

LEGAL BLOG

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IRS AGENTS ARE NOT YOUR ENEMY THEY ARE PEOPLE, NOT ALIENS

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Believe it or not, IRS Agents are normal people just like you. They brush their teeth, pack their kids' lunches, and drink coffee before going to work each day. Or as some would say, they, too, put their pants on one leg at a time. IRS Agents worked hard to get ahead in life and most of them simply aim to do their job.

The **IRS Mission** is to “Provide America’s taxpayers top-quality service by helping them understand and meet their tax responsibilities and enforce the law with integrity and fairness to all.” [See Publication 1](#). In this vein, IRS Agents are not your enemy. They are people, not aliens.

When I was an IRS Agent, my job was to improve tax compliance. Nothing more. Contrary to public opinion, I didn’t have evil aristocrats in Washington D.C. telling me to meet a certain goal or make audit adjustments in a certain amount. Ever. In fact, I was encouraged to “get in and get out,” if the examination didn’t appear to be a good use of my time. Like many organizations, the IRS has limited resources, and it must use them wisely.

Did you know, subject to manager approval, IRS agents have the discretion to close cases prematurely based on their findings or the lack thereof? And if the Taxpayer is on board, they also have the discretion to complete an exam more quickly. I did both during my time at the Service.

Unfortunately, some taxpayers—or their representatives—begin the audit angry, defensive, and resistant to the process. Believe me, this approach almost never helps. In my experience, taxpayers—or their representatives—may try to make the process more difficult by doing things like delaying the exam, flattening Excel formulas, or evading Information Document Request questions by giving answers without substance. This makes the audit take longer, it likely makes it more expensive, and it creates tension where none should exist. I question the strategy these representatives use.

But don’t get me wrong, there is a time for pushback in an audit. And when it’s warranted, a representative should ensure that the taxpayer is paying only what they owe, not a penny more. This is one reason why every taxpayer needs a good representative.

If you need a representative—or just tax advice—we can help.

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