

### Online Certificate of Coverage Service

#### Introduction

Are you a U.S. employer with operations in other foreign countries? Do you send employees to work temporarily overseas? If so, you and your employees may benefit from the [bilateral Social Security agreements](#) the United States has concluded with certain foreign countries.



These agreements, often called "Totalization" agreements, eliminate dual Social Security taxation, the situation that occurs when an employee from one country works in another country and is required to pay Social Security taxes to both countries on the same earnings. The agreements assign coverage to just one country and exempt the employer and employee from the payment of Social Security taxes in the other country.

#### What are certificates of coverage?

If a Social Security agreement assigns coverage of the employee's work to the United States, the Social Security Administration issues a U.S. Certificate of Coverage. The certificate serves as proof that the employee and employer are exempt from the payment of Social Security taxes to the foreign country.

U.S. employers have traditionally used regular mail and fax to request certificates of coverage for their expatriate employees. Now, employers and self-employed individuals can request certificates on line.

#### Confidentiality

The Social Security Administration has taken reasonable measures, including encryption, to ensure we do not disclose your personal information to a third party. The Web is an open system and we cannot guarantee that others will not intercept and decrypt the information you send. To request a Certificate of Coverage by mail or fax, please take a look at the [descriptions](#) of individual Social Security agreements.

#### What are the advantages of the online service?

- Faster service — eliminates the need for data rekeying,
- Data verification — checks data for keying errors or missing information before transmission,
- Email confirmation — provides an option to request confirmation of approved Certificate requests,
- Online help — provides help for completing data fields, and
- Up to date information — Online form is always the latest edition.

#### Accessing the online certificate request forms

You may access the online Certificate of Coverage service at [opts.ssa.gov](https://opts.ssa.gov). If you would like instructions or require assistance with the use of the online forms, please contact the Social Security Administration's Office of Earnings and International Operations by phone at (410) 965-7306, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Eastern U.S. time.

If you have questions or comments regarding certificates of coverage, you can reach us via email at [certificate@ssa.gov](mailto:certificate@ssa.gov), or fax (410) 966-1861 or by writing to the following address:

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