Social Security Number Verification Service (SSNVS) Handbook
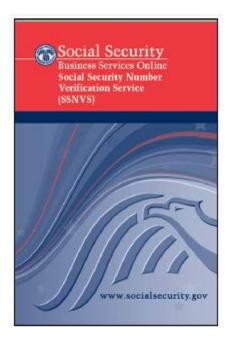
If you are navigating using only the keyboard or using an assistive device and need help, visit our Keyboard Commands web page for alternative views and navigation. Warning: If you select this link, you will leave this site and go to a new browser window. You will automatically return to this page when you close the new browser window.

**Social Security Administration
Office of Systems Electronic Services
6401 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, Maryland 21235**

Updated September 2011

Table of Contents

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CONTACT INFORMATION

Social Security Number Verification Service (SSNVS)
http://www.ssa.gov/bso/bsowelcome.htm

Employer Reporting Assistance
For help with registering or annual wage reporting, call
1-800-772-6270 (toll free)
or 1-410-965-4241
Monday - Friday
7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time
Or e-mail Social Security at employerinfo@ssa.gov
TDD/TYY call 1-800-201-7165 (toll free)

BSO Technical Assistance
For technical help with using BSO, call
1-888-772-2970 (toll free)
Monday - Friday
8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time

Fax: 1-410-597-0237
E-mail: bso.support@ssa.gov
Caution: Social Security recommends that you not include private information,
such as your Social Security Number, in Internet e-mail messages.

General Information
For information about Social Security programs and benefits, call
1-800-772-1213 (toll free)
Monday - Friday
7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time

For General Information TDD/TTY, call 1-800-325-0778 (toll free)

WHAT IS SSNVS AND BSO?

The Social Security Number Verification Service (SSNVS) is one of the services offered by Social Security Administration's (SSA) Business Services Online (BSO). It allows registered users (employers and certain third-party submitters) to verify the names and Social Security Numbers (SSNs) of employees against SSA records.

With SSNVS, you may:

- Verify up to 10 names and SSNs online and receive immediate results. There is no limit to the number of times the *SSN Verification* web page may be used within a session.

- Upload electronic files of up to 250,000 names and SSNs and usually receive results the next government business day.

In addition to SSNVS, the BSO suite consists of Registration Services and Employer Services. Registration Services offer a User Identification Number (User ID) assignment, password selection and various registration maintenance functions. Employer Services offer W-2 file upload, W-2 and W-2c online key-in functions (no special software or forms required) and the ability to track files and view processing results and notices.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CORRECT SSNs

SSA can post employee wages correctly only when employers and submitters report employee wages under the correct name and SSN. Recording names and SSNs correctly is the key to successful processing of annual wage reports. It saves the employer and the administration processing costs and allows SSA to properly credit your employees' earnings record. Credits to your employees' earnings record are important in determining their future eligibility and payment of SSA's retirement, disability and survivor benefits.

PROPER USE OF SSNVS

SSNVS should only be used for the purpose for which it is intended.

- SSA will verify SSNs and names solely to ensure that the records of current or former employees are correct for the purpose of completing Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form W-2 (Wage and Tax Statement).

- It is illegal to use the service to verify SSNs of potential new hires or contractors or in the preparation of tax returns.

- It is appropriate to use SSNVS only once an official employer-employee relationship has been established. SSA defines the existence of an employer-employee relationship as when one of the following has occurred:

    o The employer's offer of employment and acceptance by the person being hired (even though he/she hasn't started working); and /or

    o The future employee's completion of the paperwork to establish the payroll record.

- Company policy concerning the use of SSNVS should be applied consistently to all workers; for example:

    o If used for newly hired workers, verify information on all newly hired workers.

    o If used to verify information on other workers, verify the information for all other workers.

- Third-party use of SSNVS is strictly limited to organizations that contract with employers to either handle the wage reporting responsibilities or perform an administrative function directly related to annual wage reporting responsibilities of hired employees. It is suggested that contracts between the third-party and the employer stipulate that the functions being performed by the third-party contractor adhere to the proper use of SSNVS. It is not proper to use SSNVS for non-wage reporting purposes such as identity, credit checks, mortgage applications, etc.

- Anyone who knowingly and willfully uses SSNVS to request or obtain information from SSA under false pretenses violates Federal law and may be punished by a fine, imprisonment or both.

- SSA may ban you and/or the company you represent from the use of SSNVS if SSA determines there has been misuse of the service.

- SSA returns all names and SSNs submitted. If the name and SSN does not match our records, SSA advises the following:

    o This response does not imply that you or your employee intentionally provided incorrect information about the employee's name or SSN.

    o This response does not make any statement about your employee's immigration status.

- This response is not a basis, in and of itself, to take any adverse action against the employee, such as laying off, suspending, firing or discriminating against the employee.

> ***NOTE***: *If you rely only on the verification information SSA provides to justify adverse action against a worker, you may violate State or Federal law and be subject to legal consequences.*

THIRD-PARTY VERIFICATIONS

If an employer has hired you to handle his/her company's annual wage reporting responsibilities, a fee-based approach can be used when offering SSNVS to your clients. However, caution should be taken. SSA offers services such as SSNVS free of charge. Some companies in the private sector offer those same services for a fee and develop misleading brochures and advertisements. To discourage the use of misleading mailings about Social Security and Medicare, Congress enacted specific prohibitions in Section 312 of the Social Security Independence and Program Improvements Act of 1994 that broadened the existing deterrents. The prohibitions are listed in Title 42 of the U.S. Code, Section 1320b-10. To ensure you conform to these legal requirements, be careful to adhere to the following:

- Be cautious not to suggest to your clients that this service is only available through you,

- Advise all customers that this service is available at no cost from SSA and that this service is not a unique or exclusive arrangement between SSA and your company, and

- Be sure not to give any impression when describing your SSN verification service to your clients that your company has an arrangement that allows direct access to SSA databases, program software, etc.

NEW USERS

You must complete BSO registration. Once registered, you will need to request SSNVS. You will not be able to complete the online SSNVS request process if:

- Your current employer did not file a Form W-2 for you with SSA. *(Note: If you were hired in the last 18 months by your current employer, it is possible that SSA's records do not yet reflect your employment.)*, or

- You are currently self-employed but did not submit self-employment earnings to the IRS in the last taxable year.

If either of the above statements applies to you, begin the online registration process as described in the Registration section of this handbook. BSO will display a message asking you to fax information to (570) 706-7874.

There are several steps that must be completed before you can use SSNVS. You must:

1. *Register for BSO*
2. *Login to BSO*
3. *Request access to SSNVS*
4. *Enter employer information*
5. *Receive an Activation Code (mailed to your employer)*
6. *Login to BSO*
7. *Activate access*

Every BSO user must register separately. You may not register on behalf of another person.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

To use SSNVS, you will need:

- Internet access,

- A web browser, such as Internet Explorer or Firefox. Your browser version must allow 'cookies' (files stored temporarily on your computer) and have128-bit encryption.

  > **NOTE:** *In order to use Business Services Online (BSO), your browser version must be set to accept cookies and support 128-bit encryption. This is the default setting for most browsers. If you receive a request to store a file on your computer, select Yes. BSO cookies will be deleted when you close your browser.*

- Adobe Reader (version 5.0 or higher is recommended). You will need this software to view and print your forms. For a free copy of Adobe Reader go to www.adobe.com.

SECURITY

SSNVS and all applications within the Business Services Online (BSO) Suite of Services use Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) communications protocol and 128-bit line encryption to protect your privacy. These technologies prevent eavesdropping and ensure the security of data transmitted over the Internet.

These security features do not apply to Internet e-mail. Social Security recommends that you not include private information, such as your Social Security Number (SSN), in Internet e-mail messages.

SSNVS/BSO AVAILABILITY

SSNVS normally operates during the following hours, including holidays and may be available at other times as well:

SSNVS Hours of Operation

Day	Time
Monday - Friday	*5:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time*
Saturday	*5:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time*
Sunday	*8:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time*

NOTE: SSNVS/BSO is not available when SSA is in the process of implementing changes to their system. Advance notice is provided on the SSNVS News page and BSO website. Also, during website down times, informational messages are displayed when a user attempts to access the system.

REGISTRATION

INFORMATION NEEDED TO REGISTER

NOTE: Self-employed Business Services Online (BSO) users may use SSNVS only if they provided an Employer Identification Number (EIN) at the time of registration. To apply for an EIN, go to the IRS website: www.irs.gov/businesses/small/.

The information you provide when you register allows SSA to confirm your identity before issuing a User Identification Number (User ID) or to contact you, if necessary. You will be asked to provide the following:

- Type of employer/employee,
- Company EIN,
- Company or business name,
- Company phone number,
- Indication if you are a third-party submitter registering to do business on behalf of another company,
- Name as it appears on your Social Security card,
- Social Security Number (SSN),
- Date of birth,
- Your preferred mailing address,
- Work phone number,
- Fax number (optional)
- E-mail address, and
- Answers to five security questions.

You will also be asked to enter a unique password of your choice.

Your full name, SSN, date of birth, and EIN will be verified against SSA records.

If you have been hired on behalf of an employer, you should provide information about your own company when you register through BSO for SSNVS.

If you have a reason to use BSO but are not a citizen of the United States (and you live outside the United States), leave the U.S. SSN field blank. You will be allowed to continue without providing this information. If you register without providing a United States SSN, additional authentication will be required before you can use BSO services.

REGISTERING

When you have the above information ready, follow these steps to register online:

1. Go to the BSO Welcome web page.

   > **NOTE:** *Do not use your browser's Back, Forward, or Refresh buttons while completing the registration form. This could clear the form unintentionally.*

2. Select the *Register* button on the *BSO Welcome* web page. This will open the *User Registration Attestation* web page, an important user certification statement.

3. Select the *I Accept* button to indicate that you have read and understand the user certification statement and agree to its contents. This will open the registration form.

4. Provide the requested information on the registration form. Assistance and tips for completing the registration form can be found by clicking the *BSO Help* button.

> **NOTE:** *The SSN and EIN fields cannot be updated. You must re-register to enter new information in these fields.*

5. Select the *Register* button when you have completed the registration form. BSO will verify your identity against SSA records and display your User ID.

> **NOTE:** *Make a note of your User ID because you will need it to log in to BSO.*

Immediately after registering, you will be able to maintain/update your registration information, request access to BSO services, and contact SSA electronically.

YOUR BSO PASSWORD

At the time of registration, you must enter a unique password of your choice. Your password must contain a combination of eight (8) letters and numbers (e.g. 9580859A or frog2828). Passwords are NOT case sensitive. No special characters are allowed. Secure your password and do not share it with anyone. Your User ID and password are required to log in to BSO.

> **NOTE:** *Here is a list of password instructions:*
>
> - *Your password must be eight (8) characters long and must be a combination of letters and numbers.*
> - *There must be at least one letter and at least one number in your password.*
> - *Passwords are NOT case sensitive.*
> - *Do not use special characters.*
> - *You must change your password at least once every 90 days.*

CHANGING YOUR PASSWORD

It is mandatory to change your password at least once every 90 days. If you login after 90 days, you will be prompted to change your password.

The email address you provided during registration allows SSA to send you a notice when it is time to change your password. In addition, you will receive *BSO News* which provides important wage and tax reporting updates.

IF YOU FORGET YOUR PASSWORD

If you forget your password, you may request a new one by following these steps:

1. On the *Log In to BSO* web page, enter your User ID. You must provide your User ID to access the Forgot Your Password link.

2. Select the *Forgot your password* link.

3. Answer the three randomly chosen security questions that you had previously answered. Answers are not case sensitive but should match your previous answers.
4. Input and confirm your new password. Your password must contain any combination of eight letters and numbers (e.g. 9580859A or frog2828). Special characters are not allowed and passwords are not case sensitive.

5. Select the *Submit New Password* button. This will display a message indicating that your password has been successfully changed. You may now select the *Login* button and log in to BSO with your User ID and your newly changed password.

> *NOTE: Your password is for your use only and may not be disclosed to anyone else, including other employees. Exercise caution in disclosing your User ID. Your User ID is the equivalent of your electronic signature and is assigned to you personally - not generically to your company. You are responsible for all actions taken using your User ID.*

COMPLETE YOUR PHONE REGISTRATION

New users may have to complete their online registration by speaking with an Employer Reporting Branch (ERB) representative. After speaking with the ERB your next step would be to select the *Complete Your Phone Registration* button from the *BSO Welcome* web page and enter the following information:

- User ID provided by ERB personnel,
- First and Last Name,
- SSN (if applicable),
- Date of Birth,
- EIN, and
- Password (For more information, see "Your BSO Password" section above).

Once your personal and company information has been authenticated against SSA records, you can request access to SSNVS.

ACCESS TO SSNVS

Before you can verify names and Social Security Numbers (SSNs), you will need to request access to SSNVS. Once access has been requested you will receive an activation code from SSA. You are required to enter the SSNVS activation code prior to your first use.

REQUEST ACCESS TO SSNVS

> **NOTE:** *Self-employed Business Services Online (BSO) users may use SSNVS only if they provided an Employer Identification Number (EIN) at the time of registration. To apply for an EIN, go to the IRS website:* *www.irs.gov/businesses/small*.

To request access to SSNVS, after you have registered to use BSO, complete the following steps:

1. Login to BSO.

2. From the *BSO Main Menu*, select *Account Maintenance* and then select *Request Access to BSO Services.* The *Request Access to BSO Services* web page will open with a description of the available suites of services.

3. Check the *Electronic Wage Reporting Service* box and select the *Next* button.

4. Continue navigating through the wizard by selecting the *Next* button until the *Verify Social Security Numbers Online* web page displays. Click on the *Yes* button to request access to this function.

5. Select the *Next* button until reaching the *Request Summary* web page and then select the *Confirm* button to view the *Request Access to BSO Services Confirmation* web page.

SSA will mail an activation code for SSNVS to your employer at the address the IRS has on file from the Form 941, Employer's Federal Tax Return or SS-4, Application for Employer Identification Number.

If you are already registered to use BSO services, you may request access to SSNVS by selecting *Account Maintenance* from the *BSO Main Menu* web page and then selecting the *Request Access to BSO Services* link.

ACTIVATION CODE

The activation code is an alphanumeric code sent by SSA to the employer or registered User Identification Number (User ID) holder when access to certain services are requested. This code must be entered on the *Activate Access to BSO Services* web page in order to grant the user access to the requested service.

The activation code mailed to your employer is usually received within two (2) weeks. The letter to your employer with the activation code instructs him or her to provide you with the activation code. The activation code is an added layer of security. You will not have access to SSNVS until you have activated the service by entering the activation code.

ACTIVATE ACCESS TO SSNVS

SSNVS requires the activation code that was mailed to your employer to be entered to activate your access to the SSNVS service prior to your first use.

Once you have received your activation code from your employer:

1. Login to BSO.

2. From the *BSO Main Menu*, select *Account Maintenance* and then select *Activate Access to BSO Services* link. The *Activate Access to BSO Services* web page will open.

3. Enter the activation code.

4. Select the *Activate* button. A *Confirmation* web page will display indicating SSA has approved your request.

You may then begin using your SSNVS services immediately.

RE-REQUEST ACTIVATION CODE

> **NOTE**: *The activation code for SSNVS is sent directly to your employer. Please check with your employer to verify that the activation code has been received.*

If it has been 10 days or more since you requested access to SSNVS and your employer has not received your activation code from SSA:

1. From the *BSO Main Menu*, select *Account Maintenance* and then the *Re-Request Activation Codes* link. The *Re-Request Activation Codes* web page will open.

2. Check the *box* corresponding to SSNVS.

3. Select the *Re-Request* button. A *Re-Request Activation Codes Confirmation* web page will display confirming SSA received your request.

Restrictions:

- If it has been 60 days or more since you requested access:

  o Your activation code is invalid.
  o You may not re-request an activation code.
  o You must request access to SSNVS again using the *Request Access to BSO Services* web page.

> **NOTE:** *Once an activation code has been re-requested, the original activation code is de-activated and is no longer valid.*

REMOVE ACCESS TO SSNVS

1. From the *BSO Main Menu*, select *Account Maintenance* and then select the *Remove Access to BSO Services* link. The *Remove Access to BSO Services* web page will open.

2. Check the box *Verify Social Security Numbers Online*.

3. Select the *Remove* button. A *Confirmation* web page will display indicating that SSA has approved your request.

If you remove access to any service(s) in error, you must re-request access via the *Request Access* to *BSO Services* web page.

LOGGING INTO SSNVS

To access SSNVS, you must first log in to Business Services Online (BSO):

- Open the BSO Welcome web page.

- Select *Login* on the *BSO Welcome* web page. This will open the *General Login Attestation* web page containing an important user certification statement.

> *NOTE: If your browser does not support 128-bit encryption, an authorization error message will be displayed when you select the Login link. See the System Requirements section of this handbook details.*

- Select the *I Accept* button to indicate that you have read the user certification statement and agree to its contents. This will open the *Business Services Online Login* web page.

- Enter your User Identification Number (User ID) and password.

  o If you have received a temporary password in the mail, log in with your User ID and temporary password. You will then need to change your temporary password. When the *BSO Change Password* web page is displayed, enter the temporary password and then enter your own unique password twice.

  o If you registered for BSO with the Employer Reporting Branch (ERB) personnel by telephone, but have not yet selected your password, select the *Complete Your Phone Registration* link from the *Business Services Online Login* web page. This will open the *BSO Registration* web page. For more information, see the Complete Your Phone Registration section of this handbook.

- Select the *Login* button from the *Business Services Online Login* web page. This will open the *BSO Main Menu* web page. The *BSO Main Menu* web page is your point of entry for SSNVS and all other BSO services.

> *NOTE: The use of the browser's Back, Forward and Refresh buttons may unintentionally log you out of BSO.*

> *NOTE: If you forgot your password, please refer to Your BSO Password section of this handbook under Registration.*

USING SSNVS

SSNVS allows you to submit names and Social Security Numbers (SSNs) for verification both online and through electronic file submission.

REQUEST ONLINE SSN VERIFICATION

The *SSN Verification* web page enables you to submit up to 10 names and SSNs for verification and obtain immediate results. There is no limit to the number of times the *SSN Verification* web page may be used within a session.

The *SSN Verification* web page contains the following data entry fields:

Employer Identification Number (EIN) - The EIN of the employer under which wages are to be reported for the names and SSNs being verified.

- The Employer's EIN field is mandatory.
- The Employer's EIN must be nine (9) numerical characters only.
- Spaces, alphabetic characters, hyphens, slashes or any other special characters are not allowed.

Social Security Number (SSN)

- The SSN field is mandatory.
- The SSN must be nine (9) numerical characters only.
- Spaces, alphabetic characters, hyphens, slashes or any other special characters are not allowed.

First Name

- The First Name field is mandatory.
- The First Name must be between one (1) and 10 characters in length.
- If the First Name is longer than 10 characters, enter the first 10 characters of the First Name.
- Enter the First Name using alphabetic characters only.
- Spaces, numbers, hyphens, slashes or any other characters are not allowed.

Middle Name

- The Middle Name field is optional.
- If entered, the Middle Name must be between one (1) and seven (7) characters in length.
- If the Middle Name is longer than seven (7) characters, enter the first seven (7) characters of the Middle Name.

- Enter the Middle Name using alphabetic characters only.
- Spaces, numbers, hyphens, slashes or any other characters are not allowed.

Last Name

- The Last Name field is mandatory.
- The Last Name must be between one (1) and 13 characters in length.
- If the Last Name is longer than 13 characters, enter the first 13 characters of the Last Name.
- Enter the Last Name using alphabetic characters only.
- Spaces, numbers, hyphens, slashes or any other characters are not allowed.

Suffix

- The Suffix field is optional.
- If entered, the Suffix must be Jr, Sr, or a Roman numeral I through X.
- Numbers, hyphens, slashes or any other characters are not allowed.

Date of Birth (DOB)

- The DOB field is optional.
- If entered, the DOB must contain eight (8) digits.
- Enter the employee's DOB using the format MMDDYYYY where:
  - MM is the month; enter a value of 01 through 12
  - DD is the day; enter a value of 01 through 31
  - YYYY is the year; enter the first two (2) digits of the century followed by a value of 00 through 99.
- Spaces, letters, hyphens, slashes or any other special characters are not allowed.
- The DOB cannot be before 1800 or after the current date.

> **NOTE**: SSA may not be able to process your request if you enter identical SSNs or identical First and Last Names multiple times.

The First, Middle and Last Name fields provide links to the help guide for entering complex names. To access the *SSNVS Help* web page, you must be logged into SSNVS. The *Help* button is in the left hand corner of each SSNVS web page and opens in a new browser window.

> **NOTE**: If data entry errors are found, you will be prompted to correct your errors.

UPLOAD AN ELECTRONIC FILE FOR VERIFICATION

SSNVS allows you to request name and SSN verifications via electronic file submissions.

1. The *Submit a File for SSN Verification - Before You Start* web page contains the following information.

   - **Review your file** for correct formatting to ensure that the file is error-free. A properly formatted file will avoid rejection. See the Submission File Format section of the handbook for the correct file format. Files containing more than 100 records are scanned for format errors. If more than 50% of the records contain format errors, the file is not processed.

     - **Excel Users**
       To ensure your electronic file submission processes successfully, the file must NOT be in an *.xls format. If you are using Excel, you must save the file in the appropriate format.

       To properly save an Excel file for processing:

       1. On the File Menu, select Save As.
       2. In the Save As dialog box, select the drop-down box Save as type.
       3. Select Formatted text (Space delimited) (*.prn).
       4. Insert your filename and click Save.

     Once you have saved your file, check your file against the Submission File Format. Please ensure that the record length is 130 characters and all fields are properly placed in their respective positions.

   - **Zip your file** if you have over 500 name and SSN verification requests or you have a slow connection. The transmission time required will be substantially reduced if the file is zipped (compressed).

   When the file is ready for upload, select the *Continue* button.

2. The *Submit a File for SSN Verification - Submit Your File* web page contains the following data entry fields.

   - *Employer's EIN*

   The EIN of the employer under which wages are to be reported for the names and SSNs being verified.

- *Select File*

    o If you know the name of the file you wish to upload, type the file name in the *Select File* data entry field.

    or

    o Select a file from your local or network directory by selecting the *Browse* button. When the file submission box appears, select the location and name of the file you want to upload. When you select *OK* and return to *Submit a File for SSN Verification - Submit Your File* web page, the file name is automatically entered in the *Select File* data entry field.

    o Once the *Select File* data entry field is complete, select the *Submit* button to begin uploading your file. Your file submission is complete when the *Submit a File for SSN Verification - Confirmation* web page is displayed.

    o After the *Submit* button has been selected, you will see a dialog box showing the process of your file being uploaded. When the file upload is complete, you will receive a pop-up box stating "Your file submission was successful" and a recommendation to save or print the acknowledgement.

Submission times depend on many factors. SSA allows up to four (4) hours for a single file submission. If your connection is lost during file submission, you will have to submit the file again.

> **NOTE**: *Please do not exit SSNVS or log out until you receive your confirmation number.*

3. The *Submit a File for SSN Verification - Confirmation* web page contains the following information.

This web page acknowledges that your file was received and provides other submitted related information.

- Confirmation number, a 16-position alphanumeric number, assigned by SSA, that you will need to retrieve the results of your submission. Make a note of this number; you need it to check the status of your file.

- Date of submission,

- Time of submission,

- Your file name (For your information only, not to be used for tracking the status of your file.),

- File size,

- What you should do next, and

- What to expect.

Once a file is successfully submitted and you have noted its confirmation number, you can process more files by selecting the *Submit Another File* button; this returns you to the *Submit a File for SSN Verification - Submit Your File* web page.

SUBMISSION FILE FORMAT

To ensure your electronic file submission processes successfully, the file must be a text file (.txt) in the following format:

> **NOTE**: *Effective 09/24/11, gender is no longer used as part of the SSN verification process. You do not need to make any changes to the file format. If a value is included in position 54 of a file, we will remove it and replace it with a blank prior to the verification attempt. All returned files will have a blank in position 48.*
>
> **NOTE**: *Record delimiters are not to be used (i.e., do not place a comma or any other character after any field).*
>
> **NOTE**: *If a field marked "May not be left blank." does not contain an entry, the item is automatically considered a non-verified record.*
>
> **NOTE**: *In order to sort the return file to your specifications, we recommend using the User Control Data field to create a unique identifier for each record. This unique identifier would be placed in positions 90-103 in your submission file and return to you in positions 84-97 in the return file.*

Field Name	Instruction	Position	Field Size	Field Type
SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	• Must include all 9 digits including lead zeros. • May not be left blank.	1-9	9	Numeric

ENTRY CODE "TPV"	• Must insert "TPV". • May not be left blank.	10-12	3	Alpha
PROCESSING CODE 214	• Must insert "214". • May not be left blank.	13-15	3	Numeric
LAST NAME	• Do not use hyphens, apostrophes, spaces, periods, suffixes (Jr) or prefixes (Dr). • Must contain at least one character. • May not be left blank.	16-28	13	Alpha
FIRST NAME	• Do not use hyphens, apostrophes, spaces, periods, suffixes (Jr) or prefixes (Dr). • Must contain at least one character. • May not be left blank.	29-38	10	Alpha
MIDDLE NAME / INITIAL	• Do not use hyphens, apostrophes, spaces, periods, suffixes (Jr) or prefixes (Dr). • Optional	39-45	7	Alpha
DATE OF BIRTH (MMDDYYYY)	• If unknown, leave blank. • Optional	46-53	8	Numeric
BLANK	SSA use only.	54-89	36	Blanks
USER CONTROL DATA	Free form text for employer.	90-103	14	Alphanumeric
BLANK	SSA use only.	104-123	20	Blanks
REQUESTER IDENTIFICATION CODE	• Enter OEVS. • May not be left blank.	124-127	4	Alpha
MULTIPLE REQUEST INDICATOR	• Must insert "000". • May not be left blank.	128-130	3	Numeric

RETURNED FILE FORMAT

The returned text file is formatted as defined in the following table:

> **NOTE**: *Effective 09/24/11, gender is no longer used as part of the SSN verification process. You do not need to make any changes to the file format. If a value is included in position 54 of a file, we will remove it and replace it with a blank prior to the verification attempt. All returned files will have a blank in position 48.*

Field Name	Instruction	Position	Field Size	Field Type
SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	For security reasons, if the record has a verification code of 3, 6 or is blank, the first five (5) positions will be masked with an "X".	1-9	9	Alphanumeric
LAST NAME	Data identical to input provided by the requester.	10-22	13	Alpha
FIRST NAME	Data identical to input provided by the requester.	23-32	10	Alpha
MIDDLE NAME/INITIAL	Data identical to input provided by the requester.	33-39	7	Alpha
DATE OF BIRTH (MMDDYYYY)	Data identical to input provided by the requester.	40-47	8	Numeric
BLANK	SSA use only.	48	1	Blank
CONFIRMATION OR TRACKING NUMBER	16-position number assigned to a file submitted after 08/25/07 or Eight (8)-position number assigned to a file submitted prior to 08/25/07.	49-83	35	Alphanumeric
USER CONTROL DATA	Data identical to input provided by the requester.	84-97	14	Alphanumeric

VERIFICATION CODE	Blank = Verified. 1 = SSN not in file (never issued). 3 = Name matches; DOB does not match. 5 = Name does not match; DOB not checked. 6 = SSN did not verify; other reason.	98	1	Blank or Numeric
PROCESSING CODE 214	Data identical to input provided by the requester.	99-101	3	Numeric
REQUESTER IDENTIFICATION CODE	Data identical to input provided by the requester.	102-105	4	Alphanumeric
MULTIPLE REQUEST INDICATOR	Data identical to input provided by the requester.	106-108	3	Numeric
BLANK	SSA use only.	109-120	12	Blanks
DEATH INDICATOR	Y = SSA records indicate the number holder is deceased. N = SSA records indicate the number holder is not deceased.	121	1	Alpha
BLANK	SSA use only.	122-130	9	Blanks

SSN VERIFICATION RESULTS

On the *SSN Verification Results* web page, a table is displayed with the results for name and SSN verification requests submitted online. In addition, a tally is displayed showing the total number of:

- Records submitted,
- Failed,
- Deceased and
- Verified.

VERIFIED

The SSN submitted for verification matches SSA's records.

- A "blank" *Verification Results* field = a verified SSN.

For security reasons, if the record has a "blank" *Verification Results* field, the first five (5) positions of the SSN will be masked with an "X".

FAILED VERIFICATION

For security reasons, if the record has a verification code of 3 or 6, the first five (5) positions of the SSN will be masked with an "X".

Verification Results Code - The following is the list of FAILED verification codes.

- 1 = SSN not in file (never issued).
- 3 = Name matches; DOB does not match.
- 5 = Name does not match; DOB not checked.
- 6 = SSN did not verify; other reason.

DECEASED (PER SSA RECORDS)

The SSN submitted for verification matches SSA's records, but our records indicate that the individual is deceased.

STATUS AND RETRIEVAL OPTIONS

To view the *Status and Retrieval* web page, select the *View Status and Retrieval Information* link on the *BSO Main Menu* web page. The *Status and Retrieval* web page enables users to view the status of electronic files submitted for overnight processing.

There are three (3) options for checking file status:

Option 1: Confirmation or Tracking Number

To view the status of an individual file:

- Type the 16-position alphanumeric confirmation number or the eight (8)-position alphanumeric tracking number you received when your file was submitted.

- Select the *Submit* button.

Option 2: Date Range

To view the status of all files you submitted within a date range:

- Type the beginning and ending dates into the Range Start Date and Range End Date fields.

  The Date Range must:

  o Contain eight (8) digits in the MMDDYYYY format, where:

    ▪ MM is the month; enter a value 01 through 12.
    ▪ DD is the day; enter a value 01 through 31.
    ▪ YYYY is the year; enter the first two (2) digits of the century followed by a value of 00 through 99.

  o Be within two (2) years of the current date.

  o Not be later than the current date.

- Select the *Submit* button.

Option 3: All Submissions

To view the status of the most recent 100 submissions within the last two (2) years, select the *Submit* button.
If the file you are searching for is not displayed, focus your search by using Option 1 or 2.

STATUS AND RETRIEVAL RESULTS

When your file has been processed, you may download and/or view the results on the *Status and Retrieval Results* web page.

The status and retrieval results are displayed in a table; for a full explanation of each column, click on the column header. This opens a new browser to the *SSNVS Help* web page which is only accessible when logged into SSNVS.

- For 10 or less SSNs submitted, the results may be downloaded or viewed online.

- For more than 10 SSNs submitted, the results may be downloaded only.

> **NOTE**: *For security reasons, if the record has a verification code of 3, 6 or if the Verification Results field is "blank", the first five (5) positions of the SSN will be masked with an "X".*

If the file is in process or was not processed due to a format error or failed unzip, the *Record Submitted* and *Available Through* fields will be blank.

STATUS	EXPLANATION
AVAILABLE	The file is ready for viewing or downloading.
DOWNLOADED	The file is available and already has been downloaded.
FORMAT OR SURFACE ERRORS	The file was rejected. At least one (1) record in the file did not have the correct length of 130 characters **or** more than 50% of the Name and SSN records in the file failed edits.
FAILED UNZIP	The file either was not compatible with PKZip or contained multiple files.
IN PROCESS	Except for peak submission periods, file results will usually be available the next government business day.
NOT AVAILABLE	The file is more than 30 days old and can no longer be viewed or downloaded. See Available Through explanation below.
UNABLE TO PROCESS-RESUBMIT	The file could not be processed and must be resubmitted.
VIEWED	The file is available and has already been viewed.

Depending on the number of results returned, select the *Download* or *View* link in the *Retrieval Option*(s) column.

RETRIEVAL OPTION(S)	EXPLANATION
DOWNLOAD	Select to download your file results. **IMPORTANT**: You may have to associate the downloaded file with your default text editor **or** save the downloaded file as a text file.

VIEW	Select to view your file results. **NOTE:** This option is available only if there are 10 or less SSNs submitted for verification.

AVAILABLE THROUGH- Users are able to view or download the results for 30 days from the day they become available. After 30 days and up to two (2) years, users can only view the status of their files. During the period files are available, users can download or view them an unlimited number of times.

Other links that appear on this screen allow you to display context-related help.

WHAT TO DO IF AN SSN FAILS TO VERIFY

Follow these steps for each SSN that failed verification:

1. Compare the failed SSN to your employment records. If you made a typographical error, correct the error and resubmit the corrected data. If the name is hyphenated, consider trying different versions of the name.

2. If your employment records match your submission, ask your employee to check his/her Social Security card and inform you of any name or SSN difference between your records and his/her card. If your employment records are incorrect, correct your records and resubmit the corrected data.

3. If your employment record and the employee's Social Security card match, ask the employee to check with any local Social Security Administration (SSA) Office to resolve the issue. Once the employee has contacted the SSA Office, he/she should inform you of any changes. You should correct your records accordingly and resubmit the corrected data.

4. If the employee is unable to provide a valid SSN, you are encouraged to document your efforts to obtain the correct information. (Documentation should be retained with payroll records for a period of three (3) years.)

5. If you are unable to contact the employee, you are encouraged to document your efforts.

6. If you have already sent a Form W-2 with an incorrect name and/or SSN, then submit a Form W-2c (Corrected Wage and Tax Statement) to correct the mismatch. W-2c services are available through BSO Wage Reporting. There is no need to re-register for your Business Services Online (BSO) User Identification Number (User ID).

> **Remember**
> - A mismatch is not a basis, in and of itself, for you to take any adverse action against an employee, such as laying off, suspending, firing or discriminating.
> - Company policy should be applied consistently to all workers.
> - Any employer that uses the failure of the information to match SSA records to take inappropriate adverse action against a worker may violate State or Federal law.
> - The information you receive from SSNVS does not make any statement regarding a worker's immigration status.

LOGGING OUT

To log out of SSNVS:

- Select the *Logout* link at the top or bottom of any SSNVS web page.

- The *BSO Logout* web page will display.

- Select *Yes* to exit and return to the *BSO Welcome* web page.

SSNVS NEWS

The SSNVS News web page provides important updates and information regarding SSN verification.

GETTING HELP

HELP LINK

To access the *SSNVS Help* web page, you must be logged into SSNVS. The Help button is in the left hand corner of each SSNVS web page and opens in a new browser window.

CONTACT SSA

You may either speak with or e-mail a Social Security Administration (SSA) representative. To speak with a representative, refer to the Contact Information section. To e-mail a representative:

- Select the *Contact SSA* link at the top or bottom of any SSNVS web page. This will open the *Contact SSA* web page in a new browser window.

- Select "*Social Security Number Verification Service Support Team*" from the drop-down menu of the Recipient field.

- Enter your message in the Message field. Please be as specific as possible, and include:

  o The question or problem,
  o Web page details (e.g., title, URL, etc.),
  o Any error messages received,
  o A telephone number where we may contact you, and
  o Any other relevant information.

EMPLOYER REPORTING INFORMATION

Visit the Employer W-2 Filing Instructions & Information web page for additional information. Select the *Learn How to E-File Using Business Services Online* link for an online tour of BSO. You will need Microsoft Word or Adobe Reader (version 5.0 or higher recommended) to view the BSO Tutorial. For a free copy of Adobe Reader, go to www.adobe.com.

MAINTAINING YOUR REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Use the *Account Maintenance* link on the *BSO Main Menu* web page to:

- Update your contact information,
- Change your password, and
- Deactivate your User Identification Number (User ID).

These features are described below.

UPDATING YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

Select the *Update your Registration Information* link on the *Account Maintenance* web page to change or add to the contact information you provided during registration. The e-mail address you provided during registration allows the Social Security Administration (SSA) to send you an e-mail notice when it is time to change your password. In addition, you will receive *BSO News,* which provides important wage and tax reporting updates.

> **NOTE**: *The Social Security Number (SSN) and Employer Identification Number (EIN) fields cannot be updated. You must re-register to enter new information in these fields.*

CHANGING YOUR PASSWORD

For information on how to change your password, see the section "Changing Your Password" under the REGISTRATION section of this handbook.

DEACTIVATING YOUR USER ID

Select the *Deactivate Your User ID* link from the *Account Maintenance* web page to deactivate your User ID in the event that you leave the company, your User ID is disclosed to an unauthorized party or for any other reason. The prompt User ID deactivation helps to ensure the security of the information you provide to SSA.

If you require help with deactivating your User ID, or if you wish to deactivate an obsolete User ID belonging to another person, call the Employer Reporting Assistance number at the beginning of this handbook.

Deactivating your own User ID does not prevent you from obtaining a new User ID.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Activation Code - an alphanumeric value code sent by SSA to the employer or registered User ID holder when access to certain services is requested. This code must be entered on the *Activate Access to BSO Services* web page the first time the user attempts access to the requested service.

Authentication - the act of proving the identity of an individual.

BSO - Business Services Online; a suite of Internet services for businesses and employers to exchange information with SSA.

BSO News - an electronic newsletter that provides important updates and information regarding SSA Business Services Online.

Business Services Online Tutorial - an online training lesson that instructs the user on how to use BSO. It is for employers and submitters who would like to explore the business services available through BSO.

Confirmation Number - a 16-position alphanumeric number used to uniquely identify each name and SSN verification request submitted after 8/25/07.

EIN - Employer Identification Number; a nine (9)-digit number the IRS assigns to an entity to identify businesses as taxpayers.

Electronic File - a specifically formatted file submitted electronically for overnight processing via the *Submit a File for SSN Verification - Submit Your File* web page.

Employer's EIN - the Employer Identification Number of the employer under which wages are to be reported for the names and SSNs being verified.

Employer Reporting Branch (ERB) personnel - SSA employees who serve as the primary telephone answering point for general inquiries received from employers and third-party payroll service providers.

Employee Verification Service (EVS) - EVS matches your record of current or former employee names and SSNs with SSA's records.

IRS - Internal Revenue Service; a United States government agency responsible for tax collection and tax law.

IRES - Integrated Registration Services; the SSA Internet registration application for BSO.

Masking - de-identifying confidential data to safeguard the privacy of client data.

Mismatch - a name and SSN verification request that does not match SSA's records.

Password - a unique combination of eight (8) letters and numbers that must be entered to gain access to BSO.

SSA - Social Security Administration; an independent agency of the United States government that manages the United States' insurance programs, consisting of retirement, disability, survivor benefits and Supplemental Security Income.

SSN - Social Security Number; a unique nine (9)-digit number assigned by SSA to identify an individual when reporting wages, paying taxes and collecting benefits.

SSNVS - Social Security Number Verification Service; an online service provided by SSA that allows registered users to verify employee names and SSNs against SSA's records.

SSNVS News - Provides important updates and information regarding SSN verification.

Third-Party - strictly limited to organizations that contract with employers to either handle the wage reporting responsibilities or perform an administrative function directly related to annual wage reporting responsibilities of hired employees.

Tracking Number - an eight (8)-position alphanumeric number used to uniquely identify each name and SSN verification request submitted before 8/25/07.

User Certification Statement - a statement to which a BSO registered user must attest, certifying they have read, understood and agreed to the terms of use for BSO.

User ID - User Identification Number; a unique value issued by SSA to the user at BSO registration that identifies the individual. This value must be entered to gain access to BSO.

Verification - the act or process of establishing the truth, accuracy or reality of something.

APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL VERIFICATION OPTIONS

The following instructions are for employers and third-party submitters who wish to submit Social Security Number (SSN) verification requests to the Social Security Administration (SSA) via paper or telephone.

Small Paper Requests (1 to 50 Name/SSNs)

- o Submit on paper to your local SSA office. Your local office will provide you with format and submission instructions. Some offices accept faxed listings. Go to Local Office Search to find your local SSA Office.

- o This listing may be formatted across the page in a columnar format, such as:

Social Security Number	Last Name	First Name	Middle Initial	Date of Birth

Telephone Requests for Registered SSNVS Users

When the automated telephone verification service, TNEV, ends in FY2012, SSA recognizes registered SSNVS users may occasionally need to perform

verifications when the user has no online access. In those instances, registered users can call the employer 800 number (800-772-6270) and, once the user authentication with a valid UserID with an active SSNVS role is complete, an agent will provide name/SSN verification over the phone. Following are the scenarios when SSA will perform these occasional verifications.

- **Scenario 1:** The user is registered and has a telephone but does not have immediate access to a computer SSNVS and has a dire need to put a new hire to work; i.e. farmer, day worker, etc.
  Agent interaction: The agent can verify SSNs.

- **Scenario 2:** The user is registered but locked out of the Integrated Registration Services (IRES) system and an agent is unable to unlock them because of a systems problem.
  Agent interaction: If an agent is able to unlock the user's account, then the agent will not verify SSNs. The agent will advise the user to use SSNVS to verify the SSN. If the agent is unable to unlock employer, then the agent will verify SSNs until the unlock issue has been resolved.

- **Scenario 3:** The user is registered and has requested a new Business Services Online (BSO) temporary password and has not yet received it.
  Agent interaction: An agent will verify the SSN if the user is registered and had requested a temporary password.   If the employer did not request a temporary password, then the agent will not verify the SSN.

- **Scenario 4:** SSA's electronic verification systems are down and unavailable to the public.
  Agent interaction: An agent will advise the user of an estimated time for when the system will be back up, if known. The user will need to use the verification system later. Agents will not verify any SSNs in this situation unless there is an immediate need to verify an SSN.

In the above scenarios, agents will ensure users are properly authenticated (e.g., valid user, employer EIN, other pertinent information) before verifying an employee's SSN over the telephone. If the user has an active SSNVS role in the IRES system, the agent will verify SSNs. However, if the user does not have an active SSNVS role in IRES, or has a pending role in IRES, the agent will not verify SSNs since SSA has not received the positive confirmation, through the IRES role activation process, that the employer authorizes the user to perform the verifications.

What to Do If an SSN Fails to Verify

Each SSN sent in the file will be returned to you with a verification code. If the verification code is blank, the record agrees with SSA's data file. Please annotate your records that this SSN has been verified.

If the verification code is not blank, follow these steps:

1. Ask to see the employee's Social Security card to ensure that the SSN and name were correctly shown on the file.

2. Check to see whether you made a typographical error. If so, correct the data and resend to SSA in a subsequent file. Please resend only the corrected data.

3. If the SSN shown on the card and the file match, ask the employee to check with any SSA Office or call 1-800-772-1213 to determine and correct the problem. Ask the employee to give you the corrected name for your payroll records.