# Limiting Use of Social Security Numbers Through Mail

**Image:** Included in toolkit. **Alt Text:** An envelope with a lock shield holds papers, a card, and a package.

Sending Veteran or other individuals’ Social Security Numbers (SSNs) through the mail is either eliminated or reduced, thanks to a final rule released and being implemented by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

The Social Security Number Fraud Prevention Act of 2017 restricts the inclusion of the SSN on any document or package sent by physical mail, unless required for specific reasons. The specific reasons identified in the final rule are as follows: 1) To comply with other legal mandates 2) To identify an individual when no alternative is available 3) To fulfill a Department business need, and joint agreement is needed from the Senior Agency Official for Privacy (SAOP), the Chief Privacy Officer (CPO) and the Social Security Number Advisory Board (SSNAB) to continue to include SSN on mailed documents.

If you are a Veteran, your SSN will not be populated on documents sent by mail unless the VA SAOP, the CPO, and the SSNAB jointly determine that inclusion of the SSN is necessary. No portion of the SSN will be visible on the outside of any mailing (i.e., letter or package).

VA is fully compliant with this Act and continues to work diligently to protect your personally identifiable information (PII). VA has achieved several accomplishments to date:

* All VA Administrations reviewed documents, forms and items containing full SSNs that are sent through physical mail. The full SSN was truncated to the last four digits of the SSN or removed where feasible.
* Veteran SSNs have been eliminated from VA prescription labels, bottles and mailing labels.
* Veteran SSNs were removed from health care authorization cards issued for the Civilian Health and Medical Program of VA, the Spina Bifida Health Care Program and the Children of Women Vietnam Veterans Health Care Program.
* Veteran SSNs were either removed or shortened to the last four digits on most Veterans Health Administration correspondence.
* The Veterans Benefits Administration removed SSNs from outgoing Veterans Assistance Discharge System letters distributed to transitioning Service members from Active-Duty status to Veteran status.

Read [Social Security Number Reduction Overview](https://department.va.gov/privacy/ssnreduction/) for more about what VA has done to limit the use of PII.

For more information on the final rule, read the [Social Security Number Fraud Prevention Act of 2017 Implementation Final Rule.](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/08/31/2022-18782/social-security-number-fraud-prevention-act-of-2017-implementation)