

News Release



U.S. Department of Labor
Office of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.
Release Number 04-201-NAT

For Immediate Release
Date: February 10, 2004
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Labor Department Publishes 2003 Form M-1 For Multiple Employer Welfare Arrangements *Online Filing Available March 1, 2004*

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Labor Department’s Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) published in the **Federal Register** the 2003 Form M-1 annual report for multiple employer welfare arrangements (MEWAs). MEWAs are arrangements that offer medical benefits to the employees of two or more employers or to their beneficiaries.

The Labor Department has authority under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act to require reporting of information about MEWAs. Administrators generally must file the one-page Form M-1 once a year. This year for the first time, filers can fill out and submit their filings via the Internet.

The annual filing date for the Form M-1 is March 1 of each year. However, in order to encourage the use of the new electronic filing option, the department has decided to extend this year’s normal filing deadline from March 1 to May 1, 2004. In addition, administrators can request an automatic 60-day extension, which has also been extended from May 1 to July 1, 2004. The 2003 Form M-1 has few changes from the 2002 form.

Beginning March 1, the online filing system will be available on EBSA’s Web site, allowing filers to complete the form and submit it at no cost. The online form can be completed in multiple sessions and can be printed for the filer’s records. The Web site includes a user manual, frequently asked questions and a link to submit questions electronically. Online filing is an example of President Bush’s E-Government initiative, which uses improved technology to make it easier for citizens and businesses to interact with the government.

To use the online filing process, go to <http://www.askebsa.dol.gov/mewa/>. Technical assistance for the online filing system is also available by calling (202) 693-8600. Information about the Form M-1 and how to fill it out is available on the Web site or by calling (202) 693-8360.

Paper copies of the form can be obtained by calling EBSA’s toll free number at 1-866-444-EBSA (3272) or downloaded at www.dol.gov/ebsa and clicking on the “Forms/Doc Requests” section.

The U.S. Department of Labor is committed to providing America's employers and employees with easy access to understandable information on how to comply with its laws and regulations. For more information, please visit www.dol.gov/compliance. U.S. Labor Department releases are accessible on the Internet at <http://www.dol.gov>. The information in this news release will be made available in alternate format upon request (large print, Bra ille, audio tape or disc) from the COAST office. Please specify which news release when placing your request. Call (202) 693-7773 or TTY (202) 693-7755.