

EMPLOYEE NUMBER QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

PERSONNEL SYSTEMS – HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES DIVISION – DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Q: What is an Employee Number?

A: An Employee Number is a unique number that has been assigned to each current and former State employee and elected official in the Position and Personnel DataBase (PPDB). As new employees and elected officials are hired or appointed, they will be assigned the next available number.

Q: What is the Position and Personnel DataBase, or PPDB?

A: The Position and Personnel DataBase, also known as the PPDB, is the statewide computer mainframe system that processes and captures all personnel-related actions. This system includes employment-related information and data for all employees and elected officials in the Executive, Judicial, and Legislative branches of state government and the Oregon State Lottery. Whenever an action takes place that affects an employee's personnel records (e.g., a promotion, a name change, an address change, etc.), the change is entered into the PPDB. The change is captured and saved in a history file and a personnel action form is generated. This form is placed in the employee's personnel file and a copy is often forwarded to the employee to notify him or her of the record change.

Data and information in the PPDB is used by the statewide payroll system when generating employee paychecks. The payroll system gets the employee name, social security number, address, and wage-related information from the PPDB. It will now also get the new employee number for each active employee.

The PPDB also provides data and information that can be used to respond to requests received from the media, the public, the legislature, and various other entities needing statistical data on State employment or employees.

Q: Why did you assign an employee number to each employee and elected official?

A: Having a unique number for each employee other than the social security number will allow the State of Oregon to gain compliance with Section 7 of the Privacy Act of 1974. This federal regulation prohibits state governments from using social security numbers for any reason other than to process payroll unless authorized by statute or administrative rule and specifically authorized by the individual.

The addition of the Employee Number also allows the State, as your employer, to better protect your privacy in a time where the risk of identify theft continues to be on the increase.

Q: When did you assign the employee number?

A: An employee number was assigned to all current and former State employees and elected officials on Saturday, February 28, 2004. Employees and elected officials new to state government after that date will be assigned their employee number at the time of their appointment.

Q: *How did you assign the employee number?*

A: The PPDB started with the highest social security number in the active and history files and assigned that record with Employee Number OR0000001. The System then went to the second highest social security number and assigned that record with Employee Number OR0000002. And so on until it came to the lowest social security number in the active and history files. The next employee that is hired into state government for the first time will receive the next available number.

Q: *Who got the very first employee number (OR0000001)?*

A: One of our test employee records was assigned the very first employee number. We set up test records to help us insure that the changes we had to make to the PPDB to add the employee number were successful and did not cause systems errors. We create “dummy” social security numbers for our test records. These dummy numbers must be numbers that are not being used as real social security numbers. There are no social security numbers that begin with 999 or 888. Therefore, our test numbers have been developed in these two series. By starting with the highest social security number in the PPDB and assigning employee numbers in descending order, the first several employee numbers (including OR0000001) were assigned and will remain with our test records.

Q: *What if I lose my Employee Number and I can't remember what it is?*

A: You should write your new Employee Number down and put it in a safe place. But, if you do lose it, you can contact your personnel representative and ask for it.

Q: *I understand that my social security number is now identified in the PPDB as “sensitive data.” What do you mean by “sensitive data?”*

A: Under the Public Records Law (ORS 192.502 to 192.505), State employees' home addresses, dates of birth, and home telephone numbers are exempt from public disclosure. This statute also provides that information of a personal nature that would constitute an unreasonable invasion of privacy is exempt from disclosure. We have defined this information as “sensitive data.” To guard this personal information from being accessed or used by anyone without the appropriate authorization, we have set up secured screens in the PPDB that can only be viewed or accessed by individuals that require that information to perform their official State or federal duties.

Q: *Will I still need to provide my social security number to my personnel or payroll representatives?*

A: Yes. Your social security number is still required for all payroll processes and for many of the various employment-related processes. A couple of examples of processes that still require that you provide your social security number are workers' compensation claims, requests for travel reimbursement, employee benefit plans sponsored by the Public Employees' Benefit Board (PEBB) unless you have requested otherwise. Your personnel representative can call up your employee records using either your social security number or your Employee Number. Not all payroll representatives will be able to access your records using the employee number and may still require the social security number to get to your records. The statewide payroll system has not yet been updated to use to employee numbers.

Q: Will my Employee Number be printed on my paycheck, my paystub, my timesheet?

A: Payroll is considering adding Employee Numbers on paychecks, paystubs, and timesheets at a future date.

Q: Will my social security number still be used for my employee benefits sponsored by PEBB?

A: For the remainder of 2004, your social security number will still be used as the unique identifier for benefit administration unless you request that it not be used for this purpose.

Q: How does PEBB use social security numbers?

A: PEBB uses social security numbers to identify individuals in benefit-related administrative actions. These actions are limited to reporting eligibility for PEBB programs, including the wellness program, and to facilitate accurate claims processing. A PEBB member's enrollment eligibility is currently reported by the statewide payroll system to the contracted insurance carriers using the social security number as the "key identifier" unless you request PEBB not use your social security number.

Q: Why does PEBB use social security numbers?

A: When an individual covered under one of the PEBB plans changes his or her name, employer, home address or other contact information, benefit selections or health plans, or adds or removes dependents the social security number aids in communication as it is recognized industry-wide for communicating these actions.

Q: What can I expect if I restrict the use of my social security number for benefits?

A: In some cases, employees and/or their dependents have experienced difficulties in getting claims processed including payment of claims, treatment and hospitalization authorizations, and identifying eligible dependents.

Q: What if I still want to restrict the use of my social security number for benefits?

A: PEBB has developed a procedure for employees to use to restrict the use of their social security numbers for benefits purposes. The form for declining use of your social security number can be found on the PEBB web site at <http://www.oregon.gov/DAS/PEBB/index.shtml>. This form must be completed each time you enroll in a plan or make an administrative or benefit change.

If you have a question that is not addressed here, please e-mail your question to: personnel.systems@das.state.or.us.