BSO Tutorial for Tax Year 2009

Social Security Number Verification Service (SSNVS)

Contains the following lessons:

- Request Online SSN Verification
- Submit an Electronic File for SSN Verification
- View Status and Retrieval Information
- View Social Security Number Verification Service Handbook
LESSON 1: REQUEST AN ONLINE SSN VERIFICATION

Registered users (employers and certain third-party submitters) can verify up to 10 names and Social Security Numbers (SSNs) online and receive immediate results.

In order access the Social Security Number Verification Service (SSNVS) users must first register with the Integrated Registration Services (IRES) and receive a User Identification Number (User ID) and password.

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

STEP 1: Point your browser to the Business Services Online (BSO) Welcome page:
www.socialsecurity.gov/bso/bsowelcome.htm.

STEP 2: Select the Log In button on the BSO Welcome page. The system displays the Log In to Online Services page.
STEP 3: Enter your User ID and password.

STEP 4: Select the “I have read & agree to these terms.” check box to indicate you have read the user certification statement and agree to its contents. Select the Log In button. This will open the BSO Main Menu web page.

To return to the BSO Welcome page, select the BSO Welcome link.
STEP 5: Select the **Social Security Number Verification Service** link.

**Social Security Number Verification Service**

- Request online SSN verification, or
- Submit files for SSN verification

The system displays the Social Security Number Verification Service menu page.
STEP 6: Select the **Request Online SSN Verification** link.

(To return to the BSO Main Menu page, select the **BSO Main Menu** button.)

**Request Online SSN Verification**

Manually enter and submit up to 10 Social Security Numbers and Names to be verified by Social Security. Results are returned immediately for review.

The system displays the SSNVS Attestation page.
Proper Use of Social Security Number Verification Service (SSNVS)

- SSA will verify Social Security Numbers (SSNs) solely to ensure the records of current or former employees are correct for the purposes of preparing Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form W-2 (Wage and Tax Statement).

- SSA will verify SSNs of potential new hires or contractors 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 employee-employer relationship as when one of following has occurred:
  - The employer's offer of employment and acceptance by the person being hired (even though he/she hasn’t started working), and/or
  - 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:
  - If used for newly hired workers, verify information on all newly hired workers.
  - 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 are limited to the use of SSNVS for non-wage reporting purposes, such as identity, credit checks, mortgage applications, etc.

- Anyone who knowingly and wilfully 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 do not match our records, SSA advises the following:
  - SSA does not imply that you or your employee intentionally provided incorrect information about the employee's name or SSN.

- 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; however, you may be taking off, suspending, firing, or otherwise acting against the employee.

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

Federal Privacy Act Statement for Third-Party Submitters

You can use a fee-based approach when offering SSNVS to your clients. However, caution should be taken. SSA offers services, like SSNVS, free of charge. Some companies in the private sector who offer SSNVS to their clients may charge fees for using their services. When offering such services, you should not disclose the use of misleading messages about Social Security and Medicare. Congress enacted legislation in the Social Security Independence and the Modernization Amendments Act of 1994 that broadened the existing deterrents. The prohibitions are codified at Title 42 of U.S. Code, Section 1320b-10. You should ensure that you are aware of these legal provisions and conform to their requirements and:

- Be cautious not to suggest to your clients that the service is only available through you;
- Advise all clients that the service is available at no cost from SSA and that this service is not a unique or exclusive arrangement between SSA and your company;
- Be sure not to give any impression when describing your SSNVS service to your clients that your company has an arrangement that allows direct access to SSA databases, program software, etc.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

This information collection meets the clearance requirements of 44 U.S.C. § 3507, as amended by Section 2 of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. You do not need to answer these questions unless we display a valid Office of Management and Budget control number. We estimate that it will take about 2 minutes to read the instructions, gather the facts, and answer the questions. You may send comments on the amount of time needed to complete the form to: SSA, 1338 Annex Building, Baltimore, MD 21205-0051.

User Certification for Use of SSNVS - Please Read Carefully!

I certify that:

- I have read and understand the above section titled "Proper Use of Social Security Number Verification Service (SSNVS)" and the "Federal Privacy Act Statement for Third-Party Submitters".

- I am verifying SSNs solely to ensure that the records of my client's or my current or former employer is correct for the purposes of Form W-2 reporting.

- I am authorized, under valid contracts with all outside employers of any individual for whom I will request SSN verification, to transmit employee SSNs and identifying information and to receive the results of SSNVS;

- I have the authority from my employer (or am the owner of the company) to transmit employee SSNs and identifying information and to receive the results of SSNVS.

By selecting the "I Accept" button, you certify that you have read, understand and agree to the user certification of Business Services Online.
**STEP 7:** Select the **I Accept** button to indicate you have read the SSNVS user certification statement and agree to its contents. The system will then display the SSN Verification page. (To return to the BSO Main Menu page, select the **I DO NOT Accept** button.)

**STEP 8:** In the Employer’s EIN field place the EIN of the employer under which wages are to be reported for the names and SSNs being verified. Complete one (1) row for each name and SSN you would like to verify. You must complete all mandatory fields in at least one (1) row before selecting the **Submit** button.
The Employer's EIN, SSN, First Name and Last Name fields are mandatory.

The Middle Name, Suffix, Date of Birth (DOB) and Gender fields are optional.

**STEP 9:** Select the **Submit** button to process the data (Otherwise, select the **Clear Form** button to delete the data.). The system displays the SSN Verification Results page.

This page will display:
• Left-Hand Menu – the Employer’s EIN, total number of records submitted, total number of failed verifications, total number of deceased records and total number of verified records.

• Body – All of the information submitted by the user plus the verification results code.

*If any problems occur with the submission the system will display the Convert to Batch page. Select the Overnight button and SSA will process your request and send you the results within 2 business days. Follow the instructions in Lesson 2: Submit an Electronic File for SSN Verification for more information.*

**STEP 10:** The SSN submitted for verification matches SSA’s records.

The user will see a “-“ in the Verification Results field.

*For security reasons, if the record has a “-” Verification Result, the first five (5) positions of the SSN will be masked with an “X”.*

**STEP 11:** The SSN submitted for verification matches SSA’s records but our records indicate the individual is deceased.

The user will see the word “Deceased” in the Results column and a “-“in the Verification Results field.

**STEP 12:** If there are failed verifications, the number in the Verification Results column displays the reason for the failed verification.

The following are failed verification result code descriptions:

1  SSN not in file (never issued).
2  Name and DOB match; gender code does not match.
3  Name and gender code match; DOB does not match.
4  Name matches: DOB and gender code do not match.
5  Name does not match; DOB and gender code not checked.
6  SSN did not verify; other reason.
For security reasons, if the record has a verification results code of 2, 3, 4 or 6, the first five (5) positions of the SSN will be masked with an "X".

NOTE

If the data does not match SSA’s records, select the What to do if an SSN Fails to Verify link to view important information.

STEP 13: Select the Verify More SSNs link to verify additional SSNs (To return to the BSO Main Menu page, select the BSO Main Menu link.).
LESSON 2: SUBMIT AN ELECTRONIC FILE FOR SSN VERIFICATION

Follow the instructions below to upload a file containing names and SSNs to be verified by the SSA. The results are usually available the next government business day.

**STEP 1:** Point your browser to the BSO Welcome page: www.socialsecurity.gov/bso/bsowelcome.htm.

**STEP 2:** Select the Log In button on the BSO Welcome page. The system displays the Log In to Online Services page.

**STEP 3:** Enter your User ID and password.

**STEP 4:** Select the “I have read & agree to these terms.” check box to indicate you have read the user certification statement and agree to its contents. Select the Log In button (To return to the BSO Welcome page, select the BSO Welcome link). The system displays the BSO Main Menu page.
STEP 5: Select the Social Security Number Verification Service link.

**Social Security Number Verification Service**
Request online SSN verification, or
Submit files for SSN verification

The system displays the Social Security Number Verification Service menu page.
STEP 6: Select the **Submit an Electronic File for SSN Verification** link.

(To return to the BSO Main Menu page, select the **BSO Main Menu** button.)

**Submit an Electronic File for SSN Verification**
Submit a file containing Names and Social Security Numbers to be verified by Social Security. The data in the file must be in the correct format.

The system displays the SSNVS Attestation page.
STEP 7: Select the I Accept button after reading the conditions defined on the SSNVS Attestation page. The system displays the Submit a File for SSN Verification – Before You Start page. (To return to the BSO Main Menu page, select the I DO NOT Accept button.)
STEP 8: Select **Continue** after reading the information on the Submit a File for SSN Verification – Before You Start page. The system displays the Submit a File for SSN Verification – Submit Your File page.

(To return to the BSO Main Menu page, select the **BSO Main Menu** button.)
STEP 9: Enter the Employer's EIN of the employer under which wages are to be reported for the names and SSNs being verified. If you know the name of the file you wish to upload, type the file name in the Select file field or select a file from your local or network directory by selecting the Browse button.

- The file should contain no more than 250,000 SSN verification requests.
- If you have over 500 SSN verification requests or you have a slow connection it is recommended that you zip your file using WinZip, PKZIP, or another zip-compatible program.

STEP 10: Select the Submit button. The system displays a file upload in process pop-up window.
Once the file has been transferred, the system displays the Submit a File for SSN Verification – Confirmation page.

![Submit a File for SSN Verification - Confirmation](image-url)
Be sure to keep a record of your confirmation number. You will need it to track the status of your submitted file.

**TIPS**

**STEP 11:** Select the **OK** button in the pop-up window to print the Submit a File for SSN Verification - Confirmation page.

Otherwise select the **Cancel** button to close the pop-up window

**STEP 12:** Select the **Submit Another File** button to submit another file or select the **BSO Main Menu** button to return to the BSO Main Menu page.
Lesson 3: View Status and Retrieval Information

Follow the instructions below to view the status of electronic files submitted for overnight processing.

**STEP 1:** Point your browser to the BSO Welcome page:
www.socialsecurity.gov/bso/bsowelcome.htm.

**STEP 2:** Select the Log In button on the BSO Welcome page. The system displays the Log In to Online Services page.

**STEP 3:** Enter your User ID and password.

**STEP 4:** Select the “I have read & agree to these terms.” check box to indicate you have read the user certification statement and agree to its contents. Select the Log In button (To return to the BSO Welcome page, select the BSO Welcome link). The system displays the BSO Main Menu page.
STEP 5: Select the Social Security Number Verification Service link.

Social Security Number Verification Service
Request online SSN verification, or
Submit files for SSN verification

The system displays the Social Security Number Verification Service menu page.
**STEP 6:** Select the **View Status and Retrieval Information** link.

(To return to the BSO Main Menu page, select the **BSO Main Menu** button.)

**View Status and Retrieval Information**

View the current status of a submission.

The system displays the SSNVS Attestation page.
Social Security Number Verification System (SSNVS)

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

- SSA will verify Social Security Numbers (SSNs) solely to ensure the records of current or former employees are correct for the purposes of preparing Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form W-2 and/or
- 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 employer-employee relationship has been established. SSA defines the existence of an employer-employee relationship as when one of the following has occurred:
  - The employer's offer of employment and acceptance by the person being hired (even though he/she hasn't started working), and/or
  - 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:
  - If used for newly hired workers, verify information on all newly hired workers.
  - 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 social wage reporting responsibilities of hired employees. It is suggested that organizations have a written agreement that is executed by the third-party contractor 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 do not match our records, SSA advises the following:
  - This response does not imply that you or your employee intentionally provided incorrect information about the employee's name or SSN.
  - 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, including the firing, suspending, laying off, or terminating an employee.

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

Federal Privacy Act Statement for Third-Party Submitters

You can use a fee-based approach when offering SSNVS to your clients. However, caution should be taken: SSA offers services, like SSNVS, free of charge. Some companies in the private sector charge fees for these services. SSL is intended 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 statutes. The prohibitions are codified at Title 5 U.S.C. § 552a(a) of the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, and Section 1320b-10 of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. You should ensure that you are aware of these legal provisions and conform to their requirements.

- Advise all clients 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
- The service is available at no cost from SSA. Advise your clients that your company has an arrangement that allows direct access to SSA databases, programs, and software.

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- I am verifying SSNs solely to ensure that the records of my client's or my current or former employees are correct for the purposes of Form W-2 reporting,
- I am authorized, under valid contracts with all outside employers of any individual for whom I will request SSN verification, to transmit employee SSNs and identifying information and to receive the results of SSNVS,
- I have the authority from my employer (or am the owner of the company) to transmit employee SSNs and identifying information and to receive the results of SSNVS.

By selecting the "I Accept" button, you certify that you have read, understand and agree to the user certification of Business Services Online.

[Buttons: I Accept, I DO NOT Accept]
STEP 7: Select the I Accept button after reading the conditions defined on the SSNVS Attestation page. The system displays the Status and Retrieval page. (To return to the BSO Main Menu page, select the I DO NOT Accept button.)

![SSNVS Status and Retrieval](image)

STEP 8: Select one of the following options to view the status of your submitted file.

- **Option 1**: Enter the specific tracking or confirmation number to view the status of an individual file.
- **Option 2**: Enter a start and end date to view the status of files submitted within a date range.
- **Option 3**: View the 100 most recent SSNVS file submissions associated with your User ID.

**TIPS**: If the file you are searching for is not displayed, focus your search by using Option 1 or 2.
**STEP 9:** Select the corresponding **Submit** button. The system displays the Status and Retrieval Results page.
**STEP 10:** The status and retrieval options 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.

Select the **Download/View** link in the Retrieval Option(s) column to view your results.

- **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.**

**STEP 11:** Select the link in the Status column for more information about the status of your submission, if applicable.

- **The Available Through column displays the date the Status and/or Results are available to the user.**
- **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, the user can only view the status of their files.**
- **During the period files are available, you can download or view them an unlimited number of times.**
Lesson 4: View the SSNVS Handbook

The SSNVS Handbook can either be viewed by logging-in to the SSNVS application or by selecting the SSNVS Handbook links below.

- SSNVS Information and Instructions page – [http://www.ssa.gov/employer/ssnv.htm#overview](http://www.ssa.gov/employer/ssnv.htm#overview)

To access the SSNVS handbook from the SSNVS application, follow the instructions below.

**STEP 1:** Point your browser to the BSO Welcome page: [www.socialsecurity.gov/bso/bsowelcome.htm](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/bso/bsowelcome.htm).

**STEP 2:** Select the **Log In** button on the BSO Welcome page. The system displays the Log In to Online Services page.
STEP 3: Enter your User ID and password.

STEP 4: Select the “I have read & agree to these terms.” check box to indicate you have read the user certification statement and agree to its contents. Select the Log In button (To return to the BSO Welcome page, select the BSO Welcome link). The system displays the BSO Main Menu page.
STEP 5: Select the Social Security Number Verification Service link.

Social Security Number Verification Service
Request online SSN verification, or
Submit files for SSN verification

The system displays the Social Security Number Verification Service menu page.
STEP 6: Select the View Social Security Number Verification Service Handbook link.

(To return to the BSO Main Menu page, select the BSO Main Menu button.)

View Social Security Number Verification Service Handbook
Review additional information on submitting files to Social Security for verification and retrieving the results of the submissions.

The system displays the SSNVS Handbook.