Travel, transportation, entertainment, and gift expenses. Specific recordkeeping rules apply to these expenses. For more information, see IRS Publication 463.

Employment taxes. There are specific employment tax records you must keep. For a list, see Publication 15.

Assets. Assets are the property, such as machinery and furniture you own and use in your business. You must keep records to verify certain information about your business assets. You need records to figure the annual depreciation and the gain or loss when you sell the assets. Your records should show the following information.

- When and how you acquired the asset.
- Purchase price.
- Cost of any improvements.
- Section 179 deduction taken.
- Deductions taken for depreciation.
- Deductions taken for casualty losses, such as losses resulting from fires or storms.
- How you used the asset.
- When and how you disposed of the asset.
- Selling price.
- Expenses of sale.

The following documents may show this information.

- Purchase and sales invoices.
- Real estate closing statements.

Source: IRS Publication 582

What is an enrolled agent?

Enrolled agents (EAs) are America's tax experts. EAs are the **only** federally-licensed tax practitioners who specialize in taxation and also have **unlimited** rights to represent taxpayers before the Internal Revenue Service.

How can an enrolled agent help me?

Enrolled agents advise, represent and prepare tax returns of individuals, partnerships, corporations, estates, trusts and any other entity with tax reporting requirements. EAs prepare millions of tax returns each year and their expertise in the continually changing field of taxation enables them to effectively represent taxpayers audited by the IRS.

Some enrolled agents work only during tax season or by appointment only, while other enrolled agents have year round practices. In addition to **tax preparation** and tax representation, many enrolled agents offer other business services which may include:

- Tax Return Preparation
- Bookkeeping
- Financial planning or budgeting
- Payroll services
- Financial statement preparation

Small Business Record Keeping

Mary Sunderland

MBA|CFA|CFP®| EA

Enrolled Agent

Licensed to Represent Taxpayers before the Internal Revenue Service

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Why Keep Records?

Everyone in business must keep records. Good records will help you do the following.

1. **Monitor the progress of your business.**
2. **Prepare your financial statements.**
   a. An income statement shows the income and expenses of the business for a given period of time.
   b. A balance sheet shows the assets, liabilities, and your equity in the business on a given date.
3. **Identify source of receipts**
   a. You need this information to separate business from nonbusiness receipts and taxable from nontaxable income.
4. **Keep track of deductible expenses.**
5. **Prepare your tax returns.**
6. **Support items reported on tax returns.**
   a. You must keep your business records available at all times for inspection by the IRS. If the IRS examines any of your tax returns, you may be asked to explain the items reported. A complete set of records will speed up the examination.

Kinds of Records To Keep

Except in a few cases, the law does not require any specific kind of records. You can choose any recordkeeping system suited to your business that clearly shows your income and expenses.

Supporting Documents

Purchases, sales, payroll, and other transactions you have in your business generate supporting documents. Supporting documents include sales slips, paid bills, invoices, receipts, deposit slips, and canceled checks. These documents contain information you need to record in your books.

It is important to keep these documents because they support the entries in your books and on your tax return. Keep them in an orderly fashion and in a safe place. For instance, organize them by year and type of income or expense.

Gross receipts. Gross receipts are the income you receive from your business. You should keep supporting documents that show the amounts and sources of your gross receipts. Documents that show gross receipts include the following.

- Cash register tapes.
- Bank deposit slips.
- Receipt books.
- Invoices.
- Credit card charge slips.
- Forms 1099-MISC.

Purchases. Purchases are the items you buy and resell to customers. If you are a manufacturer or producer, this includes the cost of all raw materials or parts purchased for manufacture into finished products. Your supporting documents should show the amount paid and that the amount was for purchases. Documents for purchases include the following.

- Canceled checks.
- Cash register tape receipts.
- Credit card sales slips.
- Invoices.

These records will help you determine the value of your inventory at the end of the year. See IRS Publication 538 for information on methods for valuing inventory.

Expenses. Expenses are the costs you incur (other than purchases) to carry on your business. Your supporting documents should show the amount paid and that the amount was for a business expense. Documents for expenses include the following.

- Canceled checks.
- Cash register tapes.
- Account statements.
- Credit card sales slips.
- Invoices.
- Petty cash slips for small cash payments.

Source: IRS Publication 582