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IRS to Accept Facsimile Signatures on Employment Tax Returns

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service has issued new rules allowing corporate officers or duly authorized agents to sign employment tax forms by facsimile, including alternative signature methods such as computer software programs or mechanical devices.

The rules, outlined in Revenue Procedure 2005-39, will reduce burden on business taxpayers by simplifying employment tax filing and lowering the number of returns rejected by the IRS because of signature issues.

“The IRS is committed to reducing burden on taxpayers whenever we can,” said IRS Commissioner Mark W. Everson. “Providing companies with new ways to sign official documents will help reduce administrative burden and free up resources for other purposes.”

Rev. Proc. 2005-39 applies to the following forms:

- Any form in the 940 series, including Form 940, Employer’s Annual Federal Unemployment Tax Return (FUTA); Form 941, Employer’s Quarterly Federal Tax Return; Form 943, Employers Annual Federal Tax Return for Agricultural Employees; and Form 945, Annual Return of Withholding Federal Income Tax;
- Form 1042, Annual Withholding Tax Return for U.S. Source Income of Foreign Persons;
- Form 8027, Employer’s Annual Information Return of Tip Income and Allocated Tips;

- Form CT-1, Employer's Annual Railroad Retirement Tax Return; and
- Any variant of these forms, such as Form 941c, Statement to Correct Information; Form 941-SS, Employer's Quarterly Federal Tax Return.

The IRS issued the revenue procedure in response to an Industry Issue Resolution submission presented to the IRS last year by the National Payroll Consortium.

“The Industry Issue Resolution process quickly and effectively resolved issues that were fairly clear and straightforward, but that otherwise may have taken years to get through the regulatory review process,” said Pete Isberg, president of the consortium. The National Payroll Consortium “appreciates the responsiveness of the IRS in addressing these issues, and we applaud the IRS for developing the Industry Issue Resolution process. It has proven to be a very effective model for resolving complex issues.”