



Fake Form W-8BEN Used in IRS Tax Scams



Remember:

You can only submit Form W-8BEN directly to your [withholding agent](#).

The [Form W-8BEN](#) (Certificate of Foreign Status of Beneficial Owner for United States Tax Withholding) is a legitimate U.S. tax exemption document.

However, fraudsters typically target non-residents of the U.S. and use the W-8BEN format to acquire personal details such as,

- mother's maiden name,
- passport number,
- date of birth,
- PIN numbers and passcodes.

The legitimate IRS Form W-8BEN, does not ask for any of that information.

The fraudulent forms use various angles that may claim, for example:

- Anti-money laundering regulations require a review of your client information and ask you to complete the form.
- You are exempt from tax reporting and withholdings on income including interest paid to you. To protect your exemption from tax please complete the attached form.

What do I do if I receive such a scam form via email, fax, mail, or other format?

1. **Do not reply.**
2. **Do not open any attachments.**
Attachments may contain malicious code that will infect your computer.
3. **Do not click on any links.**
If you clicked on links in a suspicious email or phishing website and entered confidential information, visit our [identity protection](#) page.
4. **Forward the email as-is, to us at phishing@irs.gov.**
5. **After you forward the email and/or header information to us, delete the original email message you received.**

Related information

- **Non-resident Aliens with U.S. Income**
Using fictitious correspondence and an altered IRS Form W-8BEN, this scheme tries to get personal and financial data from foreign nationals. [IR-2004-104](#) [Aug. 3, 2004] and [IR-2004-75](#) [June 1, 2004] have details.
- [Main IRS Phishing resource page](#)
- [Phishing and Other Schemes Using the IRS Name](#)
- [Main IRS Identity Theft resource page](#)
- [U.S. Withholding Agent Frequently Asked Questions](#)

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