

Update to Settlement Program Identity Verification Process

1. **Introduction.** The Settlement Program asks every claimant to provide a Social Security number (“SSN”), Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (“ITIN”), or Employer Identification Number (“EIN”) on the Registration Form. We use that number as a unique identifier to keep claimants separate in the Program. When we receive the Registration Form, we have to verify the accuracy of the SSN, ITIN, or EIN that provided by the claimant, to make sure we have the right number and that the number exists and does not belong to anyone else. We do this verification step for several reasons:
 - (a) The SSN, ITIN or EIN is the only way to give each claimant a unique identifier, which is necessary for tracking, processing and payment purposes.
 - (b) It enables us to link a Deepwater Horizon claimant to a previous GCCF claim, copy existing documents to the new claim and account for any previous offers or payments.
 - (c) Further, we need accurate and genuine taxpayer numbers to prevent issuing payments to fictitious taxpayers or paying the same claim more than once.

2. **Documentation Required to Verify Identity.** If we are able to verify from what the claimant provides or through our own research that the SSN, ITIN, or EIN on the Registration Form belongs to the claimant, then the claimant does not need to provide any further information or documentation. In a small percentage of claims, we will not be able to match the SSN, ITIN, or EIN to an existing, authentic number, often because a digit has been transposed, there are other typos in the number or because the name associated with that number in the official governmental records is different from the name the claimant provided. If we are unable to verify the claimant’s SSN, ITIN or EIN, we have to ask the claimant to help us confirm the number and will ask the claimant to provide additional information, as described below. We recently updated the acceptable documentation for proof of Identity for claimants who use an EIN to include Tax Return Transcripts and Tax Account Transcripts and relaxed requirements for what documents are required to respond to a notice if we cannot verify the SSN. We describe the updated rules and process for obtaining Tax Transcripts in the sections below.
 - (a) **Social Security Numbers.** If the claimant uses an SSN, the claimant must provide:
 - (1) A legible copy of the claimant’s Social Security Card from the Social Security Administration displaying the claimant’s name and SSN. If the claimant does not have a copy of his/her SSN card, the claimant can get a new card by visiting ssa.gov and clicking “Get or replace a Social Security Card” or by calling 1-800-772-1213; AND
 - (2) A completed, signed and dated SSA-89 Consent Form authorizing us to contact the SSA database directly for the claimant.
 - (3) If the claimant’s name on file with the SSA has changed in the past ten years, the claimant should provide a list of all names the claimant has used during that period, including maiden names, married names, alternative spellings and aliases.

(b) Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers. If the claimant uses an ITIN, the claimant must provide:

- (1) A legible copy of the claimant's ITIN Assignment Letter from the Internal Revenue Service ("IRS") displaying the claimant's name and ITIN. If the claimant does not have a copy of his/her ITIN Assignment Letter from the IRS, the claimant can request a replacement letter by calling the IRS at 1-800-829-0922 and choosing Option 1.
- (2) If the claimant's name on file with the IRS has changed in the past ten years, the claimant should provide a list of all names the claimant has used during that period, including maiden names, married names, alternative spellings and aliases.

(c) Employer Identification Numbers. If the claimant uses an EIN, the claimant must provide:

- (1) A legible copy of the claimant's EIN Assignment Letter from the Internal Revenue Service ("IRS") displaying the claimant's name and EIN. If the claimant does not have a copy of his/her EIN Assignment Letter from the IRS, the claimant can request a replacement by calling the IRS Business and Specialty Tax Line at 1-800-829-4933 and selecting EIN from the list of options. In place of an EIN Assignment Letter, the claimant may also request a Tax Return Transcript or Tax Account Transcript that shows his/her EIN by calling 1-800-908-9946, or by visiting irs.gov and clicking on "Order a Return or Account Transcript".
- (2) If the business name on file with the IRS has changed in the past ten years, the claimant should provide a list of all business names the claimant has used during that period including alternative spellings and aliases. If the claimant is a company doing business as another company, the claimant should include that company's full name and any alternative EINs.

NOTE: A claimant does not have to provide these documents unless and until we notify the claimant that we have been unable to verify the claimant's SSN, ITIN or EIN.