

# **Revenue Procedure 2003-30**

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## **Publication 1141**

### **General Rules and Specifications For Substitute Forms W-2 and W-3**



Department of the Treasury  
**Internal Revenue Service**

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**Note:** This revenue procedure will be reprinted as the next revision of IRS Publication 1141, *General Rules and Specifications for Substitute Forms W-2 and W-3*.

26 CFR 601.602: Tax forms and instructions. (Also Part I, Sections 6041, 6051, 6071, 6081, 6091; 1.6041-1, 1.6041-2, 31.6051-1, 31.6051-2, 31.6071(a)-1, 31.6081(a)-1, 31.6091-1.)

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**Part A. General**

**Section 1. Purpose**

**.01** The purpose of this revenue procedure is to provide general rules and specifications of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Social Security Administration (SSA) for paper substitute forms for **Form W-2, Wage and Tax Statement**, and **Form W-3, Transmittal of Wage and Tax Statements**, for wages paid during the **2003** calendar year.

**.02** For purposes of this revenue procedure, a substitute form is one that is not printed by the IRS. A substitute Form W-2 or W-3 **must** conform to the specifications in this revenue

procedure to be acceptable to the IRS and the SSA. No IRS office is authorized to allow deviations from this revenue procedure. Preparers should also refer to the separate *2003 Instructions for Forms W-2 and W-3* for details on how to complete these forms. See Part C, Section 4, for information on obtaining the official IRS forms and instructions. See Part B, Section 2, for requirements for the copies of substitute forms furnished to employees.

**.03** The IRS maintains a centralized call-site at its Martinsburg Computing Center (IRS/MCC) to answer questions related to information returns (Forms W-2, W-3, 1099 series, 1096, etc.). You can reach the call-site at 304-263-8700 (**not a toll-free number**) or 1-866-455-7438 (**toll-free**). The Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD) number is 304-267-3367 (**not a toll-free number**). The hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. Eastern Time. You may also send questions to the call-site via the Internet at [mccirp@irs.gov](mailto:mccirp@irs.gov). IRS/MCC does **not** process Forms W-2. Forms W-2 prepared on paper **and/or** magnetically/electronically must be filed with the SSA. IRS/MCC does, however, process waiver requests (**Form 8508, Request for Waiver From Filing Information Returns on Magnetic Media**) and extension of time to file requests (**Form 8809, Request for Extension of Time To File Information Returns**) for Forms W-2 and requests for an extension of time to furnish the employee copies of Form W-2. See **Pub 1220, Specifications for Filing Forms 1098, 1099, 5498 and W-2G Magnetically or Electronically**, for information on waivers and extensions of time.

**.04** The following publications provide detailed filing procedures for certain information returns:

- *2003 Instructions for Forms W-2 and W-3*,
- *Instructions for Forms W-2c and W-3c (Rev. December 2002)*, and
- **Pub 1223, General Rules and Specifications for Substitute Forms W-2c and W-3c**.

## **Section 2. Nature of Changes**

**.01** Because there were few changes to the format of Forms W-2 and W-3 since the last revision of Pub. 1141, most of the changes to this document are editorial in nature.

**.02** Redundancies were eliminated as much as possible.

**.03** The IRS plans to change the dimensions of the 2004 Forms W-2 and W-3 to match those shown for laser-printed forms in Exhibits E and F. Details will be posted under “What’s Hot in Tax Forms, Pubs, and Other Tax Products” on the IRS web site at [www.irs.gov/formspubs](http://www.irs.gov/formspubs).

**.04** The web address for the Social Security Administration has changed to [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).

**.05** The 4-digit vendor code on the laser-printed Forms W-2 and W-3 must be preceded by

four zeros and a slash (0000/).

### **Section 3. General Rules for Filing Forms W-2 or W-3 Magnetically or Electronically**

**.01** Employers **must** file Forms W-2 (Copy A) with the SSA electronically or with magnetic media if they file 250 or more calendar year 2003 Forms W-2 (Copy A). The SSA publication **MMREF-1, *Magnetic Media Reporting and Electronic Filing***, contains specifications and procedures for filing Form W-2 information with the SSA magnetically or electronically. Employers are cautioned to obtain the most recent revision of MMREF-1 (and supplements) due to any subsequent changes in the specifications and procedures.

**.02** You may obtain a copy of the MMREF-1 by:

- Writing to:

Social Security Administration  
OCO, DES; Attn: Employer Reporting Services Center  
300 North Greene Street  
Baltimore, MD 21290-0300

- Accessing the SSA web site at [www.socialsecurity.gov/employer](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/employer).
- Calling your local SSA Employer Service Liaison Officer (ESLO) (the ESLOs' telephone numbers are available at [www.socialsecurity.gov/employer](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/employer)) or by calling 1-800-772-6270, or
- Using the SSA Business Services Online (BSO) at [www.socialsecurity.gov/employer](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/employer).

**.03 Magnetic media or electronic filers do not file a paper Form W-3.** See the SSA publication MMREF-1 for guidance on transmitting Form W-2 information to SSA magnetically or electronically.

**.04** Employers who do *not* comply with the magnetic media or electronic filing requirements for Form W-2 and who are not granted a waiver may be subject to penalties. Employers who file Form W-2 information with the SSA on magnetic media or electronically **must not** send the same data to the SSA on paper Forms W-2. Any duplicate reporting may subject filers to unnecessary contacts by the SSA or IRS.

### **Section 4. General Rules for Paper Forms W-2 And W-3**

**.01** Employers not filing magnetically or electronically **must** file a paper Form W-2 (Copy A) and Form W-3 with the SSA using either the official IRS form or a substitute form that **exactly** meets the specifications shown in Parts B and C of this revenue procedure.

**Note:** *Substitute territorial forms (W-2GU, W-2VI, W-2AS) should also conform to the specifications as outlined in this revenue procedure. These forms require the form designation ("W-2AS," "W-2GU," "W-2VI") on Copy A to be in black ink."*

Employers who file with the SSA magnetically, electronically, or on paper may design their own statements to furnish to employees. These employee statements designed by employers **must** comply with the requirements shown in Parts B and C.

**.02** Red-ink substitute forms that **completely** conform to the specifications contained in this revenue procedure may be privately printed **without prior approval** from the IRS or the SSA. Forms **cannot** be submitted to the IRS or the SSA for specific approval, except for the black-and-white laser-printed forms submitted to SSA for initial approval (see Section 1B of Part B).

**.03** Substitute forms filed with the SSA and substitute copies furnished to employees that do not conform completely to these specifications are unacceptable. Forms W-2 (Copy A) and W-3 filed with the SSA that do not conform may be returned. In addition, **penalties may be assessed** for not complying with the form specifications.

**.04** If you are uncertain of any specification and want it clarified, submit a letter citing the specification, state your interpretation of that specification, and enclose an example (if appropriate) of how the form would appear if produced using your understanding of the specification.

**.05** Any questions about the red-ink Form W-2 and Form W-3 should be sent to:

Internal Revenue Service  
Attn: Substitute Forms Coordinator  
W:CAR:MP:T:T:SP  
Room 6411  
1111 Constitution Ave N.W.  
Washington, DC 20224

Any questions about the black-and-white laser-printed Form W-2 (Copy A) and Form W-3 should be sent to:

Social Security Administration  
Data Operations Center  
Attn: Laser Forms Approval, Room 359  
1150 E. Mountain Drive  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702-7997

**Note:** *You should receive a response within **30** days from either the IRS or the SSA.*

.06 Forms W-2 and W-3 are subject to annual review and possible change. Therefore, employers are cautioned against overstocking supplies of privately-printed substitutes.

.07 Separate instructions for Forms W-2 and W-3 are provided in the *2003 Instructions for Forms W-2 and W-3*. Form W-3 should be used only to transmit paper Forms W-2 (Copy A). Form W-3 is a single sheet including only essential filing information. **Be sure to make a copy of your completed Form W-3 for your records.** Copies of the current year official IRS Forms W-2 and W-3, and the instructions for those forms may be obtained from most IRS offices or by calling 1-800-829-3676. The IRS provides only cutsheet sets of Forms W-2 and cutsheets of Form W-3. The instructions and information copies of the forms may be found on the IRS web site at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

.08 Because substitute Forms W-2 (Copy A) and W-3 are machine-imaged and scanned by the SSA, the forms **must** meet the same specifications as the official IRS Forms W-2 and W-3 (as shown in the exhibits).

## Part B. Specifications for Substitute Forms W-2 and W-3

### Section 1A. Specifications for “Red-Ink” Substitute Form W-2 (Copy A) and Form W-3 Filed With the SSA

.01 The official, IRS-printed red drop-out ink Form W-2 (Copy A) and W-3 and their exact substitutes are referred to as “**red-ink.**” Employers may file substitute Forms W-2 and W-3 with the SSA. The substitute forms **must** be exact replicas of the official IRS forms with respect to layout and content because they will be read by scanner equipment.

.02 Paper used for substitute Form W-2 (Copy A) and Form W-3 (cutsheets and continuous-pinfed forms) that are to be filed with the SSA must be white 100% bleached chemical wood, **18-20 pound paper only**, optical character recognition (OCR) bond produced in accordance with the specifications shown as follows:

- Acidity: Ph value, average, not less than..... 4.5
- Basis Weight: 17 x 22 inch 500 cut sheets, pound.....18-20
- Metric equivalent – gm./sq. meter..... 68-75  
(a tolerance of +5 pct. Is allowed)
- Stiffness: Average, each direction, not less than—milligrams  
Cross direction ..... 50  
Machine direction ..... 80
- Tearing strength: Average, each direction, not less than—grams..... 40
- Opacity: Average, not less than—percent..... 82
- Reflectivity: Average, not less than—percent..... 68

- Thickness: Average—inch..... 0.0038  
Metric equivalent—mm..... 0.097  
(a tolerance of +0.0005 inch (0.0127 mm) is allowed) Paper cannot vary more than 0.0004 inch (0.0102 mm) from one edge to the other.
- Porosity: Average, not less than—seconds ..... 10
- Finish (smoothness): Average, each side—seconds ..... 20-55  
(for information only) the Sheffield equivalent—units.....170-d200
- Dirt: Average, each side, not to exceed—parts per million ..... 8

**Note:** *Reclaimed fiber in any percentage is permitted, provided the requirements of this standard are met.*

**.03** All printing of substitute Forms W-2 (Copy A) and W-3 **must** be in Flint red OCR dropout ink **except** as specified below. The following **must** be printed in **nonreflective black ink**:

- Identifying number "22222" (for Form W-2) or "33333" (for Form W-3) at the top of the forms.
- Tax year at the bottom of the forms using 24-point OCR-A font.
- The four (4) corner register marks on the forms.
- The jurat and "Signature, Title, Date" line at the bottom of Form W-3.
- The form identification number ("W-3") at the bottom of Form W-3.
- All the instructions below Form W-3 beginning with "Send this entire page...." line to the bottom of Form W-3.

**.04** As in the past, Form W-2 (Copy A) and Form W-3 may be generated using a laser-printer by following all guidelines and specifications (also see Section 1B). In general, regardless of the method of entering data, the use of black ink on Forms W-2 and W-3 provides better readability for processing by scanning equipment. Colors other than black are not easily read by the scanner and/or may result in delays/errors in the processing of Forms W-2 and W-3. The printing of the data should be centered within the boxes. Type **must** be substantially identical in size (not below 10-point) and shape to the official form. All other printing, including shading and dollar signs for money boxes, on Form W-2 (Copy A) and W-3 **must** be in Flint J-6983 **red** OCR dropout ink or an exact match.

**.05** The vertical and horizontal spacing for all federal payment and data boxes on Forms W-2 and W-3 **must** meet specifications. On Form W-3 and Form W-2 (Copy A), all the perimeter rules **must** be 1-point (0.014-inch), while all other rules must be one-half point (0.007-inch). Vertical rules **must** be parallel to the left edge of the form; horizontal rules parallel to the top edge.

**.06** Employers filing Forms W-2 (Copy A) with the SSA on paper **must** also file a Form W-3. Form W-3 **must** be the same width (8.0 inches) as the Form W-2. One Form W-3 is printed on standard-size, 8.5 x 11-inch paper. Two official Forms W-2 (Copy A) are

contained on a single page that is 8.5 inches wide by 11 inches deep (exclusive of any snap-stubs). The official red-ink Form W-3 and Form W-2 (Copy A) are 8.0 inches wide.

**.07** The top margin for the Form W-2 (Copy A) and Form W-3 is .375 inches (3/8 inch). The right margin **must** be .2 inches and the left margin is .3 inches (plus or minus .0313 inches). Margins **must** be free of all printing.

**.08** The identifying numbers are "22222" for Form W-2 (Copies A and 1) and "33333" for Form W-3. No printing should appear anywhere near the identifying numbers. For both Form W-2 (Copy A) and Form W-3, the combination width of box a (Control number) and the box containing the identifying number (22222) **must** always be 2.54 inches.

**Note:** *The identifying number **must** be printed in nonreflective black ink in OCR-A font of 10 characters per inch.*

**.09** The depth of the individual scannable image on a page **must** be the same as that on the official IRS forms. For Form W-2, the total depth of an individual form **must** be 4.94 inches. The depth of the Form W-3 on a page **must** be 4.8 inches.

**.10** Continuous-pinfed Forms W-2 (Copy A) must be separated into 11-inch deep pages. The pinfed strips must be removed when Forms W-2 are filed with the SSA. The two Copies A of Form W-2 on the 11-inch page **must not** be separated (only the pages are to be separated (burst)). The words "Do Not Cut, Fold, or Staple Forms on This Page" **must** be printed **twice** between the two Copies A in Flint red OCR dropout ink. Perforations are required on all other copies (Copies 1, B, C, 2, and D) to enable the separation of individual forms.

**.11** Box 12 of Form W-2 (Copy A) contains four entry boxes — 12a, 12b, 12c, and 12d. Do **not** make more than one entry per box. Enter your first code in box 12a (i.e., enter Code D in box 12a, not 12d, if it is your first entry). If more than four items need to be reported in box 12, use a second Form W-2 to report the additional items (see "Multiple forms" in the *2003 Instructions for Forms W-2 and W-3*). Do not report the same federal tax data to the SSA on more than one Form W-2 (Copy A). However, repeat the identifying information (employer's name, address, and EIN) on each additional form.

**.12** The checkboxes in box 13 of Form W-2 (Copy A) must be .14 inches each; the spacing on each side of the 3 checkboxes is .36 inches; the space after the 3<sup>rd</sup> checkbox is .46 inches (see Exhibit A). The checkboxes in box b of Form W-3 **must** be .14 inches (see Exhibit B).

**Note:** *More than 50% of an applicable checkbox **must** be covered by an "X."*

**.13** All substitute Forms W-2 (Copy A) and W-3 in the red-ink format must have the tax year, form number, and form title printed on the bottom face of each form using identical



type to that of the official IRS form. The red-ink substitute Form W-2 (Copy A) and Form W-3 **must** have the form producer's EIN entered to the left of "Department of the Treasury."

.14 The words "For Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see separate instructions," **must** be printed in Flint red OCR dropout ink in the same location as on Form W-2 (Copy A). The *2003 Instructions for Forms W-2 and W-3* contain the Privacy Act Notice previously shown on the Form W-3.

.15 The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Number **must** be printed on substitute Form W-3 and on each ply of substitute Form W-2 in the same location as the official IRS forms.

.16 All substitute Forms W-3 must include the instructions that are printed on the same sheet below the official IRS form.

.17 The back of substitute Form W-2 (Copy A) and Form W-3 **must** be free of all printing.

.18 All copies must be **clearly legible**. Hot wax and cold carbon spots **are not** permitted for Form W-2 (Copy A). **Interleaved carbon** should be black and must be of good quality to assure legibility on all copies and to avoid smudging. Fading must be minimized to assure legibility.

.19 Chemical transfer paper is permitted for Form W-2 (Copy A) only if the following standards are met:

- Only **chemically-backed** paper is acceptable for Form W-2 (Copy A). Front and back chemically-treated paper cannot be processed properly by scanning equipment.
- Chemically-transferred images must be black.
- Carbon-coated forms are not permitted.

.20 The Government Printing Office (GPO) symbol and the Catalog Number (Cat. No.) must be deleted from substitute Form W-2 (Copy A) and Form W-3.

## **Section 1B. Specifications for "Laser-Printed" Substitute Form W-2 (Copy A) and Form W-3 Filed With the SSA**

.01 The SSA-approved, laser-printed, black-and-white Forms W-2 (Copy A) and W-3 are referred to as "**laser-printed.**" Specifications for the laser-printed black-and-white Forms W-2 (Copy A) and W-3 are similar to the red-ink forms (Part B, Section 1A) except for the following items and the actual form dimensions (in Exhibits E and F). Exhibits are samples only and must not be downloaded to meet tax obligations.

1. Forms must be printed on 8.5 x 11-inch single-sheet paper only, **not** on continuous-feed using a laser printer. **There must be two Forms W-2 printed on a page.** There must be no horizontal perforations between the two Copies A of Form W-2 on each page.
2. All forms and data must be printed in nonreflective black ink only.
3. **The data and forms must be programmed to print simultaneously.** Forms cannot be produced separately from wage data entries.
4. The forms must **not** contain corner register marks.
5. The forms must **not** contain any shaded areas including those boxes that are entirely shaded on the red-ink forms.
6. Identifying numbers on both Form W-2 (**22222**) and Form W-3 (**33333**) must be preprinted in 14-point Arial bold font.
7. The form numbers ("W-2" and "W-3") must be in 18-point Arial font. The tax year ("2003") on Forms W-2 and W-3 must be in 20-point Arial font.
8. No part of the box titles or the data printed on the forms may touch any of the vertical or horizontal lines, nor should any of the data intermingle with the box titles. The data should be centered in the boxes.
9. Do not print any information in the margins of the laser-printed forms (i.e., do not print "DO NOT STAPLE OR FOLD" in the top margin of Form W-3).
10. The word "Code" must **not** appear in box 12 on Form W-2 (Copy A).
11. A 4-digit vendor code preceded by four zeros and a slash (i.e., 0000/1234) must appear in 12-point Arial font under the tax year in place of the Cat. No. on Form W-2 (Copy A) and in the bottom right corner of the "For Official Use Only" box at the bottom of Form W-3. Do **not** display the form producer's EIN to the left of "Department of the Treasury." The vendor code will be used to identify the form producer.
12. Do not print Catalog Numbers (Cat. No.) on either form (10134D for Form W-2; 10159Y for Form W-3).
13. Do **not** print the checkboxes in:
  - Box b of Form W-3. The "X" should be programmed to be printed and centered directly below the applicable "Kind of Payer."
  - The "Void" box of Form W-2 (Copy A). The "X" should be programmed to be printed to the right of "Void" because of space limitations.
  - Box 13 of Form W-2 (Copy A). The "X" should be programmed to be printed and centered directly below the applicable box title.
14. Do **not** print dollar signs. If there are no money amounts being reported, the entire field should be left blank.

**.02** You **must** submit samples of your laser-printed substitute forms to the SSA. Only laser-printed, black-and-white substitute Forms W-2 (Copy A) and W-3 for tax year 2003 will be accepted for approval by the SSA. Questions regarding other forms (i.e., Forms W-2c, W-3c, 1099 series, 1096, etc.) **must be** directed to the IRS.

**.03** You will be required to send one set of blank and one set of dummy-data, laser-printed substitute Forms W-2 (Copy A) and W-3. Sample data entries should be filled in to the maximum length for each box entry using numeric data or alpha data depending upon the type being entered. Include in your submission the name, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address of a contact person who can answer questions regarding your sample forms.

**.04** To receive approval, you may first contact the SSA at [laser.forms@ssa.gov](mailto:laser.forms@ssa.gov) to obtain a template and further instructions in pdf or Excel format. You may also send your 2003 sample, laser-printed substitute forms to:

Social Security Administration  
Data Operations Center  
Attn: Laser Forms Approval, Room 359  
1150 E. Mountain Drive  
Wilkes-Barre, PA. 18702-7997

Send your sample forms via private mail carrier or certified mail in order to verify their receipt. You can expect approval (or disapproval) by the SSA within **30** days of receipt of your sample forms.

**.05** The 4-digit vendor code preceded by four zeros and a slash (0000/) must be preprinted on the sample, laser-printed substitute forms. **Forms not containing a vendor code will be rejected and will not be submitted for testing or approval.** If you do not have a vendor code, you may contact the National Association of Computerized Tax Processors via e-mail at [president@nactp.org](mailto:president@nactp.org).

**.06** If you use forms produced by a vendor and have questions concerning approval, do **not** send the forms to the SSA for approval. Instead, contact the software vendor to obtain a copy of SSA's dated approval notice supplied to that vendor.

## **Section 2. Requirements for Substitute Forms Furnished to Employees (Copies B, C, and 2 of Form W-2)**

**.01** All employers (including those who file on magnetic media or electronically) must furnish employees with at least two copies of Form W-2 (three or more for employees required to file a state, city, or local income tax return). The following rules are guidelines for preparing employee copies.

The dimensions of these copies (Copies B, C, and 2), but not Copy A, may differ from the dimensions of the official IRS form to allow space for reporting additional information, including additional entries such as withholding for health insurance, union dues, bonds, or

charity in box 14. The limitation of a maximum of **four items** in box 12 of Form W-2 applies **only** to **Copy A** that is filed with the SSA.

**Note:** *Printers are cautioned that the rules in Part B, Section 2, apply only to employee copies of Form W-2 (Copies B, C, and 2). Paper filers who send Forms W-2 (Copy A) to the SSA **must** follow the requirements in Part B, Sections 1A and 1B.*

**.02** The **minimum** allowable dimensions for employee copies **only** (not Copy A) of Form W-2 are 2.67 inches deep by 4.25 inches wide. The **maximum** allowable dimensions are no more than 6.5 inches deep by no more than 8.5 inches wide.

**Note:** *The maximum and minimum size specifications are for tax year 2003 only and may change in future years.*

**.03** Either horizontal or vertical format is permitted (see Exhibit D).

**.04** The paper for all copies **must** be white. The substitute Form W-2 (Copy B), which employees are instructed to attach to their federal income tax return, must be at least 12-pound paper (basis 17 x 22-500).

**.05** Employee copies of Form W-2 (Copies B, C, and 2), including those that are printed on a single sheet of paper, **must** be easily separated. Including perforations between the individual copies satisfies this requirement, but using scissors to separate Copies B, C, and 2 does not.

**.06** Interleaved carbon and chemical transfer paper employee copies must be **clearly legible**. Hot wax and cold-carbon spots **are not** permitted for employee copies. All copies **must** be able to be photocopied. **Interleaved carbon** should be black and must be of good quality to assure legibility on all copies and to avoid smudging. Fading must be minimized to assure legibility.

**.07** The electronic tax logo on the IRS official employee copies is **not** required on any of the substitute form copies. To avoid confusion and questions by employees, employers are encouraged to delete the identifying number (22222) and the word "Void" and its associated checkbox from the employee copies of Form W-2.

**.08** All substitute employee copies **must** contain the boxes, box numbers, and box titles that, **when applicable**, match the official IRS Form W-2. However, certain **core information** is required. The placement, numbering, and size of this information is specified as follows:

- The items and box numbers that constitute the core data are:
  - Box 1 - Wages, tips, other compensation,
  - Box 2 - Federal income tax withheld,
  - Box 3 - Social security wages,

Box 4 - Social security tax withheld,  
Box 5 - Medicare wages and tips, and  
Box 6 - Medicare tax withheld.

The core boxes **must** be printed in the exact order shown on the official IRS form.

- The core data boxes (1 through 6) **must** be placed in the upper right of the form. Substitute vertical-format copies may have the core data across the top of the form (see Exhibit D). **In no instance**, will boxes or other information be permitted to the right of the core data.
- The form title, number, or copy designation (B, C, or 2) may be at the top of the form. Also, a reversed or blocked-out area to accommodate a postal permit number or other postal considerations is allowed in the upper-right.
- Boxes 1 through 6 **must** each be a minimum of 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches wide x 1/4 inch deep.
- Other required boxes are:
  - b) Employer identification number (EIN),
  - c) Employer's name, address, and ZIP code,
  - d) Employee's social security number,
  - e) Employee's name, and
  - f) Employee's address and ZIP code.

Identifying items **must** be present on the form and be in boxes similar to those on the official IRS form. However, they may be placed in any location other than the top or upper right. You do not need to use the lettering system (b-f) used on the official IRS form. The employer identification number (EIN) may be included with the employer's name and address and not in a separate box.

**Note:** *Box a ("Control number") is not required.*

**.09** All copies of Form W-2 **must** clearly show the form number, the form title, and the tax year prominently displayed together in one area of the form. The title of Form W-2 is "Wage and Tax Statement." It is recommended (but not required) that this be located on the bottom left of Form W-2. The reference to the "Department of the Treasury - Internal Revenue Service" **must** be on all copies of Form W-2 provided to the employee. It is recommended (but not required) that this be located on the bottom right of Form W-2.

**.10** If the substitute employee copies are labeled, the forms **must** contain the applicable description:

- "Copy B, To Be Filed With Employee's FEDERAL Tax Return."
- "Copy C, for EMPLOYEE'S RECORDS."
- "Copy 2, To Be Filed With Employee's State, City, or Local Income Tax Return."

It is recommended (but not required) that these be located on the lower-left of Form W-2. If the substitute employee copies are **not labeled** as to the disposition of the copies, then written notification using similar wording **must** be provided to each employee.

.11 The tax year (2003) must be clearly printed in **nonreflective black ink** on all copies of substitute Form W-2. It is recommended (but not required) that this information be in the middle at the bottom of the Form W-2. The use of 24-pt. OCR-A font is recommended (but not required).

.12 Boxes 1, 2, and 9 (if applicable) on **Copy B** must be outlined in **bold** 2-point rule or highlighted in some manner to distinguish them. If "Allocated tips" are being reported, it is recommended (but not required) that box 8 also be outlined. If reported, "Social security tips" (box 7) **must** be shown separately from "Social security wages" (box 3).

**Note:** *Boxes 8 and 9 may be omitted if not applicable.*

.13 If employers are required to withhold and report state or local income tax, the applicable boxes are also considered core information and **must** be placed at the bottom of the form. State information is included in:

- Box 15 (State, Employer's state ID number)
- Box 16 (State wages, tips, etc.)
- Box 17 (State income tax)

Local information is included in:

- Box 18 (Local wages, tips, etc.)
- Box 19 (Local income tax)
- Box 20 (Locality name)

.14 Boxes 7 through 14 may be omitted from substitute employee copies **unless** the employer must report related information to the employee. For example, if an employee did not have Social security tips (box 7), the form could be printed without that box. But if an employer provided dependent care benefits, the amount must be reported separately, shown in box 10, and labeled "Dependent care benefits."

.15 Employers may enter more than four codes in box 12 of Copies 1, B, C, 2, and D of Form W-2, but each entry **must** use **Codes A-V** (see the *2003 Instructions for Forms W-2 and W-3*).

.16 If an employer has employees in any of the three categories in box 13, all checkboxes must be shown and the proper checkmark made when applicable.

.17 Employers may use box 14 for any other information that they wish to give to their employees. Each item must be labeled. (See the instructions for box 14 in the *2003 Instructions for Forms W-2 and W-3*.)

.18 The front of Copy C of a substitute Form W-2 must contain the note "This information is being furnished to the Internal Revenue Service. If you are required to file a tax return, a negligence penalty or other sanction may be imposed on you if this income is taxable and you fail to report it."

.19 Instructions similar to those contained on the back of Copies B and C of the official IRS Form W-2 **must** be provided to each employee. An employer may modify or delete instructions (i.e., removing Railroad Retirement Tier 1 and Tier 2 compensation information for nonrailroad employees or information about dependent care benefits that the employer does not provide) that do not apply to its employees.

.20 Employers **must** notify their employees who have no income tax withheld that they may be able to claim a tax refund because of the earned income credit (EIC). They will meet this notification requirement if they furnish a substitute Form W-2 with the EIC notice on the back of Copy B, IRS **Notice 797, Possible Federal Tax Refund Due to the Earned Income Credit (EIC)**, or on their own statement containing the same wording. They may also change the font on Copy C so that the EIC notification and Form W-2 instructions fit entirely on the back. For more information about notification requirements, see **Notice 1015, Have You Told Your Employees About the Earned Income Credit (EIC)?**

## **Part C. Additional Instructions**

### **Section 1. Additional Instructions for Form Printers**

.01 If magnetic or electronic media is not used for filing with the SSA, the substitute copies of Forms W-2 (either red-ink or laser-printed) should be assembled in the same order as the official IRS Forms W-2. Copy A should be first, followed sequentially by perforated sets (Copies 1, B, C, 2, and D).

.02 The substitute form to be filed by the employer with the SSA must carry the designation "Copy A."

**Note:** *Magnetic media/electronic filers do not submit paper Copy A (red-ink or laser-printed) of Form W-2 or Form W-3 (red-ink or laser-printed) to the SSA.*

.03 Substitute forms (red-ink or laser-printed) do not require a copy to be retained by employers (Copy D). However, employers **must** be prepared to verify or duplicate the information if it is requested by the IRS or the SSA. Paper filers who do not keep a Copy D should be able to generate a facsimile of Copy A in case of loss.

.04 Except for copies in the official assembly, no additional copies that may be prepared by employers should be placed ahead of Form W-2 (Copy C) "For EMPLOYEE'S RECORDS."

.05 Instructions similar to those contained on the back of **Copies B and C** of the official IRS Form W-2 **must** be provided to each employee. These instructions may be printed on

the back of the substitute Copies B and C or may be provided to employees on a separate statement. **Do not** print these instructions on the back of Copy 1 or 2 that is to be filed with the employee's state, city, or local income tax return. Any Forms W-2 (Copy A) and W-3 that are filed with the SSA **must** have no printing on the reverse side. Instructions similar to those provided as part of the IRS official forms **must** be provided as part of any substitute Form W-2 (Copy A) or Form W-3.

## **Section 2. Instructions for Employers**

**.01** Only originals of Form W-2 (Copy A) and Form W-3 may be filed with the SSA. **Carbon copies and photocopies are unacceptable.**

**.02** Employers should type or machine-print data entries on non laser-generated forms whenever possible. Ensure good quality by using a high-quality type face, inserting data in the middle of blocks that are well separated from other printing and guidelines, and taking any other measures that will guarantee clear, sharp images. Black ink **must** be used with no script type, inverted font, italics or dual-case alpha characters.

**Note:** *12-point Courier font is preferred by the SSA.*

**.03** Form W-2 (Copy A) requires decimal entries for wage data. Dollar signs are preformatted on **red-ink** Forms W-2 (Copy A) and W-3 and should not be entered as part of money amounts. **Dollar signs should not be printed with money amounts on the black-and-white laser-printed Forms W-2 (Copy A) and W-3.**

**.04** The employer must provide a machine-scannable Form W-2 (Copy A). The employer must also provide payee copies (Copies B, C, and 2) that are legible and able to be photocopied (by the employee). Refrain from printing any data in the top margin of the forms.

**.05** Any printing in box a (Control number) on Forms W-2 or W-3 may not touch any vertical or horizontal lines and should be centered in the box.

**.06** The filer's employer identification number (EIN) **must** be entered in box b of Form W-2 and box e of Form W-3.

**Note:** *The EIN entered on Form(s) W-2 (box b) and Form W-3 (box e) **must** be the same as on Forms 941, 943, CT-1, Schedule H (Form 1040), or any other corresponding forms filed with the IRS.*

**.07** The employer's name, address, and EIN may be preprinted.



**.08** Employers should use the official IRS-preprinted Form W-3 that they received with Pub. 393 or Pub. 2184, if available, when filing red-ink Forms W-2 (Copy A) with the SSA.

### **Section 3. OMB Requirements for Both Red-Ink and Laser-Printed Substitute Forms**

**.01** The Paperwork Reduction Act (the Act) of 1995 (Public Law 104–13) requires that:

- The OMB approves all IRS tax forms that are subject to the Act.
- Each IRS form contains (in or near the upper right corner) the OMB approval number, if any. (The official OMB numbers may be found on the official IRS printed forms and are also shown on the forms in Exhibits A, B, E, and F.)
- Each IRS form (or its instructions) states:
  1. Why the IRS needs the information,
  2. How it will be used, and
  3. Whether or not the information is required to be furnished to the IRS.

This information must be provided to any users of official or substitute IRS forms or instructions.

**.02** The OMB requirements for substitute IRS forms are:

- Any substitute form or substitute statement to a recipient must show the OMB number as it appears on the official IRS form.
- For Form W-2 (Copy A) and Form W-3, the OMB number must appear exactly as shown on the official IRS form.
- For any copy of Form W-2 other than Copy A, the OMB number must use one of the following formats.
  1. OMB No. XXXX-XXXX (preferred) or
  2. OMB # XXXX-XXXX (acceptable).

**.03** Any substitute Form W-2 (Copy A only) must state “For Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see separate instructions.” Any substitute Form W-3 must state “For Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see the 2003 Instructions for Forms W-2 and W-3.” If no instructions are provided to users of your forms, you must furnish them with the exact text of the Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice.

### **Section 4. Copies of Forms**

**.01** You can obtain official IRS forms and information copies of federal tax materials at local offices or by calling the IRS Distribution Center at **1-800-829-3676**. Other ways to get federal tax material include:

- The Internet at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).
- IRS Fax Forms at 703-368-9694.
- CD-ROM.

**Note:** *Many IRS forms are provided electronically by fax, on the IRS web site, and on the Federal Tax Forms CD-ROM. But copies of Form W-2 (Copy A) and Form W-3 cannot be used for filing with the IRS when obtained this way because the forms do not meet the specific printing specifications as described in this publication. Copies of Forms W-2 and W-3 obtained from these sources are for information purposes only.*

**.02** You can access the IRS via the Internet by File Transfer Protocol (FTP) using <ftp.irs.gov> or by the World Wide Web using [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

**.03** The IRS also offers an alternative to downloading electronic files and provides current and prior-year access to tax forms and instructions through its Federal Tax Forms CD-ROM. The CD will be available for the upcoming filing season. Order Pub. 1796, *IRS Federal Tax Products CD-ROM*, by using the IRS's Internet web site at [www.irs.gov/cdorders](http://www.irs.gov/cdorders) or by calling 1-877-CDFORMS (1-877-233-6767).

## **Section 5. Effect On Other Documents**

**.01** Rev. Proc. 2002-53, 2002-31 I.R.B. 253, dated August 5, 2002 (reprinted as Publication 1141, Revised 8-2002), is superseded.

### **List of Exhibits**

Exhibit A – Form W-2 (Copy A) (Red-Ink)

Exhibit B – Form W-3 (Red-Ink)

Exhibit C – Form W-2 (Copy B)

Exhibit D – Form W-2 (Alternative Employee Copies) (Illustrating Horizontal and Vertical Formats)

Exhibit E – Form W-2 (Copy A) (Laser-Printed)

Exhibit F – Form W-3 (Laser-Printed)

**Exhibit  
A  
Form  
W-2  
(Copy A)**

(Red Ink)

a Control number 1.6" ← 22222 → .94" ↑ Void <input type="checkbox"/> ← 4.82" → OMB No. 1545-0008		For Official Use Only		.375"		
b Employer identification number ← 4.4" →		1 Wages, tips, other compensation \$	2 Federal income tax withheld \$	.2"		
c Employer's name, address, and ZIP code ← 4.4" →		3 Social security wages \$	4 Social security tax withheld \$			
		5 Medicare wages and tips \$ ← 1.8" →	6 Medicare tax withheld \$ ← 1.8" →			
		7 Social security tips \$	8 Allocated tips \$			
		9 Advance EIC payment \$	10 Dependent care benefits \$			
d Employee's social security number		11 Nonqualified plans \$		12a See instructions for box 12 \$		
e Employee's first name and initial Last name 4.94" ← 8.0" →		13 Statutory employee \$	Retirement plan \$	Third-party sick pay \$	12b \$ 4.56"	
f Employee's address and ZIP code		14 Other \$ ← .36" → Retirement plan ← .36" → Third-party sick pay ← .46" →	12c \$	12d \$		
		15 State Employee's state ID number \$	16 State wages, tips, etc. \$	17 State income tax \$	18 Local wages, tips, etc. \$	19 Local income tax \$
		20 Locality name				

Form **W-2** Wage and Tax Statement

**2003**

Department of the Treasury—Internal Revenue Service

For Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see separate instructions.

Copy A For Social Security Administration—Send this entire page with Form W-3 to the Social Security Administration; photocopies are not acceptable.

Cat. No. 10134D

**Do Not Cut, Fold, or Staple Forms on This Page — Do Not Cut, Fold, or Staple Forms on This Page**

8.5"

11.0"

**Exhibit B**  
**Form W-3**  
(Red Ink)

**DO NOT STAPLE OR FOLD**

a Control number 1.6" ← 33333 → .94" ← For Official Use Only ▶ PMB No. 1545-0008 → 5.46" →			
b Kind of Payer ▶	941 .36" Military .36" 943 .46" Third-party sick pay .36" CT-1 .14" emp. .14" gov. emp.	1 Wages, tips, other compensation \$	2 Federal income tax withheld \$
		3 Social security wages \$	4 Social security tax withheld \$
c Total number of Forms W-2 1.6" →	d Establishment number .14" →	5 Medicare wages and tips \$	6 Medicare tax withheld \$
e Employer identification number 3.5" →		7 Social security tips \$	8 Allocated tips 2.2" →
f Employer's name 8.0" →		9 Advance EIC payments \$	10 Dependent care benefits \$
		11 Nonqualified plans \$	12 Deferred compensation \$
		13 For third-party sick pay use only	
g Employer's address and ZIP code		14 Income tax withheld by payer of third-party sick pay \$	
h Other EIN used this year			
15 State	Employer's state ID number	16 State wages, tips, etc. \$	17 State income tax \$
		18 Local wages, tips, etc. \$	19 Local income tax \$
Contact person		Telephone number ( )	For Official Use Only
E-mail address		Fax number ( )	

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have examined this return and accompanying documents, and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, they are true, correct, and complete.

Signature ▶ Title ▶ Date ▶

Form **W-3 Transmittal of Wage and Tax Statements** **2003**

Department of the Treasury  
Internal Revenue Service

Send this entire page with the entire Copy A page of Form(s) W-2 to the Social Security Administration. Photocopies are not acceptable.

Do not send any payment (cash, checks, money orders, etc.) with Forms W-2 and W-3.

**An Item To Note**

Separate instructions. See the separate 2003 Instructions for Forms W-2 and W-3 for information on completing this form.

**Purpose of Form**

Use this form to transmit Copy A of Form(s) W-2, Wage and Tax Statement. Make a copy of Form W-3, and keep it with Copy D (For Employer) of Form(s) W-2 for your records. Use Form W-3 for the correct year. **File Form W-3 even if only one Form W-2 is being filed.** If you are filing Form(s) W-2 on magnetic media or electronically, **do not** file Form W-3.

**When To File**

File Form W-3 with Copy A of Form(s) W-2 by March 1, 2004.

**Where To File**

Send this entire page with the entire Copy A page of Form(s) W-2 to:


**Social Security Administration  
Data Operations Center  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18769-0001**

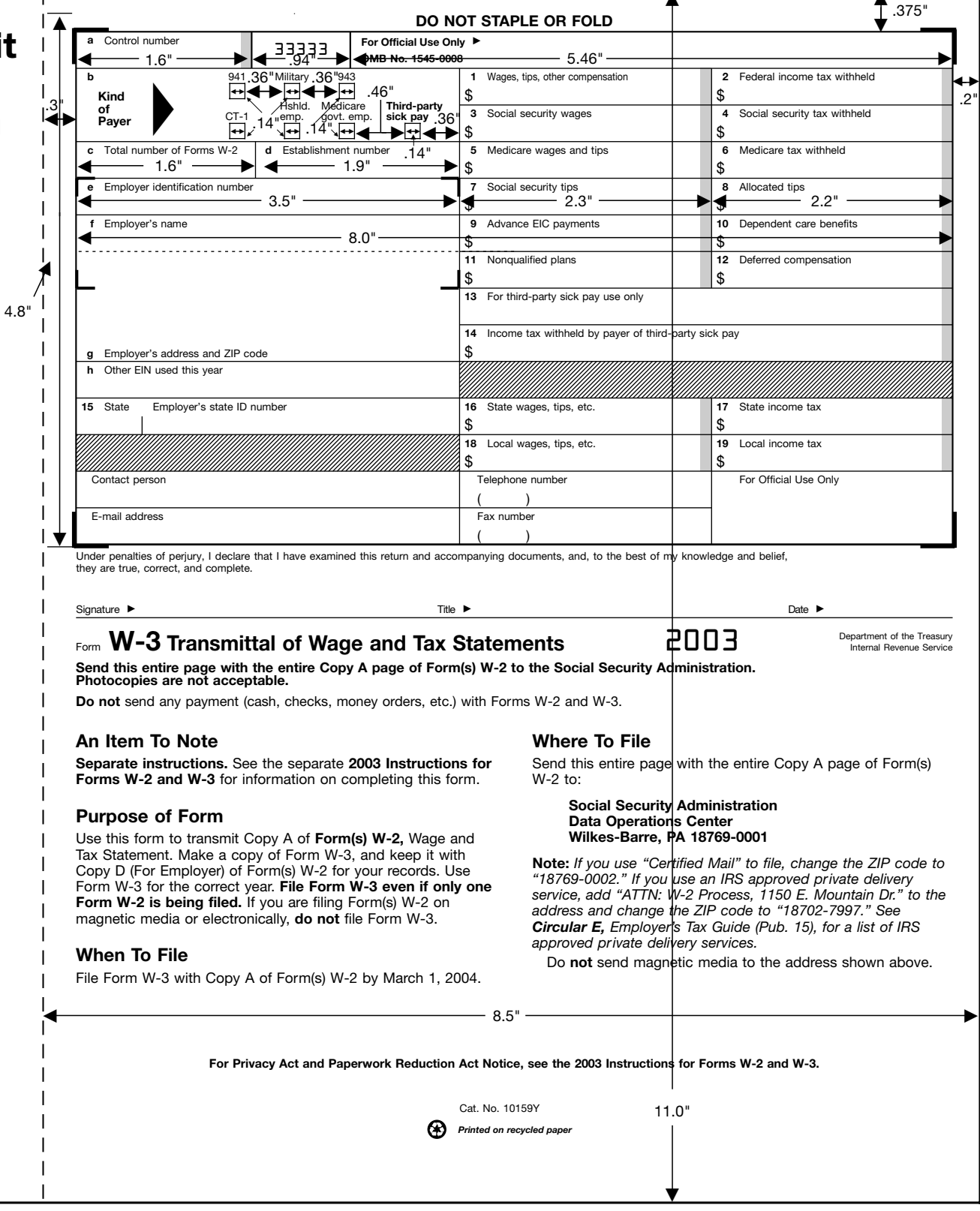
**Note:** If you use "Certified Mail" to file, change the ZIP code to "18769-0002." If you use an IRS approved private delivery service, add "ATTN: W-2 Process, 1150 E. Mountain Dr." to the address and change the ZIP code to "18702-7997." See **Circular E, Employer's Tax Guide (Pub. 15)**, for a list of IRS approved private delivery services.

Do not send magnetic media to the address shown above.


For Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see the 2003 Instructions for Forms W-2 and W-3.

Cat. No. 10159Y

 Printed on recycled paper



**Exhibit  
C  
Form  
W-2  
(Copy B)**

a Control number		OMB No. 1545-0008		Safe, accurate, FAST! Use 		Visit the IRS Web Site at <a href="http://www.irs.gov">www.irs.gov</a> .	
b Employer identification number		1 Wages, tips, other compensation		2 Federal income tax withheld			
c Employer's name, address, and ZIP code		3 Social security wages		4 Social security tax withheld			
		5 Medicare wages and tips		6 Medicare tax withheld			
		7 Social security tips		8 Allocated tips			
d Employee's social security number		9 Advance EIC payment		10 Dependent care benefits			
e Employee's first name and initial      Last name		11 Nonqualified plans		12a See instructions for box 12			
		13 Statutory employee <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement plan <input type="checkbox"/> Third-party sick pay <input type="checkbox"/>		12b			
		14 Other		12c			
				12d			
f Employee's address and ZIP code							
15 State	Employer's state ID number	16 State wages, tips, etc.	17 State income tax	18 Local wages, tips, etc.	19 Local income tax	20 Locality name	

Form **W-2** Wage and Tax Statement **2003** Department of the Treasury—Internal Revenue Service  
**Copy B To Be Filed with Employee's FEDERAL Tax Return.**  
 This information is being furnished to the Internal Revenue Service.

**Exhibit D**  
**Form W-2**  
**Alternative Employee Copies**  
 (Illustrating Horizontal and Vertical Formats)

**Form W-2 Wage and Tax Statement**

**2003**

b Employer identification number		1 Wages, tips, other compensation		2 Federal income tax withheld		
c Employer's name, address, and ZIP code		3 Social security wages		4 Social security tax withheld		
		5 Medicare wages and tips		6 Medicare tax withheld		
d Employee's social security number						
e Employee's name						
f Employee's address and ZIP code						
15 State	Employer's state ID number	16 State wages, tips, etc.	17 State income tax	18 Local wages, tips, etc.	19 Local income tax	20 Locality name

Copy C for EMPLOYEE'S RECORDS.

Department of the Treasury—Internal Revenue Service

**Horizontal Format**

1 Wages, tips, other compensation		2 Federal income tax withheld	
3 Social security wages		4 Social security tax withheld	
5 Medicare wages and tips		6 Medicare tax withheld	
Employer identification number			
Employer's name, address, and ZIP code			
Employee's social security number			
Employee's name			
Employee's address and ZIP code			
15 State	Employer's state ID number	18 Local wages, tips, etc.	
16 State wages, tips, etc.		19 Local income tax	
17 State income tax		20 Locality name	

**Note:** Exhibit D provides examples of employee copies of Form W-2 only. For examples of Copy A, see Exhibit A or Exhibit E. For the specifications of Copy A, which must be filed with the SSA, see Part B, sections 1A and 1B.

The core data boxes are 1 through 6 and, if applicable, 15 through 20. The core data must be similarly positioned, exactly numbered, and exactly titled as shown for each format. Other data may be placed in unoccupied areas based upon the employer's needs. Form identification may be placed before or after the core data. However, the employer's non-core elements may be positioned only between the sections of core data.

**Form W-2**  
 Wage and Tax  
 Statement

**2003**

Department of the Treasury—  
 Internal Revenue Service

**Vertical Format**

**Exhibit E**  
**Form W-2**  
**(Copy A)**  
(Laser-Printed)

This form may be subject to change.

a Control number 22222 Void		For Official Use Only OMB No. 1545-0008	
b Employer identification number		1 Wages, tips other compensation	2 Federal income tax withheld
c Employer's name, address, and ZIP code		3 Social security wages	4 Social security tax withheld
		5 Medicare wages and tips	6 Medicare tax withheld
		7 Social security tips	8 Allocated tips
d Employee's social security number		9 Advance EIC payment	10 Dependent care benefits
e Employee's first name and initial Last name		11 Nonqualified plans	12a See instructions for box 12
		13 Statutory employee Retirement plan Third-party sick pay	12b
		14 Other	12c
			12d
f Employee's address and ZIP code		15 State Employer's state ID number	16 State wages, tips, etc.
		17 State income tax	18 Local wages, tips, etc.
		19 Local income tax	20 Locality name

Form **W-2 Wage and Tax Statement** 2003  
**Copy A For Social Security Administration**—Send this entire page with Form W-3 to the Social Security Administration; photocopies are **not** acceptable.

2003  
0000/0000

Department of the Treasury—Internal Revenue Service  
**For Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see separate instructions.**

**Do Not Cut, Fold, or Staple Forms on This Page**

a Control number 22222 Void		For Official Use Only OMB No. 1545-0008	
b Employer identification number		1 Wages, tips other compensation	2 Federal income tax withheld
c Employer's name, address, and ZIP code		3 Social security wages	4 Social security tax withheld
		5 Medicare wages and tips	6 Medicare tax withheld
		7 Social security tips	8 Allocated tips
d Employee's social security number		9 Advance EIC payment	10 Dependent care benefits
e Employee's first name and initial Last name		11 Nonqualified plans	12a See instructions for box 12
		13 Statutory employee Retirement plan Third-party sick pay	12b
		14 Other	12c
			12d
f Employee's address and ZIP code		15 State Employer's state ID number	16 State wages, tips, etc.
		17 State income tax	18 Local wages, tips, etc.
		19 Local income tax	20 Locality name

Form **W-2 Wage and Tax Statement** 2003  
**Copy A For Social Security Administration**—Send this entire page with Form W-3 to the Social Security Administration; photocopies are **not** acceptable.

2003  
0000/0000

Department of the Treasury—Internal Revenue Service  
**For Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see separate instructions.**

# Exhibit F Form W-3

(Laser-Printed)

This form may be subject to change.

<b>a</b> Control number 1.6" → <b>33333</b> ← .9" For Official Use Only ▶ OMB No. 1545-0008 ← 5.0"			
<b>b</b> Kind of Payer 941 Military 943 CT-1 → 3.2" ← Hshld. emp. Medicare gov't. emp. Third-party sick pay		<b>1</b> Wages, tips, other compensation	<b>2</b> Federal income tax withheld
<b>c</b> Total number of Forms W-2 1.6" →		<b>3</b> Social security wages	<b>4</b> Social security tax withheld
<b>d</b> Establishment number 1.6" →		<b>5</b> Medicare wages and tips	<b>6</b> Medicare tax withheld
<b>e</b> Employer identification number 3.2" →		<b>7</b> Social security tips 2.15" →	<b>8</b> Allocated tips 2.15" →
<b>f</b> Employer's name 7.5" →		<b>9</b> Advance EIC payments	<b>10</b> Dependent care benefits
		<b>11</b> Nonqualified plans	<b>12</b> Deferred compensation
		<b>13</b> For third-party sick pay use only	
		<b>14</b> Income tax withheld by payer of third-party sick pay	
<b>g</b> Employer's address and ZIP code			
<b>h</b> Other EIN used this year			
<b>15</b> State Employer's state ID number	<b>16</b> State wages, tips, etc.	<b>17</b> State income tax	
	<b>18</b> Local wages, tips, etc.	<b>19</b> Local income tax	
Contact person	Telephone number	For Official Use Only	
E-mail address	Fax number		
		0000/0000	

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have examined this return and accompanying documents, and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, they are true, correct, and complete.

Signature ▶ Title ▶ Date ▶

Form **W-3 Transmittal of Wage and Tax Statements** **2003** Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service

Send this entire page with the entire Copy A page of Form(s) W-2 to the Social Security Administration. Photocopies are not acceptable.

Do not send any payment (cash, checks, money orders, etc.) with Forms W-2 and W-3.

### An Item To Note

**Separate instructions.** See the separate **2003 Instructions for Forms W-2 and W-3** for information on completing this form.

### Purpose of Form

Use this form to transmit Copy A of **Form(s) W-2**, Wage and Tax Statement. Make a copy of Form W-3, and keep it with Copy D (For Employer) of Form(s) W-2 for your records. Use Form W-3 for the correct year. **File Form W-3 even if only one Form W-2 is being filed.** If you are filing Form(s) W-2 on magnetic media or electronically, **do not** file Form W-3.

### When To File

File Form W-3 with Copy A of Form(s) W-2 by March 1, 2004.

### Where To File

Send this entire page with the entire Copy A page of Form(s) W-2 to:

**Social Security Administration  
Data Operations Center  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18769-0001**

**Note:** If you use "Certified Mail" to file, change the ZIP code to "18769-0002." If you use an IRS approved private delivery service, add "ATTN: W-2 Process, 1150 E. Mountain Dr." to the address and change the ZIP code to "18702-7997." See **Circular E, Employer's Tax Guide (Pub. 15)**, for a list of IRS approved private delivery services.

Do not send magnetic media to the address shown above.

For Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see the 2003 Instructions for Forms W-2 and W-3.