

Social Security Administration

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Monthly Information Package

November 2016

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Social Security Column

01 - SUPPORTING OUR WOUNDED WARRIORS

By Bob Simpson

Social Security District Manager in Traverse City



Every Veterans Day, the nation honors the brave men and women who risk their lives to protect our country and the freedoms we cherish. Social Security honors veterans and active duty members of the military every day by giving them the support they deserve. A vital part of that is administering the Social Security disability program.

For those who return home with injuries, Social Security is a resource they can turn to for disability benefits. Social Security's Wounded Warriors website is at www.socialsecurity.gov/woundedwarriors.

The Wounded Warriors website has answers to many commonly asked questions, and shares other useful information about disability benefits, including how veterans can receive expedited processing of disability claims. Benefits available through Social Security are different from those available from the Department of Veterans Affairs and require a separate application.

The expedited process is available to military service members who become disabled while on active military service on or after October 1, 2001, regardless of where the disability occurs.

Even active duty military who continue to receive pay while in a hospital or on medical leave should consider applying for disability benefits if they're unable to work due to a disabling condition. Active duty status and receipt of military pay doesn't necessarily prevent payment of Social Security disability benefits. Although a person can't receive Social Security disability benefits while engaging in substantial work for pay or profit, receipt of military payments should never stop someone from applying for disability benefits from Social Security.

Learn more by visiting www.socialsecurity.gov/woundedwarriors.

With over 80 years of experience and compassionate service, Social Security is proud to support our veterans and active duty members of the military. Let these heroes know they can count on us when they need to take advantage of their earned benefits, today and tomorrow.

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Social Security Column

02 - ARE YOU POSTING DURING NATIONAL BLOG POSTING MONTH?

By **Bob Simpson**

Social Security District Manager in Traverse City



Social Security Matters is Social Security's blog and one of the best places for retirement and other benefit news.

November is National Blog Posting Month, which means there's never been a better time to join the conversation with Social Security. The blog is our interactive center for engaging with you by answering questions and concerns in a way that benefits all readers and contributors. *Social Security Matters* also lets you provide meaningful feedback that can help us serve you more effectively.

The blog's comment section allows you to voice your thoughts and ask questions. The conversation is growing every day. We're doing our best to serve you, and a big part of that is listening to what you have to say.

We regularly post items about disability. For example, check out this article focusing on transitioning into adulthood: blog.socialsecurity.gov/helping-young-people-with-disabilities-successfully-transition-to-adulthood.

And we share ways you can protect your identity: blog.socialsecurity.gov/protecting-your-social-security-number-from-identity-theft.

Blog posts aren't a one-way conversation. We'd like you to share the items that interest you and your family and friends. Using your preferred social media, *Social Security Matters* lets you share our posts with the click of a button. In addition, you can subscribe to our blog and get Social Security news as it happens. Simply select the blue button titled "Get blog updates."

We're updating our blog all the time, and not just during National Blog Posting Month. You can join the conversation too. Visit *Social Security Matters* today at blog.socialsecurity.gov.

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Social Security Column

03 - WHILE SHOPPING ONLINE, VISIT SOCIAL SECURITY

By **Bob Simpson**

Social Security District Manager in Traverse City



“Black Friday” is the busiest shopping day of the year, with people lining up at midnight for deals as they begin the busy holiday shopping season. More people than ever are taking advantage of online holiday deals. “Cyber Monday” is the day internet-savvy people search for deals, all online.

You’re smart, and you probably already know there’s more than one way to find value on the internet. For example, Social Security offers many online services to the public — and they’re free and secure! Doing business online with Social Security will also save time. The feeling of instant gratification is like clicking submit on that online shopping cart.

Here are some of the most popular online services you’ll find at www.socialsecurity.gov. Each site is safe and secure.

Need a replacement Social Security card? You may be able to request your replacement card without visiting a local Social Security office. Still working and wondering what future Social Security benefits you might receive? The online *Social Security Statement* is a smart service that is a hit with the millions of people who’ve used it. Your online *Statement* provides you with a

record of your past earnings along with projected earnings for future years to give you estimates of future Social Security benefits. Do you already get Social Security benefits? You can use your online account to manage your benefits, such as starting or changing Direct Deposit, getting an instant proof of benefits letter, and much more. Just go to www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount.

The *Retirement Estimator* is another easy way to get an instant, personalized estimate of your future Social Security benefits. Just enter some basic information and the *Estimator* will use information on your Social Security record, along with what you input, to give you a benefit estimate on the spot. You can even experiment with different scenarios, such as changing your future earnings and retirement date. Check it out in English at www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator or in Spanish at www.segurosocial.gov/calculador.

The online *Retirement Application* is the most convenient way to apply for Social Security retirement benefits. You can apply from the comfort of your home — it's convenient and secure. In fact, you can apply online in as little as 15 minutes. In most cases, after you submit the application electronically, you're done. There are no forms to sign and, usually, no documentation is required. Social Security will process your application and contact you if any further information is needed. When you're ready to retire, apply at www.socialsecurity.gov/applyonline.

Business Services Online is our one-stop shop for small business owners. The site allows organizations and authorized people to conduct business with and submit confidential information to Social Security. Employers can use it to file W-2s for their employees the fast, convenient, and paperless way — online. Visit *Business Services Online* at www.socialsecurity.gov/bsa.

Social Security's online services continually receive the highest customer satisfaction ratings in both the public and private sectors. Each site uses the highest security to keep your information safe. Learn more about all you can do online at Social Security on Cyber Monday, or any day, at www.socialsecurity.gov/onlineservices.

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Social Security Column

04 - MORE STATES ADDED TO SOCIAL SECURITY'S ONLINE REPLACEMENT CARD APPLICATION

By **Bob Simpson**

Social Security District Manager in Traverse City



Applying for a replacement Social Security card just got even easier!

As of last month, we've added residents of Arizona, Maryland, and South Dakota to the list of those who can request a replacement Social Security card online using *my Social Security*. You can also request a replacement card if you live in the District of Columbia, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin. We continue to add more states to this list and provide updates, so check out www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount.

Applying online is an easy, convenient, and secure way to request a replacement card.

To request a replacement card online, you must:

- Have or create a *my Social Security* account;
- Have a valid driver's license in a participating state or the District of Columbia (or a state-issued identification card in some states);

- Be age 18 or older and a United States citizen with a domestic U.S. mailing address (this includes APO, FPO, and DPO addresses); and
- Not be requesting a name change or any other changes to your card.

No matter what state you live in, with a secure *my Social Security* account, you also can:

- Keep track of your earnings and verify them every year;
- Get an estimate of your future benefits, if you are still working;
- Get a letter with proof of your benefits, if you currently receive them; and

Manage your benefits:

- Change your address;
- Start or change your direct deposit;
- Get a replacement Medicare card; and
- Get a replacement SSA-1099 or SSA-1042S for tax season.

In order to secure your future, you need the best tools and information available. Our online services provide superior support and offer knowledge you won't get anywhere else. Visit *my Social Security* to empower yourself today at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount.

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Social Security Column

05 - SOCIAL SECURITY COVERS YOU WHEN YOU'RE ABROAD

By Bob Simpson

Social Security District Manager in Traverse City



Social Security has you covered, even outside our nation's borders. We're with you through life's journey, even if you're traveling outside the United States. Many people who travel or live outside the country receive some kind of Social Security benefit, including retired and disabled workers, as well as spouses, widows, widowers, and children.

If you're a U.S. citizen, you may receive your Social Security payments outside the United States as long as you are eligible. When we say you are "outside the United States," we mean you're not in one of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, or American Samoa. Once you've been outside the United States for at least 30 days in a row, we consider you to be outside the country. Whether you're off to Europe, or considering a stay in our newly reopened neighbor, Cuba, you may be able to receive your Social Security benefits even while you're outside the United States. If you receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), you cannot receive benefits if you're outside of the United States for a month or more.

If you're traveling outside the U.S. for an extended amount of time, it's important that you tell Social Security the date you plan to leave and the date you plan to come back, no matter how long you expect your travel to last.

You can use this online tool to find out if you can continue to receive your Social Security benefits if you are outside the United States or are planning to go outside the United States at www.socialsecurity.gov/international/payments_outsideUS.html.

This tool will help you find out if your retirement, disability, or survivor's payments will continue as long as you are eligible, stop after six consecutive calendar months, or if certain country-specific restrictions apply.

When you live outside the United States, we send you a questionnaire periodically. Your answers will help us figure out if you still are eligible for benefits. Return the questionnaire to the office that sent it as soon as possible. If you don't, your payments will stop. In addition to responding to the questionnaire, notify us promptly about changes that could affect your payments.

You can also read the publication titled *Your Payments While You Are Outside the United States* at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs.

Securing today and tomorrow is our priority, no matter where you might be living.

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