME

- Domestic corporations (other than regulated investment companies and real estate investment trusts) can deduct 37.5% of the corporation's "foreign derived intangible income."

BUSINESS INTEREST DEDUCTIONS

- For 2019 and 2020, business interest deductions are limited to the sum of (1) business interest income; (2) 50% of the taxpayer's adjusted taxable income (ATI) for the tax year (30% if the taxpayer elects out of the 50% limitation); and (3) the taxpayer's floor plan financing interest for the tax year.
- A taxpayer can elect to use its 2019 ATI instead of its 2020 ATI to calculate its 2020 limitation.
- Any disallowed business interest deduction can be carried forward indefinitely (with certain restrictions for partnerships).

NET OPERATING LOSSES

- 80%-of-taxable-income limitation on NOLs has been suspended for 2020.
- NOLs incurred in 2018, 2019, or 2020 must be carried back five years unless the carryback period is waived.
- Can be carried forward indefinitely.

LIKE-KIND EXCHANGES

- Limited to real property held for productive use in a trade or business or for investment.

TRAVEL PER DIEM RATES

- High-low method: \$297 per day (\$71 for meals) through Sept. 30, \$292 per day (\$71 for meals) after Sept. 30, for high-cost localities; \$200 per day (\$60 for meals) through Sept. 30, \$198 per day (\$60 for meals) after Sept. 30, for other localities in the continental United States (CONUS).
- Transportation industry meals and incidentals: \$66 per day through Sept. 30, \$66 per day after Sept. 30 (CONUS); \$71 per day through Sept. 30, \$71 per day after Sept. 30 (outside CONUS).

SEC. 179 AND BONUS DEPRECIATION

- Sec. 179 expense deduction: \$1,040,000 with \$2,590,000 threshold limit.
- Bonus depreciation: 100% of the cost of eligible property placed in service in 2020.

DIVIDENDS-RECEIVED DEDUCTION

- From a domestic corporation: 50%.
- From a corporation owned 20% or more: 65%.
- From a member of an affiliated group filing a separate return: 100%.
- From a qualified 10%-owned foreign corporation: 50% of the U.S.-source portion; 100% of the foreign-source portion.

S CORPORATIONS

- Built-in gains tax: Corporate tax rate times net recognized built-in gain (imposed during the recognition period on S corporations that were formerly C corporations).
- Excess net passive income tax: Imposed if an S corporation has accumulated earnings and profits at the end of the tax year and its passive investment income exceeds 25% of the corporation's gross receipts. Corporate tax rate times excess net passive income.
- LIFO recapture amount: Excess (if any) of the inventory amount under FIFO over the inventory amount under LIFO at the close of the S corporation's last C corporation tax year must be included in the corporation's gross income.

Business auto depreciation limits

For vehicles placed in service during 2020.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Years 4–6
Passenger automobiles*	\$10,100	\$16,100	\$9,700	\$5,760
Passenger automobiles with bonus depreciation*	\$18,100 [†]	\$16,100	\$9,700	\$5,760

* Including trucks and vans.

[†] No bonus depreciation is available if vehicle was acquired before Sept. 28, 2017, and placed in service after 2019.