SOFTWARE & TECH

Sample W 2 Filled Out

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For millions of American workers, the arrival of the W-2 form in January marks the beginning of tax season. This essential document, officially known as the **Wage and Tax Statement**, summarizes an employee's earnings and tax withholdings for the previous calendar year. However, for many people, the series of boxes, codes, and dollar amounts can look like a foreign language. This is where examining a **sample W-2 filled out** becomes incredibly valuable. By walking through a realistic example, you can learn exactly what each box means, how to verify the information is correct, and how to use these numbers when filing your tax return.

Whether you are a new employee reviewing your first tax form, a small-business owner preparing to issue W-2s, or simply someone who wants to double-check their payroll data, this guide will help you decode every section of a completed W-2. We will use a concrete sample filled with typical figures, and we will explain the purpose and significance of each entry. By the end, you will feel confident reading any W-2 and understanding how it reflects your earnings and your employer's reporting to the IRS and Social Security Administration.

What Is a W-2 Form and Why Does It Matter?

A W-2 is a multi-part tax form that employers must send to each employee and to the IRS by January 31 each year. It reports an employee's annual wages and the amount of federal, state, Social Security, and Medicare taxes withheld from those wages. The form is used by individuals to prepare their personal income tax returns, and it is also used by the IRS to ensure that taxpayers are reporting their income correctly.

Understanding how a W-2 is structured is critical because any mistake on this document — an incorrect Social Security number, wrong dollar amount, or missing box — can cause delays in processing your tax return or trigger a notice from the IRS. By referencing a **sample W-2 filled out** correctly, you gain a baseline for checking your own form.

Anatomy of a Sample Filled-Out W-2

To illustrate the details, let us picture a fictional employee named **Maria Garcia**. Maria works at "GreenTech Solutions," a mid-sized company in Portland, Oregon. She is single and claims one withholding allowance. Throughout 2023, she earned a salary plus a small bonus and had various pre-tax deductions. Below we break down each part of her **W-2 sample filled out**.

Box a – Employee's Social Security Number

This box contains the employee's nine-digit Social Security number (SSN). For Maria, it appears as **XXX-XX-1234**. It is vital that this number matches the SSN on your Social Security card. A mismatch can cause your earnings to be misattributed, affecting future Social Security benefits. Compare this with your actual SSN before filing.

Box b – Employer Identification Number (EIN)

XX-XXX6678. This number is used by the IRS to track wages reported by employers. You typically do not need to verify it, but it should appear as a nine-digit number.

Box c – Employer's Name, Address, and ZIP Code

Here you see the full legal name and address of your employer. In our sample, it shows:

*GreenTech Solutions
123 Innovation Drive
Portland, OR 97201*

Double-check that the name matches your pay stubs or employer records. An outdated address is usually not a problem, but a wrong name could indicate a clerical error.

Box d – Control Number (Optional)

This box is used by some employers to internally track the W-2. It is rarely needed for your tax return. In our sample, it is left blank or contains a short code like **CN-456**.

Box e and f – Employee's Name and Address

These boxes show your full legal name and current mailing address. Maria's name appears as **Maria Garcia** and address as **456 Oak Avenue, Portland, OR 97204**. Ensure your name is spelled exactly as it appears on your Social Security card — including middle initials if you use them. If your name changed due to marriage or divorce, contact the Social Security Administration before filing to avoid delays.

Decoding the Wages and Tax Withholding Boxes

These boxes represent the financial core of the W-2. Each corresponds to a specific type of income or tax withheld. Our **sample W-2 filled out** will use realistic amounts for Maria's 2023 earnings.

Box 1 – Wages, Tips, Other Compensation

This is perhaps the most important number for your federal income tax return. It shows total taxable wages, including salary, bonuses, commissions, and tips, *minus* pre-tax deductions such as contributions to a 401(k), health insurance premiums, or flexible spending accounts. In Maria's case, her gross pay was $62,000, she contributed $3,500 to a 401(k), and $1,200 for health insurance, giving her **Box 1 = $57,300**. This amount is what you report as wage income on your Form 1040.

Box 2 – Federal Income Tax Withheld

This box shows the total federal income tax that was taken out of your pay during the year. For Maria, that figure is **$5,870**. You subtract this from your total tax liability when you file; if too much was withheld, you get a refund. Compare this with your pay stubs if needed.

Box 3 – Social Security Wages

Unlike Box 1, Box 3 includes all wages subject to Social Security tax — usually the full gross wages *before* pre-tax deductions for certain benefits (such as health insurance). But contributions to a 401(k) are still subject to Social Security tax, so they are included. In Maria's case, her Social Security wages are **$62,000**(gross pay). There is also a wage base limit; for 2023, the maximum amount subject to Social Security tax was $160,200. Maria is well under that limit.

Box 4 – Social Security Tax Withheld

This is 6.2% of Box 3 (up to the wage base). Maria's Box 3 is $62,000, so 6.2% × $62,000 = **$3,844**. This amount is listed in Box 4. The employer also pays 6.2%, but that is not shown on the W-2.

Box 5 – Medicare Wages and Tips

Medicare wages are similar to Social Security wages, but there is no wage cap. They generally include the same total as Box 3, except for certain exceptions. Maria's Box 5 is again **$62,000**.

Box 6 – Medicare Tax Withheld

This is 1.45% of Box 5. For Maria, that equals **$899**(since 1.45% of $62,000 = $899). High-earning employees may have an additional 0.9% Medicare surtax, but that does not apply here.

Box 7 – Social Security Tips

If you work in an occupation where you receive tips (restaurants, hotels, etc.), this box reports allocated tips. Maria does not receive tips, so Box 7 is blank.

Box 8 – Allocated Tips

This is only for certain employers in the food and beverage industry. It shows tips that the employer has allocated to you. Blank for Maria.

Additional Medicare and Dependent Care Benefits

Box 10 – Dependent Care Benefits

If your employer provides a dependent care flexible spending account (FSA) or you receive dependent care assistance, the total amount (up to $5,000) goes in Box 10. This amount is also included in Box 1, 3, and 5 unless specified. Maria did not participate in dependent care, so Box 10 is zero.

Box 11 – Nonqualified Plans (Deferred Compensation)

This box reports distributions from nonqualified deferred compensation plans that are subject to Social Security and Medicare taxes but were previously excluded from Box 1. For most employees, this box is empty. Maria has no such plan.

State and Local Tax Information

Many W-2 forms include a separate section at the bottom for state and local taxes. Our **sample W-2 filled out** for Maria includes Oregon state taxes.

Box 15 – State and Employer's State ID Number

This shows the two-letter abbreviation for the state where you worked (e.g., **OR** for Oregon) and the employer's state tax identification number. GreenTech's Oregon ID is **XX-XXXXX**.

Box 16 – State Wages, Tips, etc.

This is the amount of wages subject to state income tax. It may differ from Box 1 because state tax laws treat certain deductions differently. Oregon, for example, allows a personal exemption deduction at the state level but not at the federal level? Actually, Oregon does not conform to federal deductions in all ways. But often Box 16 equals Box 1. For Maria, Box 16 shows **$57,300**.

Box 17 – State Income Tax Withheld

The total state income tax withheld. Maria's Oregon state tax is **$3,120**.

Boxes 18, 19, 20 – Local Wages and Taxes (if applicable)

These boxes are for city or county income taxes. Some localities have them (e.g., New York City, Philadelphia, or cities in Ohio). Box 18 shows local wages, Box 19 shows local income tax withheld, and Box 20 shows the locality name. For Maria (Portland, Oregon), there is no local income tax, so these boxes are blank.

Common Codes in Box 12

Box 12 has multiple letter-coded entries. Each code represents a specific type of compensation or benefit. Our sample includes two codes:

- Code D: Deferrals under a 401(k) or similar plan. Amount: $3,500. This is Maria's contribution, which reduced her Box 1 wages.
- Code W: Employer contributions to a Health Savings Account (HSA) — not applicable for Maria.

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