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Paper Copies Of IRS Publication 17 Will Cost Practitioners \$60.

Some practitioners are outraged that the IRS is making them buy necessary forms and publications.

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===== HIGHLIGHT =====

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Some practitioners were shocked last week when they learned that to obtain essential documents on paper such as Publication 17, "Your Federal Income Tax," and Publication 334, "Tax Guide for Small Businesses," they would have to buy a minimum of 10 from the Government Printing Office at a cost of about \$6 per copy.

A spokesman on September 13 confirmed that the IRS has implemented the new policy of charging for paper publications because electronic versions are available on a \$25 CD-ROM and for free on the Internet. Individual taxpayers will still be able to get single copies of requested forms mailed to them for free, the spokesman said.

===== FULL TEXT =====

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Practitioners learned of the fees when they received (free) copies of Form 1045, "Tax Practitioner Program." Practitioners who have fully assimilated electronically were nonplussed, but smaller practitioners were incensed.

Steven F. O'Rourke, director of professional services for the National Association of Tax Practitioners in Appleton, Wis., said members of the 15,000-strong organization have been calling him all week to complain.

The association understood that some charges might be implemented, but O'Rourke said many members of the organization believe that being required to buy a minimum of 10 copies of the forms was unfair.

"Someone has to absorb the costs," O'Rourke said. But he said his association was negotiating to buy copies of the form and publications in bulk to make them available to members in smaller quantities and reduced cost.

Other practitioners had harsher words.

"This is just a way of getting more money into the coffers without calling it a tax," said Philadelphia practitioner John H. Fisher in a post to the Usenet newsgroup misc.taxes. "It's like being taxed to pay your tax." Usenet is part of the Internet.

Another practitioner estimated that obtaining the basic forms and publications on paper could cost him more than \$250. "We have to buy 10 copies each of Pub 17 and 334 to get one," he complained.

O'Rourke said he agreed that getting the necessary forms on paper would cost practitioners at least \$200. "Every practitioner is different," he said.

But others said it was no big deal. San Antonio, Texas, CPA Steven **Bankler** said he stopped ordering paper forms and publications years ago. "We get everything on CD-ROM," he said.

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