

STATE CONTROLLER'S OFFICE
PERSONNEL AND PAYROLL SERVICES DIVISION
P.O. BOX 942850
SACRAMENTO, CA 94250-5878

DATE: November 3, 2017

PAYROLL LETTER #17-019

TO: All Agencies in the Uniform State Payroll System

FROM: Debra Spellman, Chief
Personnel and Payroll Services Division

RE: SPECIAL ACCOUNTING PERIOD FOR NON-CASH FRINGE BENEFITS

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) allows employers to adopt a Special Accounting Period (SAP) for reporting **non-cash**, taxable fringe benefit values. The SAP allows employers to report values received late in the previous calendar year as income in the following tax year. The SAP helps to reduce late reporting and the issuance of corrected Forms W-2. This also results in employees filing fewer amended income tax returns.

For employees receiving non-cash values in November 2017, the Personnel /Payroll Services Division (PPSD) must receive Form STD. 676V by December 1, 2017. This will ensure the taxable gross and Social Security/Medicare amounts for non-cash values will be on the 2017 Form W-2. When Form STD. 676V is received after December 1, 2017, a corrected W-2 will be issued.

GENERAL INFORMATION

This letter provides reporting instructions for **non-cash**, taxable fringe benefit values that employees will receive in December 2017. It also includes a sample employee notification letter to employees regarding SAP provisions (Payroll Procedures Manual (PPM) Section N-175 and Payroll Letter # 17-015 for 2017 reporting cut-off dates).

SPECIAL REPORTING INSTRUCTIONS

Complete the Form STD. 676V Non-USPS Adjustment Request – Values (Fringe Benefit/Employee Business Expense) using PPM Section N-172.2 procedures. When completing column 9 (issue date), **enter 01/01/18 for all non-cash values that employees receive during December 2017**. The 2018 Form W-2 will reflect these non-cash values.

NOTE: Fringe benefits reported in November will not have Federal and State income taxes withheld from the December warrant. See PPM Section Z Attachment N-2 for additional information on the fringe benefit processing under the SAP.

MANDATORY EMPLOYEE NOTIFICATION

The Internal Revenue Service **requires** employers (agencies and campuses) to:

1. Notify affected employees of SAP reporting provisions;
2. Instruct employees to use the same SAP (for value based benefits received December 2016 through November 2017) when filing personal income tax returns; and

3. Notify employees of the **SAP no sooner than the receipt of the last paycheck of the calendar year and no later than release of the employee's W-2**

NOTE: Agencies/Campuses are encouraged to use the attached sample notification letter to fulfill the mandated reporting requirements.

REMINDER

The State's goal is that all employers (agencies and campuses) comply with federal and state employment tax regulations. This requires each agency or campus to report Fringe Benefits/Employee Business Expenses (FB/EBEs) on a timely, accurate, and comprehensive basis. Accurate reporting means proper completion of reporting documents. Comprehensive reporting means that your agency or campus reports all applicable FB/EBEs that are provided to employees, as defined in the PPM Section N-120 – 175 and corresponding Payroll Letters. By complying with these requirements, your agency or campus prevents fines, penalties and assessments levied by tax authorities. Complying with these requirements may prevent costs stemming from retroactivity and corrected Forms W-2.

CONTACTS

For assistance with personnel or payroll related items, agencies/campuses can contact the Customer Contact Center at (916) 372-7200. For questions regarding the SAP, please contact John Ochoa at jochoa@sco.ca.gov.

DS: JD: JO: TSS

ATTACHMENT

ATTACHMENT—SAMPLE LETTER TO EMPLOYEES IMPACTED BY SAP

January 5, 2018

Dear State Employee,

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) allows employers to adopt a Special Accounting Period (SAP) for reporting **non-cash**, taxable fringe benefit values. The SAP allows employers to report values received late in one calendar year as income in the following tax year. The SAP reduces late reporting, issuing corrected Forms W-2 and employees filing amended income tax returns.

In January 1996, the State Controller's Office adopted a December through November SAP calendar. Your 2017 Form W-2 will show non-cash values reported by your employing agency or campus that you received in December 2016 through November 2017.

NON-CASH, TAXABLE FRINGE BENEFITS

Under the SAP, the following non-cash taxable values are affected:

Value of State Housing	Out-Placement
Lottery Sales Recognition	Merit Award Program (non-cash)
Educational Assistance Program	Scholarships (Fee Waiver Program)
Rideshare Incentive Award Program	Commuter Highway Vehicle
Dues and Memberships	Vehicle Provided by Third Parties
Personal Use of State Vehicle	Uniform Allowance
Loan Assumption Program	Miscellaneous Incentive Program
Car/Vanpool	Discount Travel/Transit Pass (non-cash)
Group-Term Life Insurance (Legislators)	Overtime Meal Compensation (i.e., Meal Tickets)
Forgivable Loan/Doctoral Incentive Program	Electronic Devices
Loan Forgiveness Program	Incentive Provided by Third Parties (non-cash)
Tickets	

IRS REQUIREMENTS

The IRS **requires** that employees use the same accounting period (December through November) when filing tax returns. Employees who itemized deductions related to non-cash, taxable values received in December 2017 would report these values in the following tax year (2018).

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions regarding the Special Accounting Period (SAP), please contact your Human Resources or Accounting Office. **Contact your tax advisor or the IRS regarding tax-filing questions.**