

Social Security



Protecting Social Security Numbers

The Social Security number is perhaps the most frequently used record-keeping number in America.

Your employers, or you, if you are self-employed, use your Social Security number to report your earnings to the Social Security Administration and the Internal Revenue Service. Your future Social Security benefits are based on your total earnings.

The Social Security Administration also uses your Social Security number to pay you Supplemental Security Income benefits, if you are eligible for these benefits.

Additionally, your Social Security Number is used by financial institutions, agencies that pay unemployment benefits, and educational loan organizations for their accounting systems. And, your Social Security number is used by other government agencies to identify your record for benefits such as Medicare and Medicaid.

Social Security is responding to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and to the problem of identity fraud by changing the way Social Security numbers and cards are issued.

The Social Security Administration is taking steps to make it harder for someone to get or use your Social Security number. It will help ensure the integrity of Social Security numbers for everyone.

Beginning June 1, 2002, before a Social Security number is issued, Social Security will contact the office that issued your birth record to make sure the record you provide is valid. This change affects people born in the U.S. who are one year or older and are either

- ✎ applying for a Social Security number for the first time or
- ✎ requesting a change in the date of birth shown in Social Security's records.

This change could add three to 12 weeks to the two weeks it currently takes Social Security to issue a card.

For more information about getting a Social Security number and card, ask for our factsheet, *Social Security—Your Number And Card* (SSA Publication No. 05-10002).

Social Security Administration
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