

Archived Social Security Retirement Tips

October 2016 - If I go outside the United States, will I still receive my Social Security check?

Special rules apply to people outside the U.S. If you go outside the country for 30 days or more while you are receiving social security checks, your absence from this country may affect your right to checks. For more information on your Social Security benefits go to: www.ssa.gov or call (800) 772-1213.

June 2016 - How is my Social Security Retirement Benefit calculated?

Many people wonder how Social Security calculates their benefit. Social Security benefits are based on your lifetime earnings. Your actual earnings are adjusted or “indexed” to account for changes in your average wages beginning with the first year your earnings were received. Social Security calculates your average indexed monthly earnings during the 35 years of your highest earnings. For more information on your Social Security benefits go to: <http://www.ssa.gov> or call (800) 772-1213.

February 2016 - What documents will I need to apply for Social Security?

The Social Security office may need to see certain documents in order to pay benefits and help Social Security decide how much your benefits should be. The documents you'll need will depend on the circumstances of your claim. The documents they may ask for are:

- your Social Security card (or a record of your number)
- your original birth certificate or other proof of birth
- proof of U.S. citizenship or lawful alien status if you were not born in the U.S.
- a copy of your U.S. military service paper(s) (e.g., DD-214 - Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty)
- a copy of your W-2 form(s) and/or self-employment tax return for last year

For more information on your Social Security benefits go to: www.socialsecurity.gov or call (800) 772-1213.

November 2015 - Is there an online tool that can be used to calculate my pension benefit?

You can use the Benefit Projection Calculator on the Office of the State Comptroller’s website to project what your approximate pension could be based on the retirement date you choose. The calculator also projects benefit amounts under the various payment options available to you at retirement. Visit www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/members/projecting-your-pension.php to use the calculator. For more information, call (866) 805-0990.

October 2015 - Is there an online tool that can be used to calculate my Social Security benefit?

Social Security has an online calculator at www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator that will provide immediate and personalized benefit estimates to help you plan for your retirement. The Retirement Estimator is tied to your actual Social Security earnings record and eliminates the need to manually key in years of earnings information. For more information, call (800) 772-1213.

June 2015 - What is the Social Security Administration’s Retirement Estimator?

The Retirement Estimator is an online calculator at www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator (also available in Spanish) that will provide immediate and personalized benefit estimates to help you plan for your retirement. The Retirement Estimator is tied to your actual Social Security earnings record and eliminates the need to manually key in years of earnings information. For more information on your Social Security benefits go to www.socialsecurity.gov or call (800) 772-1213

February 2015 - When are Social Security checks mailed to participants each month?

If your birthday falls between the 1st and 10th of the month, your Social Security check comes on the 2nd Wednesday of the month; between the 11th and 20th of the month, your Social Security check comes on the 3rd Wednesday of the month; between the 21st and 31st of the month, your Social Security check comes on the 4th Wednesday of the month. For more information on your Social Security benefits go to: www.socialsecurity.gov or call 800-772-1213.

November 2014 - Upon my death, what happens to the balance in my NYS Deferred Compensation Plan Account?

Upon your death, the amount remaining in your plan account will be paid to your beneficiary(s). If you did not name a beneficiary, the amount remaining will be paid to your spouse, if you have a spouse, or to your estate. To speak to a NYS Deferred Compensation Plan HELPLINE Representative, call (800) 422-8463. Representatives are available Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., and Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., except holidays. You may also visit the Deferred Compensation Plan website at www.nysdcp.com.

October 2014 - If I go outside the United States, will I still receive my Social Security check?

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June 2014 - Is my Social Security affected if I return to work after I retire?

If you return to work after you start receiving retirement checks, your added earnings may result in higher benefits. Social Security will automatically refigure your benefit after the additional earnings are credited to your record. In addition, there is a special credit that can mean a larger benefit. For each month you delay collecting retirement benefits, beginning with the month you reach full retirement age until you are 70, you'll receive an extra amount in benefits when you do retire. For more information on your Social Security benefits go to: www.socialsecurity.gov or call 800-772-1213.

February 2014 - Will the amount of my Social Security benefit change if I retire early?

You can retire as early as 62, but your retirement check will be reduced permanently. Payment amounts are also reduced if a wife, husband, widow or widower starts getting payments before full retirement age. The amount of reduction depends on the number of months you get checks before you reach full retirement age. If you start your checks early, you will get about the same value in total benefits over the years, but in smaller amounts to adjust for the longer period you will get them. The Retirement Estimator can be found at: www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator. For more information on your Social Security benefits go to www.socialsecurity.gov or call 800-772-1213.

October 2013 - Is there an online tool that can be used to calculate my Social Security benefit?
Social Security has an online calculator at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator> that will provide immediate and personalized benefit estimates to help you plan for your retirement. The Retirement Estimator is tied to your actual Social Security earnings record and eliminates the need to manually key in years of earnings information. For more information, call (800) 772-1213.

February 2013 - How does Social Security calculate my monthly benefit?

Social Security benefits are based on your lifetime earnings. Your actual earnings are adjusted or "indexed" to account for changes in average wages since the year the earnings were received. Then Social Security calculates your average indexed monthly earnings during the 35 years in which you

earned the most. If there were some years when you did not work, or had low earnings, your benefit amount may be lower than if you had worked steadily. For more information on your Social Security benefits go to www.socialsecurity.gov or call 800-772-1213.

October 2012 - Go Direct Program for Social Security

The Federal Direct Deposit Program "Go Direct", is coming soon. You'll need to switch to electronic payments by March 1, 2013 if you receive federal benefits (such as Social Security) by paper check. You can sign up to receive your federal benefits through direct deposit, or you can choose to receive a prepaid debit card. Visit the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Go Direct site for more information. http://www.godirect.gov/?utm_source=enews-member-july12&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=member-close-to-retire-1

For more information on your Social Security benefits go to www.socialsecurity.gov or call 800-772-1213.

June 2012 - What is the Social Security Administration's Retirement Estimator?

The Retirement Estimator is an online calculator at www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator (also available in Spanish) that will provide immediate and personalized benefit estimates to help you plan for your retirement. The Retirement Estimator is tied to your actual Social Security earnings record and eliminates the need to manually key in years of earnings information. For more information on your Social Security benefits go to www.socialsecurity.gov or call 800-772-1213.

February 2012 - Are my Social Security benefits figured on my last five years of earnings?

No. Retirement benefit calculations are based on your average earnings during a lifetime of work under the Social Security system. For most current and future retirees, we will average your 35 highest years of earnings. Years in which you have low earnings or no earnings may be counted to bring the total years of earnings up to 35. For more information on your Social Security benefits go to: www.socialsecurity.gov or call 800-772-1213.

February 2011 - What documents will I need to apply for Social Security?

The Social Security office may need to see certain documents in order to pay benefits and help S.S. decide how much your benefits should be. The documents you'll need will depend on the circumstances of your claim. The documents they may ask for are:

- your Social Security card (or a record of your number)
- your original birth certificate or other proof of birth
- proof of U.S. citizenship or lawful alien status if you were not born in the U.S.
- a copy of your U.S. military service paper(s) (e.g., DD-214 - Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty)
- a copy of your W-2 form(s) and/or self-employment tax return for last year

For more information on your Social Security benefits go to: www.socialsecurity.gov or call 800-772-1213.

October 2010 - If I go outside the United States, will I still receive my Social Security check?

Special rules apply to people outside the U.S. If you go outside the country for 30 days or more while you are receiving social security checks, your absence from this country may affect your right to checks. For more information on your Social Security benefits go to: www.socialsecurity.gov or call 800-772-1213.

June 2010 - How can I estimate what my social security benefit amount will be when I retire?

Social Security has an online calculator at www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator that will provide immediate and personalized benefit estimates to help you plan for your retirement. The Social Security Retirement Estimator is tied to your actual Social Security earnings record and eliminates the need to manually key in years of earnings information. For more information on your Social Security benefits go to: www.socialsecurity.gov or call 800-772-1213.

February 2010 - When are Social Security checks mailed to participants each month?

If your birthday falls between the 1st and 10th of the month, your Social Security check comes on the 2nd Wednesday of the month; between the 11th and 20th of the month, your Social Security check comes on the 3rd Wednesday of the month; between the 21st and 31st of the month, your Social Security check comes on the 4th Wednesday of the month. For more information on your Social Security benefits go to: www.socialsecurity.gov or call 800-772-1213.

October 2009 - When do I apply for social security benefits if I retire from state service before I reach full social security retirement age?

You can apply for social security benefits when you retire from state service. However, if you apply for social security benefits before you reach your full social security retirement age, your social security retirement check will be reduced permanently. The amount of reduction depends on the number of months you receive checks before you reach full social security retirement age. The fastest and easiest way to apply for retirement benefits is to go to www.socialsecurity.gov/applyonline. To use our online application to apply for Social Security retirement or spouse's benefits, you must:

- Be at least 61 years and 9 months old;
- Want to start your benefits in the next four months; and
- Live in the United States or one of its commonwealths or territories.

You may also call 800-772-1213 for an appointment to apply by phone or in person at your local social security office.

June 2009 - How can I estimate my monthly Social Security benefit amount?

Social Security has an online calculator at www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator that provides immediate and personalized benefit estimates to help you plan for your retirement. The Retirement Estimator is tied to your actual Social Security earnings record and eliminates the need to manually key in years of earnings information. Retirement estimates may vary slightly from the actual benefit you may receive in the future because:

- Your Social Security earnings record is constantly being updated; and,
- Social Security calculators use different parameters and assumptions (e.g., different stop work ages, future earnings projections, etc.) and your actual future benefit will be adjusted for inflation.

For more information about Social Security, call 800-772-1213 or visit www.socialsecurity.gov.

February 2009 - Will the amount of my Social Security benefit change if I retire early?

You can retire as early as 62, but your Social Security check will be reduced permanently. The amount of reduction depends on the number of months you get checks before you reach full retirement age. If you start your checks early, you will get about the same value in total benefits over the years, but in smaller amounts to adjust for the longer period you will get them. The Retirement Estimator can be found at www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator. For more information about Social Security call: 800-772-1213 or visit www.socialsecurity.gov

October 2008 - Is my Social Security benefit affected if I return to work after I retire?

If you return to work after you start receiving retirement checks, your added earnings may result in higher benefits. Social Security will automatically recalculate your benefit after the additional earnings are credited to your record. In addition, there is a special credit that can mean a larger benefit. For each month you delay collecting retirement benefits, beginning with the month you reach full retirement age until you are 70, you'll receive an extra amount in benefits when you do retire.

For more information about Social Security call: 800-772-1213 or visit: www.socialsecurity.gov

June 2008 - How does retirement affect Social Security survivor benefits?

If you are collecting Social Security (SS) survivor benefits, you can switch to your own SS retirement benefits (assuming you are eligible and your SS retirement rate is higher than the widow/widower's rate) as early as age 62. In many cases, you can begin receiving SS retirement benefits either on your own or your spouse's record at age 62 and then switch to the other benefit when you reach full retirement age, if that amount is higher. For more information: call Social Security at 800-772-1213 or toll-free "TTY" 800-325-0778, 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. Monday through Friday or visit:

<http://www.socialsecurity.gov>.

March 2008 - Do I need to enroll in Medicare Part A and B?

Three months before you turn 65, contact the Social Security Office to arrange for Medicare Parts A and B. After you turn 65, Medicare will become primary to the NYS Health Insurance Program (NYSHIP). You can also apply for both Social Security benefits and Medicare benefits online. For more information, visit: www.socialsecurity.gov or call: 1-800-772-1213.

November 2007 - Should I use direct deposit for my Social Security check?

Using direct deposit for your monthly Social Security check is safe, secure, and convenient. You will get your benefits on time, even if you're out of town, sick, or unable to get to the bank. For additional information call Social Security at: 800-772-1213 or visit: www.socialsecurity.gov.

July 2007 - Remember to review your Social Security Statement each year for accuracy.

This is a very useful planning document because it includes a summary of estimated retirement, disability and survivor benefits you and your family may receive based on your earnings.