



Structure of Social Security Numbers

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A Social Security Number (SSN) consists of nine digits, commonly written in three fields separated by hyphens: AAA-GG-SSSS. The first three-digit field is called the "area number". The central, two-digit field is called the "group number". The final, four-digit field is called the "serial number".

Area Numbers

The area numbers were assigned to geographical locations in a manner analogous to the way in which ZIP codes were later assigned (in part, area numbers increase from east to west across the continental US as ZIP codes). Most area numbers were assigned according to state (or territorial) boundaries, although the series 700-729 was assigned to railroad workers regardless of location (this series of area numbers was discontinued in 1964 and is no longer used for new SSNs). With few exceptions, each geographical area is assigned a range of area numbers. Area numbers assigned prior to 1972 are an indication of the location of the SSA office which originally issued the SSN. Since 1972 SSNs have been issued centrally and the area number in SSNs assigned since 1972 corresponds to the residence location of the applicant as indicated on the application for the SSN.

The original range of area number assignments for a particular region, in many cases, eventually exhausted because of population increases. As a result, original area number assignments have been augmented as required. All

the original assignments were less than 600 (except for the 700-729 railroad worker series mentioned above). Only recently have group numbers in series been allocated. An area number in the 800 series is bogus, so SSN beginning with an "8" is invalid. An area number of "000" is also invalid.

000	unused	387-399	WI	528-529	UT
001-003	NH	400-407	KY	530	NV
004-007	ME	408-415	TN	531-539	WA
008-009	VT	416-424	AL	540-544	OR
010-034	MA	425-428	MS	545-573	CA
035-039	RI	429-432	AR	574	AK
040-049	CT	433-439	LA	575-576	HI
050-134	NY	440-448	OK	577-579	DC
135-158	NJ	449-467	TX	580	VI Virgin Islands
159-211	PA	468-477	MN	581-584	PR Puerto Rico
212-220	MD	478-485	IA	585	NM
221-222	DE	486-500	MO	586	PI Pacific Islands*
223-231	VA	501-502	ND	587-588	MS
232-236	WV	503-504	SD	589-595	FL
237-246	NC	505-508	NE	596-599	PR Puerto Rico
247-251	SC	509-515	KS	600-601	AZ
252-260	GA	516-517	MT	602-626	CA
261-267	FL	518-519	ID	*Guam, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, Philippine Islands	
268-302	OH	520	WY		
303-317	IN	521-524	CO		
318-361	IL	525	NM		
362-386	MI	526-527	AZ		

627-699 unassigned, for future use

700-728 Railroad workers through 1963, then discontinued

729-899 unassigned, for future use

900-999 not valid SSNs, but were used for program purposes when state aid to the aged, blind and disabled was converted to a federal program administered by SSA.

Group Numbers

The group number is not related to geography but rather to the order which SSNs are issued for a particular area. The group numbers for each area number are assigned in the following order:

1. Odd numbers, 01 to 09
2. Even numbers, 10 to 98
3. Even numbers, 02 to 08
4. Odd numbers, 11 to 99

A group code of "00" is invalid.

SSA publishes a list every month of the highest group assigned for each Area. For example, if the highest group assigned for area 999 is 72, we know that the number 999-04-1234 is an invalid number because even under 9 have not yet been assigned.

Serial Numbers

Serial numbers are assigned in chronological order as the application processed (except that all 2000 and 7000 series serial numbers are special, see below). Serial number "0000" is invalid.

Composite SSN Assignment

The composite numbers are assigned starting with serial number 0001 and running through all assigned area numbers for the first group code. Serial number 0002 is used with all assigned area numbers for the first group code. Etc., etc. Thus, the area numbers vary first (ascending within the assigned range of numbers), followed by the serial numbers in ascending order, except for 2000 and 7000 series; see below), followed by the group numbers (according to the rules above). Since the group number is non-repeating and assigned according to a fixed (albeit weird) rule, the last digit is an indicator of the age of the SSN.

For example, Idaho is assigned area numbers 518-519. The SSNs in Idaho then, were assigned in the following order:

518-01-0001, 519-01-0001, 518-01-0002, 519-01-0002 518-01-9999, 519-01-9999, 518-03-0001, 519-03-0001, etc.

The 2000 and 7000 series serial numbers are special. These ranges are assigned in chronological order. Rather, every fifth applicant is assigned a serial number in one of these ranges. These serial number groups represent a random sampling of SS participants and are used for statistical analysis.

Invalid SSNs

Any SSN conforming to one of the following criteria is an invalid number.

1. Any field all zeroes (no field of zeroes is ever assigned).
2. First digit "8" (no area numbers in the 800 series have been assigned).
3. First two digits 73-79 (no area numbers in the 700 series have been assigned except for the "railroad" series, 700-729).

Very few SSNs with an area number in the 900 series have been allocated; virtually all of them are special numbers (i.e., they are not assigned to individuals).

A pamphlet entitled "The Social Security Number" (Pub. No. 05-10633) provides an explanation of the SSN's structure and the method of assigning and validating Social Security numbers.

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