



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SERVICE
P. O. BOX 8676
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19101-8676

To All Federal Agencies For
Which Financial Services Are
Provided By The Philadelphia
Financial Center

Management Letter No. 02-02
July 11, 2002

The Financial Management Service has decided to remove all personal identification numbers from Treasury checks issued after January 1, 2004. A letter from Deputy Commissioner Papaj notifying all Chief Financial Officers of this change was signed on May 20, 2002, (copy attached).

FMS already has complied with Public Law 106-433, which mandates that personal identification numbers not appear through unopened mailings of checks. Due to the increasing concern about identify theft in our society, we now have concluded that any display of identifying numbers is no longer advisable.

Removal will allay legitimate privacy concerns and help reduce the opportunity for crime. Both individuals and consumer advocacy groups have called for the change. Congress shares this concern and is considering several bills which would require us to remove the numbers.

You will not necessarily have to make any changes to your payment file as FMS will suppress any field designated exclusively for personal identifying information. However, you may need to change the content of other discretionary data fields that may contain personal identifying information. For example, in the vendor format, field numbers 23 and 25 allows agency discretionary information to be printed on the check. We will not suppress this field, so all personal identifying information must be removed from the input file. You may also need to change your internal processes and procedures that relied on the personal identifying information that will be removed, either by you or by us, from the face of Treasury checks.

Removal of the numbers will serve everyone's interest and demonstrate that the Government is committed to protecting the privacy of American citizens.

Please contact me at (215) 516-8001 if you have any questions concerning this decision.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL COLARUSSO
REGIONAL DIRECTOR
PHILADELPHIA FINANCIAL CENTER

Enclosure



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20227

May 20, 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR AGENCY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICERS

FROM: KENNETH R. PAPAJ
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER *Kenneth R. Papaj*

SUBJECT: Removal of Personal Identification Numbers From Treasury Checks

For many years personal identification numbers have been printed on Treasury checks. Such numbers include Social Security Numbers (SSNs), Veterans Affairs claim numbers, Employee Identification Numbers (EINs), and other individual identifiers assigned by Federal agencies. In effect, these numbers have served as a confirmation that the negotiable instrument is in fact intended for the designated payee.

In compliance with Public Law 106-433, the Financial Management Service has already taken measures to ensure that personal identification numbers no longer appear through unopened mailings of checks. Due to the increasing concern about identity theft in our society, we now have concluded that the display of the identifying numbers is no longer advisable. Accordingly, FMS will stop printing all such numbers on Treasury checks issued after January 1, 2004.

This action will allay legitimate privacy concerns and help reduce the opportunity for identity theft. Both individuals and consumer advocacy groups have called for this change. There are also several bills before Congress which include provisions to make removal mandatory.

I believe removal of the numbers will serve everyone's interest and demonstrate that the Government is committed to protecting the privacy of American citizens. Please contact the Chief Disbursing Officer, William T. Andersen (202-874-6790) if you have any questions concerning this decision.