



Social Security Number Randomization Frequently Asked Questions

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What is Social Security Number (SSN) Randomization?

The project is a forward looking initiative of the Social Security Administration (SSA) to help protect the integrity of the SSN by establishing a new randomized assignment methodology. SSN Randomization will also extend the longevity of the nine-digit SSN nationwide.

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When will SSN randomization take effect?

The SSA plans to implement the new assignment methodology on June 25, 2011.

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Why is the SSA changing the way it assigns the SSN?

The SSA believes that randomly assigning the SSN will help protect the integrity of the SSN. Changing assignment methodology will also extend the available pool of nine digit SSNs in every state.

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Will the SSA ever run out of SSNs?

The nine-digit SSN will eventually be exhausted. The current SSN assignment process limits the number of SSNs that are available for assignment to individuals in each state. Randomization affords the SSA the opportunity to extend the number of SSNs available for assignment for many years.

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How will SSN randomization provide enhanced protection to my identity?

As the SSN is increasingly used by public and private entities in conjunction with other tools and processes for identity verification, instances of SSN fraud, misuse, and identity theft are also on the rise. SSN randomization will help protect an individual's SSN by making it more difficult to reconstruct an SSN using public information.

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What changes will result from randomization?

The SSA will eliminate the geographical significance of the first three digits of the SSN, currently referred to as the area number, by no longer allocating the area numbers for assignment to individuals in specific states. The significance of the highest group number (the fourth and fifth digits of the SSN) for validation purposes will be eliminated. Randomization will also introduce previously unassigned area numbers for assignment excluding area numbers 000, 666 and 900-999.

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Will SSN randomization assign group number (the fourth and fifth digits of the SSN) 00 or serial number (the last four digits of the SSN) 0000?

SSN randomization will not assign group number 00 or serial number 0000. SSNs containing group number 00 or serial number 0000 will continue to be invalid.

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Will the SSN length change as a result of randomization?

The length of the SSN will not change. The SSN will still be comprised of nine numeric digits.

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Will current number holders receive a new SSN and card?

Current number holders will not receive a new SSN or a new card as a result of randomization. The new assignment process will only apply to those receiving an SSN for the first time.

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Will I be able to request a new randomized SSN?

Generally, we assign only one SSN to an individual. We use that number to record the individual's earnings so that we can determine future benefits and, eventually, to track benefits paid. Only under the following circumstances can we assign a different number.

- Sequential numbers assigned to members of the same family are causing problems;
- More than one person is using the same number;
- An individual has religious or cultural objections to certain numbers or digits in the original number; (See "Can I request a new SSN because I object to digits used?")
- A victim of identity theft continues to be disadvantaged by using the original number; (See [Identity Theft And Your Social Security Number](#), Publication No. 05-10064.) or
- Situations of harassment, abuse or life endangerment (including domestic violence). (See [New Numbers For Domestic Violence Victims](#), Publication No. 05-10093.)

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Will previously issued SSNs be re-assigned as a result of randomization?

The SSA will not reassign SSNs. Randomization will provide us with enough new numbers to avoid reassignment.

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How will SSN randomization affect the geographical significance of the area number?

Randomization will eliminate the geographical significance of the area number (the first three digits of the SSN). Area numbers will no longer be allocated to states for assignment.

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How will I verify a name and SSN?

The SSA will still provide opportunities for direct SSN verification. Internet based verification services include:

- The SSA's [Social Security Number Verification Service](#) – available to employers.
- The Department of Homeland Security's [eVerify Service](#) – available to employers to determine employment eligibility.
- The SSA's [Consent-Based SSN Verification Service](#) – available to enrolled private companies and government agencies for a fee.

Federal and State Agencies will continue to have several SSN verification systems available to them such as those outlined on <http://www.ssa.gov/gix/eprojects.html>. These methods for SSN verification are much more accurate than using the High Group List. For more information on those services, please contact us at ssn.randomization@ssa.gov for referral to the appropriate SSA contact.

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Will the High Group List still be available for validation?

Currently, there are no plans to update the High Group List once randomization is implemented. The High Group List will be frozen in time and can be used for validation of SSNs issued prior to the randomization implementation date.

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Who can I contact if I have any questions/comments pertaining to SSN randomization?

Please email any questions/comments to ssn.randomization@ssa.gov.

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