



The ABC's Of Your W-2



(NAPSA)—By January 31, every employer that paid you during 2002 must provide you with a Form W-2, Wage and Tax Statement—even if you worked for only a day. The nation's leader in payroll education, the American Payroll Association, offers these tips to help you check your W-2:

- If you haven't received your W-2, contact the company's payroll department. Be prepared with your full name, your Social Security number, and your employee number.

- Check that your name and Social Security number exactly match those on your Social Security card. If not, contact your payroll department and request a corrected W-2. An exact match is vital to get your eventual Social Security benefits. An exception: it's okay if your Social Security card shows your middle name, but your W-2 only contains your middle initial.

- Locate your last pay stub of the year. The amounts entered in W-2 box 1 (Wages, tips, and other compensation), box 3 (Social Security wages), and box 5 (Medicare wages and tips) may differ from your year-to-date gross pay. Deductions from your pay for some employer-sponsored

savings plans, such as a 401(k), reduce the amount reported in box 1. Payroll deductions for flexible spending accounts (medical, dependent care, etc.) will reduce the amounts in boxes 1, 3, and 5, if you chose pre-tax deductions.

- Make sure state and local boxes accurately reflect the states and municipalities for which you have a tax liability. Some of these jurisdictions may calculate taxable wages differently from what is reported in box 1.

- Read the back of the W-2 Copy B to determine if you are eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit, and the back of Copy C for explanations of other boxes.

- If any of the dollar amounts seem incorrect, contact your payroll department.

- If you misplace your W-2, request a "reissued statement" from your payroll department. Your employer may charge you a fee.

- If, as a freelance or contract worker, you received \$600 or more from any one company in 2002, you should have received a Form 1099-MISC, Miscellaneous Income, from that company. If you haven't, contact the company's accounts payable department.

For more information, visit www.nationalpayrollweek.com.