



## ROADSIDEREADER

  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF INDEPENDENT TRUCKERS

### ARE YOU READY?

As 2025 draws to a close, now is the time to ensure you have taken every available step to minimize your tax liability. There are several actions you can begin taking now that will not only simplify the filing process but also help reduce the amount you ultimately owe. Below are some of the most important tax moves to consider before the end of the year.

Whether you operated as an owner-operator for all of 2025 or only part of the year, ATBS is equipped to help you navigate the complexities of owner-operator taxes and file with confidence.

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**10** **Top Weather Apps**  
Stay ahead of Mother Nature



**11** **WORD SEARCH**  
Happy Holidays!

## Tax Moves for Truckers to Make Before Year End



More than 20,000 independent contractors trust ATBS with their taxes, bookkeeping, and business success each year

2025 is almost over, which means it's time to make sure you have minimized your tax bill for the year. There are many things you can begin doing now to make filing your tax return as easy as possible and reduce the amount you owe. Let's take a look at a few of the most important tax moves to make before 2025 comes to an end.

Whether you've been an owner-operator for all of 2025 or just part of 2025, ATBS can help you get those complicated owner-operator taxes filed.

### 1. Buy Assets – ONLY if you Need Them

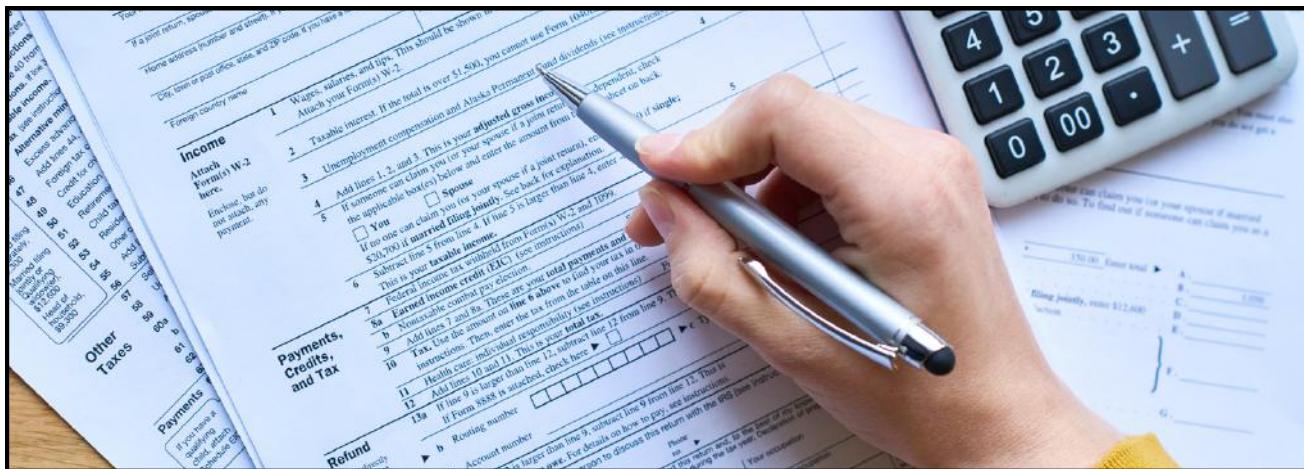
If you are in need of a new truck or piece of equipment for your business, it may be worth purchasing it before the year ends. Purchasing equipment for your business could allow you to reduce your tax liability because of the depreciation rules.

The tax code allows your business to take an immediate first-year deduction on any asset purchased during the year. This is because any qualified property purchased and placed in service between Jan. 1, 2025, and Dec. 31, 2025, can be depreciated by 100% of the cost of the property.

But before you go out and make a big purchase in order to take advantage of the new depreciation rules, there are a few things to consider.

- This deduction shouldn't motivate you to purchase things that you might want but won't help your business make more money.
- A higher deduction in the present means you will likely have a lower deduction in the future. If your business is growing, this can lead to problems when your business moves into a higher tax bracket.
- If an asset is sold for more than its adjusted basis (the original purchase price minus any depreciation deduction allowed on that piece of equipment), then tax law states any excess depreciation that was deducted on the prior year's returns (up to the amount of the sale price) is considered taxable income. This means if you end up selling an asset for more than its adjusted basis, tax law requires the IRS to take back the depreciation deduction, and the recaptured depreciation profits will be taxed as income.

## Tax Moves for Truckers to Make Before Year End



### 2. Calculate your Per Diem Deduction

Per diem is the tax deduction that the IRS allows to substantiate ordinary and necessary business expenses paid or incurred while traveling away from home. In simpler terms, it's a deduction for meals and incidental expenses for the days you are on the road and away from home for a period of time that requires sleep or rest to complete your job duties. This deduction was eliminated for employees, also known as company drivers, under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA), but remains a deductible business expense for self-employed individuals or owner-operators.

As of Oct. 1, 2024, the per diem rate increased to \$80 per full day and \$60 per partial day. For 2025, the deduction amount will remain at 80% for the amounts listed above.

Taxpayers are required to keep track of their days on the road in order to claim the per diem deduction. ATBS recommends keeping a per diem calendar where you mark an "X" for full days and a "/" on partial days to keep tracking per diem simple. To prove your per diem, you will also need to provide DOT ELD logs with times, dates, and locations.

### 3. Consider Electing to be Taxed as an S-Corporation

Consider setting your business up as an LLC and filing Form 2553 to elect to be taxed as an S-Corporation. There are some advantages to filing as an S Corp, as long as you net enough earnings throughout the year. ATBS recommends not making this election unless your net earnings are consistently exceeding \$70,000-\$75,000 per year. At that point, tax savings will be greater than the costs to set up and run the corporation.

As an S-Corp, you can minimize your self-employment tax by paying yourself a reasonable salary and withdrawing additional funds as distributions. Unlike a sole proprietorship, not all income (distributed and undistributed) from an S corporation is subject to self-employment tax. The self-employment tax rate is approximately 15% on all earnings from self-employment activity.

Here is an example of how you can lower your self-employment taxable income when set up as an S-corporation. If you earned \$60,000 of net income over the year, and pay yourself a reasonable salary of \$40,000, you only have to pay self-

## Tax Moves for Truckers to Make Before Year End



employment tax (payroll tax) on the \$40,000. 15% (the self-employment tax rate) of \$40,000 is \$6,000. This means that you are now only paying \$6,000 of self-employment tax rather than \$9,000 (15% of \$60,000 is \$9,000).

Paying yourself a salary that is not considered "reasonable" may send a red flag to the IRS that could potentially trigger an audit.

### 4. Get Caught Up on Quarterly Tax Estimates

If you have not been paying your quarterly estimated tax payments, it would be a good idea to make a larger than normal 4th quarter tax payment to try and catch up. This will help pay any existing tax liability due when you file your 2025 tax return. It will also allow you to avoid penalties for not paying enough taxes during the year. The 4th quarter estimated tax payment is due Jan. 15, 2026.

Generally, most taxpayers will avoid a penalty for underpayment of annual tax if they owe less than \$1,000 or if they've paid at least 90% of the tax due for the current year. However, it's HIGHLY recommended you pay taxes every quarter. Failing to pay

your quarterly estimated taxes can result in additional penalties that vary based on how much you owe.

Don't let yourself get too far behind, or it will become more and more difficult to get yourself caught up. ATBS recommends setting aside 25%-30% of your weekly net income for quarterly estimated tax payments.

### 5. Make an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) Contribution

Contributions that you make towards a traditional IRA are considered tax deductible with some restrictions. You can contribute up to \$7,000 per year across all IRAs in your name, and if you are over the age of 50, you can make an additional \$1,000 contribution for a total of \$8,000 per year. These contributions have to be made before April 15, 2026.

Additional retirement plans you can contribute to include a simplified employee plan (SEP) or a savings incentive match plan for employees (SIMPLE).

A SEP has special rules attached to it, so if you have employees, make sure you understand the contribution rules. If you

## Tax Moves for Truckers to Make Before Year End



are the only employee of your company, then you can contribute 25% of your net income from self-employment activity, or \$70,000, whichever is less.

If you are a single truck owner-operator, or your company has fewer than 100 employees, you can use a SIMPLE IRA. Your annual contributions are capped at \$16,500 unless you are 50 and older then it's increased to \$20,000 (\$21,750 for those 60-63).

For companies with less than 25 employees, the contribution limits increase to \$17,600 (\$21,450 for those over 50, and \$21,750 for those 60-63). Find a trusted financial advisor to help you determine which method of investing for retirement is best based on your individual income needs.

### Additional Tips

#### *Max Out Health Savings Account (HSA)*

A health savings account (HSA) lets you set aside pretax income to cover health care costs that your insurance doesn't pay. You can contribute to an HSA only if you have a high-deductible health plan (HDHP) and aren't enrolled in Medicare. For

2025, the maximum contribution amounts are \$4,300 for individuals and \$8,550 for family coverage. If you're 55 or older, you can add up to \$1,000 more as a "catch-up" contribution. HSAs have no use-it-or-lose-it provision. Any funds still in the plan at the end of the year can be rolled over indefinitely.

#### *Send Books to an Accountant*

At the end of the year, one of the best ways to get ready for the upcoming tax season is to send your books to an accountant. This way they can begin getting everything in order early and let you know with plenty of time if they are missing any items. If you wait until later in the tax season, it could mean that your taxes may not get done before the deadline.

#### *Prepare 1099's for Contractors*

The 1099-NEC form is used to report payments made to independent contractors for services. If you paid someone who is not your employee (W-2), such as a subcontractor, \$600 or more for services provided during the year, a Form 1099-NEC needs to be completed. A copy of the 1099-NEC must be provided to the independent contractor and the IRS by

## Tax Moves for Truckers to Make Before Year End



Jan. 31 of the year following payment.

### *Avoid Paying Additional Taxes on Health Insurance*

The 2018 tax year was the last year there would be a penalty for not having health insurance. However, you could still end up owing more in tax because of Marketplace coverage.

When you apply for health insurance through the federal or state marketplace or exchange, you need to accurately estimate your total family income for the year. When signing up for marketplace insurance, it is better to slightly overstate your 2026 estimated income than to underestimate it. If you underestimate your income you may owe back thousands of dollars in taxes. However, if your income is below a certain amount, you may be

eligible to receive a subsidy to help you pay your monthly insurance premiums.

When you file your taxes, you are required to calculate how much your household income actually turned out to be. If your income is above the amount you estimated, you may have to pay some or all of the subsidized assistance you received back to the marketplace as part of your tax liability.

It's recommended that you talk to a tax professional if you need any help with any of the above items. At ATBS, we specialize in owner-operator truck driver taxes. We can walk you through each scenario above to make sure your 2025 taxes are filed correctly. Give us a call at 866-920-2827 to get started!



**TAX & BUSINESS SOLUTIONS FOR TRUCK DRIVERS**

[www.atbs.com](http://www.atbs.com)

## Tax Season Preparation Checklist

Get a head start on gathering the things you'll need to file a successful tax return. Consider using this information to help you be prepared for the upcoming tax season!

### Income Documents and Information

- 1095-A Federal Marketplace Health Insurance (This is non-employer insurance)
- W-2 Wage and Tax Statement
- 1099-NEC Non-Employee Compensation
- 1099-INT Interest Income
- 1099-DIV Dividends & Distributions
- 1099-R Taxable Pensions, IRAs, Annuities
- SSA-1099 Social Security Benefit Statement
- 1099-K Rideshare, Payment Card & Third Party Network Transactions
- 1099-MISC Miscellaneous Income
- 1099-B Proceeds from Broker & Barter Exchange Transactions
- 1099-G Unemployment Compensation & Gov't Payments
- W-2G Certain Gambling Winnings
- 1099-C Cancellation of Debt
- K-1 Other Investment Income

### Deduction Documents and Information

- Medical, Dental, and Vision Expenses
- 1098-E Student Loan Interest
- 1098-T Tuition and Fees
- 1098 Mortgage Interest Statement
- 1098-VLI Vehicle Loan Interest
- Charitable Contribution Amounts
- Casualty / Theft Losses
- Real Estate / Property Taxes not included on Form 1098
- Fees paid for registering personal vehicles (car, RV, boat, motorcycle, etc)
- Gambling Losses (you must have gambling winnings AND a year-end Casino Statement)
- Unreimbursed education expenses
- Form 5498 (IRA, SEP, HSA, or SIMPLE Contributions)

### Additional Documents and Information

- Prior Year Tax Return (if your Return wasn't filed by ATBS)
- Dependent Social Security Numbers and Birthdates
- Buying / Selling Assets Information
- Financial Brokerage Information
- Year-end Bank / Credit Card Statements (if you operate a business entity, like an S-corp)
- Secondary Business Information
- Rental Property Information
- Foreign Bank Accounts or Investments
- Buying / Selling Digital Assets Information





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- Used Truck Purchase Program
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- Form 2290 Truck Tax Assistance
- Heavy Duty Truck Parts
- ATBS Discounted Tax Services
- Mapping and Navigation App

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## Top 5 Weather Apps for Truckers

Weather is arguably one of the most important factors affecting your driving routes, so it's important to have the most up-to-date forecast at your fingertips. But finding the best weather app can be tricky since there are so many to choose from. Here are five weather apps that we think are a cloud above the rest.

### **The Weather Channel**

Provides a range of meteorological data, including temperature, humidity, wind speed, UV index, sunrise, sunset, and visibility, available on hourly, 36-hour, or 10-day intervals. The data is displayed in a sleek and easy-to-view format. Interactive weather maps display the latest Doppler radar data to show current and future rainfall and weather events. You can also set up Severe Weather Alerts to be notified of severe storms, tornadoes, lightning strikes near you, blizzards, and more. The app also includes social sharing features for users to upload images, tweets, videos, and photos.

### **The National Weather Service**

Provides a quick snapshot of current weather warnings and watches across the U.S. To get a more detailed forecast for a specific area, click the map area. You can also quickly highlight multiple areas along your route by typing city names or by moving the map to click a specific area. You can use this to focus on weather-prone areas along your route. This function is very useful for trip planning.

### **Storm Shield**

While it does provide many of the most basic forecasting features, Storm Shield's primary focus is on providing users with up to date local severe weather alerts for extreme weather events such as thunderstorms, hurricanes, and tornadoes. Using GPS location data from your device, Storm Shield delivers relevant NOAA alerts via voice and push notifications (or on your Apple Watch). Storm Shield differs from most apps in that its alerts are based on the user's precise GPS location rather

than county-level data. A detailed radar and weather map includes numerous data overlays, keeping you up to date on current and saved locations. Storm Shield is free, but additional features cost money.

### **Weather Underground**

Unique in that it gets data from a network of more than 40,000 local professional and amateur weather stations. The crowd reporting feature lets you verify reported forecasts and post your own, creating a truly collaborative and interactive experience. You can also configure the app to send you severe weather alerts. Hourly, Daily, and 10-day forecasts are available. This app was voted as one of the most accurate weather apps for rural areas. If your truck route takes you into the countryside, this might be the best app for your needs. Weather Underground also includes weather cameras to view conditions in a specific area. Ads can be disabled via an in-app purchase of \$1.99 per year.

### **AccuWeather**

A great, simple to use app that offers hourly, daily, and 15-day weather forecasts which can be integrated with your calendar. MinuteCast is a new feature that provides local minute-by-minute forecasts for the next 2 hours, based on your GPS location. The app includes severe weather alerts including thunderstorms, tornadoes, and heavy snow. AccuWeather is best for forecasting the weather in your exact location, but you can also receive alerts and forecasts from other cities you choose to save in your settings. Ads can be disabled via an in-app purchase of \$3.99.

# Word Search

## Happy Holidays

- Carol
- Christmas
- Dreidel
- Elves
- Gingerbread
- Grinch
- Hanukkah
- Holly
- Kwanzaa
- Manger
- Menorah
- Mistletoe
- Nativity
- Noel
- Nutcracker
- Sleigh
- Stocking
- Tinsel
- Wreath
- Yule

Y E O S E C I U K F K H F G O E P I P C D P R T F  
 T K X B H N I U J T M G J B S I A I O R O T J V L  
 V L K S H Y D V C E K I L R R Y Z C Y Y J S X K Z  
 A L S M K Y B Z D G N C S T K E Y Y K V Y G M W K  
 P I H M Y L S L D G K E V T I N S E L Z U N P A W  
 F A X R V H A T R B R C N I L P J Y A D P M V N L  
 A C G B O X Y Y E V I I A J O E N T W G R W G Z I  
 S Z G A N R A L I H B L N R G I T J M H P I I A V  
 N S C G N H Y D D Y A O O C O E F O Z Y M I N A L  
 C D M J Q I H J E H T N Y N H L Y S E Z R X G I T  
 A I B H M T B K L C R I U C A W E J B G N B E R M  
 W U X X O F T L L O H V B K K T F L J I B G R E Y  
 W A N U H D A P G H Q R I H K K I P V O L T B V U  
 S J O J X Q B O V Y G L I A O A M V R E E G R S L  
 T G B N U T C R A C K E R S Y L H C I A S F E B E  
 O D M S Z N P W I E A J J M T F L S W T I G A N J  
 C X B E G H U L L G H N U Z P M L Y L W Y H D O J  
 K P R Q Y H A R P Y B F C R V S A H R E S J K E D  
 I A L R B P T C K A Y I A P G D I S B I I D D L R  
 N I Q P S J U U C D F G K V A D J X W Z B G E P F  
 G T W E H Q P L Z O P I T J N O B Z I R I W H T J  
 B O V R G B S T B H M C J D W W B Z T H E D O D Z  
 M S H A X S T Y D H L K T P T H D W R M R A W A X  
 U Z W Z E M A N G E R P E D F I P K Q H C J T G A  
 P Z I A C Y O X N M E S R I M E N O R A H Z M H M



		4		3		2		1
5			9		1			7
1	7	6	5	4	2			
	1		3				2	
		3					8	
2		8		4	3	7		
			7		4			
	6	1		2		7	9	
7		9						

## Sudoku

The goal is to fill a 9x9 grid with digits 1 through 9, ensuring each digit appears only once in each row, column, and 3x3 subgrid.