

A Sales Tax Holiday Can Help You Save on Back-to-School Shopping

Your state may offer a break on clothing and school supplies, and in some cases, much more

By Beth Braverman, Mary Beth Quirk

July 26, 2022

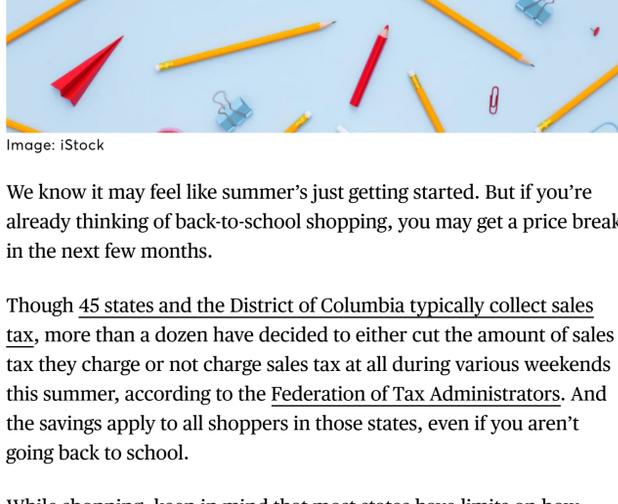


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We know it may feel like summer’s just getting started. But if you’re already thinking of back-to-school shopping, you may get a price break in the next few months.

Though [45 states and the District of Columbia](#) typically collect sales tax, more than a dozen have decided to either cut the amount of sales tax they charge or not charge sales tax at all during various weekends this summer, according to the [Federation of Tax Administrators](#). And the savings apply to all shoppers in those states, even if you aren’t going back to school.

While shopping, keep in mind that most states have limits on how much you can purchase without paying taxes. Tennessee, for example, forgives its full 7 percent state sales tax on [computers](#) that cost up to \$1,500. South Carolina, on the other hand, [doesn’t place a dollar limit](#) (PDF) on eligible purchases and even exempts add-ons such as clothing alterations and delivery charges.

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Though you might not have to pay state tax, you still could owe county and city sales tax. In Missouri, for instance, [dozens of municipalities](#) have opted to collect their local sales tax during the state sales tax holiday.

Parents with children in elementary school through high school plan to spend an average of about \$864 this year, according to a survey from the [National Retail Federation](#), a trade organization. That’s a new record, up from the previous record of \$848.90 last year. College students and their families could spend an average of \$368 per family, \$168 more than last year. Depending on where you shop, the savings could really add up.

Tax Breaks by State

Arkansas: Aug. 6 to 7

Clothing that costs less than [\\$100 per item](#) as well as [school art supplies under \\$50 per purchase](#), and [select textbooks and school supplies](#) (PDF) costing less than \$50 per item.

Connecticut: Aug. 21 to 27

Connecticut’s [2021 tax-free week](#) breaks include certain [clothing and footwear](#) that sell for less than \$100 per item.

Florida: July 25 to Aug. 7

The back-to-school [tax break in Florida](#) applies to clothing, footwear, and other accessories that cost up to \$100 per item; certain school supplies that sell for up to \$50; and the first \$1,500 of the sales price of personal computers and some computer-related accessories. You can get more details from [Florida’s Department of Revenue](#) (PDF).

Illinois: Aug. 5 to 14

For this 10-day period, there’s reduced sales tax—1.25 percent instead of the usual 6.25 percent—on clothing and footwear with a retail price of less than \$125 per item. But the \$125 limit doesn’t apply to school supplies. For more information, check out [Illinois’ Department of Revenue guidance](#).

Iowa: Aug. 5 to 6

Iowa’s [sales tax holiday](#) includes select clothing and footwear costing less than \$100 per item. [This list](#) (PDF) shows taxable items first, then exempt items.

Maryland: Aug. 14 to 20

If you need to buy a [backpack or book bag](#), there’s no tax on the first \$40. There are also [other items covered](#) (PDF), including qualifying clothing and footwear costing up to \$100 per item.

Massachusetts: Aug. 13 to 14

Retail items of up to \$2,500 purchased in Massachusetts for personal use will be exempt from sales tax. It’s worth noting that if the item exceeds the \$2,500 threshold, shoppers will have to pay tax on the full price, not just the amount over that limit. Exceptions to the holiday include cars, gas, telecom services, and others. For more info, check out the [Massachusetts Department of Revenue’s guidance](#).

Mississippi: July 29 to 30

Mississippi’s [2022 sales tax holiday](#) (PDF) includes qualifying clothing, footwear, and school supplies that sell for less than \$100 per item.

Missouri: Aug. 5 to 6

Missouri’s [2022 sales tax holiday](#) applies to clothing that costs up to \$100 per item, school supplies up to \$50 per purchase, computer software up to \$350, and computers and computer accessories up to \$1,500.

New Mexico: Aug. 5 to 6

New Mexico’s [2021 sales tax holiday](#) includes qualifying clothing costing less than \$100, computers for less than \$1,000, computer-related items such as printers and monitors for less than \$500, handheld calculators for less than \$200, and school supplies for less than \$30. Here’s a full list of eligible items from the [New Mexico Taxation & Revenue Department site](#) (PDF).

Ohio: Aug. 5 to 7

Instructional materials that your kids may need at school are tax-free as long as they cost \$20 per item or less. So are school supplies. [Ohio’s 2022 sales tax holiday](#) also includes qualifying clothing that costs up to \$75 per item.

Oklahoma: Aug. 5 to 7

Oklahoma’s [2022 sales tax holiday](#) (PDF) includes qualifying clothing and footwear that costs less than \$100 per item.

South Carolina: Aug. 5 to 7

If your back-to-school list includes printers, software, bed linens, and even footwear, South Carolina’s [2022 sales tax holiday](#) is a good time to make these purchases.

Tennessee: July 29 to 31

Tennessee’s [2022 sales tax holiday](#) includes qualifying clothing that costs up to \$100 per item, school supplies up to \$200, and computers and tablets up to \$1,500.

Texas: Aug. 5 to 7

Texas’ [2022 sales tax holiday](#) includes qualifying clothing, footwear, backpacks, and school supplies costing less than \$100 per item.

Virginia: Aug. 5 to 7

During [Virginia’s sales tax holiday](#), qualifying school supplies costing \$20 or less, and clothing and footwear priced at \$100 or less are free from sales tax. That same weekend, you also can pick up emergency-preparedness products such as [portable generators](#), plus Energy Star certified appliances, and benefit from the tax break.

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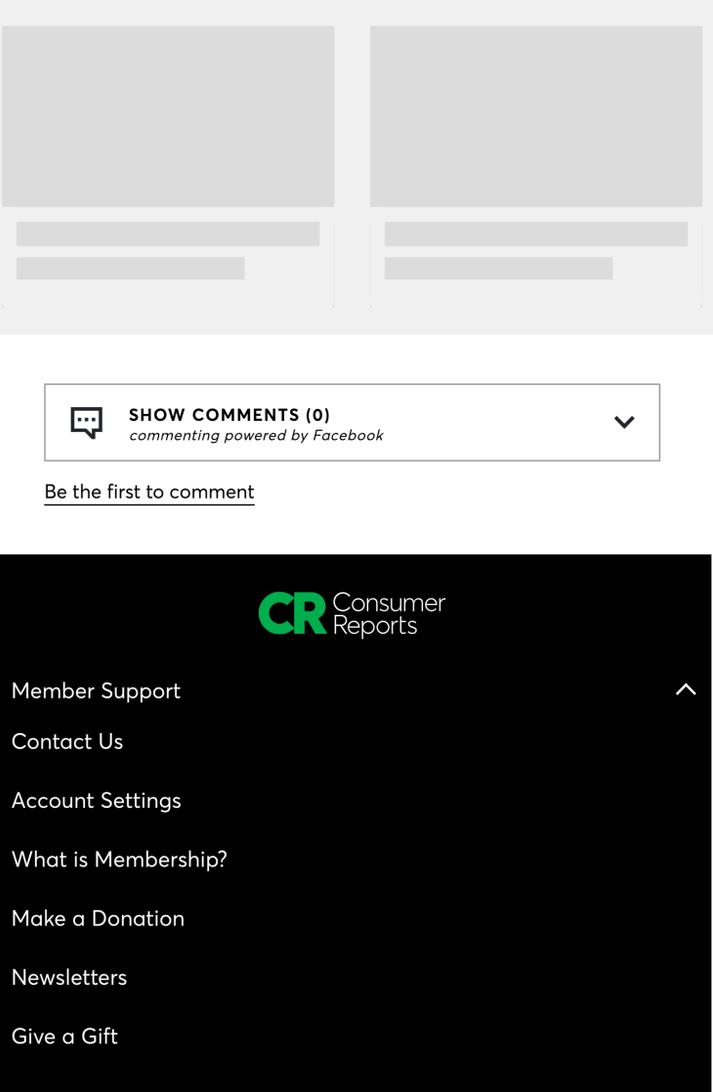
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Beth Braverman is a freelance writer who contributes to Consumer Reports on personal finance topics. Conscious of the intersection of life and money, she is always looking for ways to make more mindful decisions about both.

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