

Use of Social Security Number on Forms

REQUESTING SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS

The Privacy Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-579) limits the circumstances under which governmental agencies may request social security numbers from individuals.

Whenever a University department designs a form that directly solicits a social security number from an individual, the form is to display a statement explaining whether the disclosure of the social security number is mandatory or voluntary.

DISCLOSURE WORDING

The Attorney General's Office suggests the following disclosure notice wording for forms requesting social security numbers directly from individuals.

Mandatory Disclosure

When social security number disclosure is mandatory, display the following notice on the form:

WSU requires disclosure of your social security number on this form. The authority for this mandatory disclosure is: (cite statute or regulation here). WSU will use your social security number for only the following purposes: (list purposes here).

Voluntary Disclosure

When social security number disclosure is voluntary, display the following notice on the form:

It is unlawful for WSU to deny to any individual any right, benefit, or privilege provided by law because the individual refuses to disclose his or her social security number except in very limited circumstances. WSU requests the voluntary disclosure of your social security number on this form. If provided, WSU will use your social security number for only the following purposes: (list purposes here).

FORMS NOT REQUIRING DISCLOSURE NOTICE

A limited number of University forms, e.g., the Personnel Action Form, require completion of a social security number field, but do not directly solicit disclosure of the signing individual's personal social security number. As such, these forms do not require the disclosure notices described above.

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**PROTECTING
CONFIDENTIALITY**

Since social security numbers are sometimes used for illegal and fraudulent purposes, the numbers are considered confidential. University departments are to safeguard forms containing social security numbers from disclosure and shred the forms at disposition (*BPPM* 90.01).

University departments are not to include a social security number field on any form unless a bona fide need for the number exists.

QUESTIONS

Contact the Office of Procedures, Records, and Forms with questions regarding the use of social security numbers on forms.