



Checklist for Forms W-2/W-3

About the W-2/W-3: Employers must give all employees a W-2, Wage and Tax Statement, which reports annual taxable wages for the previous year and taxes withheld (Social Security, Medicare, federal, state, and local.) W-2s can include tip income, contributions to a retirement or health savings accounts, Roth contributions, deferred compensation, dependent care benefits, and other information. (Read our article "[What is a W-2?](#)" for further explanation.)

Employers must then submit a copy of all W-2s along with a W-3 Transmittal of Employee Wages to the Social Security Administration -- see deadlines below.

Here are the steps to prepare W-2 forms for your employees and Form W-3:

- Verify your Employer Identification Number (EIN)** for federal, state, and local taxes as it appears on your tax documents.
- Verify your Company's Legal Name and address** as it appears on your Federal EIN document.
- Verify the status of your employees.** Make sure you have the correct name, Social Security number, and address for all employees who worked for you during the year. (Note: If you have questions regarding who is an employee, read the IRS article "[Employee vs. Independent Contractor -- Seven Tips for Business Owners.](#)")
- Verify your employees' wages.** If you changed payroll providers during the year, make sure your payroll records are accurate and up-to-date.
- Order or purchase official red-ink W-2 paper stock** or an acceptable substitute if you're preparing W-2s yourself. For more information, read "[General Rules and Specifications for Substitute Forms W-2 and W-3.](#)"
- Distribute employee W-2s by January 31, 2012.** W-2s must be postmarked by that date to be considered timely.
- Correct any errors found** after employees examine their W-2s. Reissue W-2s if necessary.
- File Copy A of the W-2 and the W-3** with the Social Security Administration when you know the W-2s are correct. The deadline is Feb. 29, 2012, to file paper forms and April 2, 2012, to e-file.

For more information, read the [2011 Instructions for Forms W-2 and W-3](#).

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