

2011 Idaho Income Tax Substitute Form Specifications

August 2011



Introduction

The Idaho State Tax Commission accepts substitute or reproduced tax forms. These forms must meet the requirements of the Tax Commission's original forms. The Tax Commission has established these guidelines and standards for software developers, computer tax processors, business forms companies, and any other individual or business that plans to market, distribute, or file substitute or reproduced tax forms.

Income Tax Forms

Income tax forms include the following:

- Form 40 - Individual Income Tax Return & Associated Schedules
- Form 43 - Part-Year Resident & Nonresident Income Tax Return & Associated Schedules
- Form 41 - Corporation Income Tax Return & Associated Schedules
- Form 41S - S Corporation Income Tax Return & Associated Schedules
- Form 65 - Partnership Return of Income & Associated Schedules
- Form 66 - Fiduciary Income Tax Return & Associated Schedules

Substitute Form Standards

A substitute form is one designed for use in place of an original Tax Commission issued form. Forms must be developed as close to the Idaho forms as possible. A substitute form must duplicate the appearance and layout of the Tax Commission form to include:

- Layout size, font size, style, and margins.
- Special keying symbols, line numbers, and code numbers.
- Paper weight, ink color, and density.
- Official forms less than standard 8 ½ x 11 must either be printed separately or printed on the bottom portion of a form, with a size of 8-1/2" wide and 3-2/3" high.

There must be a ½" margin on all sides of the page.

When a two-sided form contains only instructional information on the backside, the instructional side doesn't need to be submitted for approval.

Each side of a two-sided form that requires the entry of data is treated as a separate form. Submit all pages for approval at the same time.

A company that develops any substitute form must get approval from the Tax Commission before releasing or distributing the substitute form to its customers or clients. Any changes to the form by the developer after the original approval must be resubmitted for additional approval.

Specific Guidelines

For best results, we recommend that all substitute forms be printed on a laser printer. Forms printed on ink jet or dot matrix printers may be rejected if the readability of the barcode is adversely affected.

Shading

Several official Tax Commission forms contain shading. Please include shading where shown on the official form.

Form Fonts

Form 40 & Form 43 - Arial (All Caps) 08 pt.

All other Forms and Schedules - Arial (All Caps) 09 pt.

Keying Symbols and Line Numbers

Keying symbols such as data dots and line numbers are codes essential to the Tax Commission's forms processing system. All substitute income tax forms must include these symbols and line numbers.

Scannable Forms

Tax Commission income tax forms are optically read on high-speed scanners. All optically scanned forms have anchor marks printed at the corners of the form and boxes for Social Security numbers and tax due or refund fields.

The anchors and boxes on substitute scannable forms must be placed and measured exactly as shown on the original form.

State use only boxes

NOTE: Developers must fill these in with the appropriate data on a completed return.

- Individual: name control (box above the last name) - the name control will be the first four letters of the last name. For example, "Testing" would be TEST. If the last name is less than four letters, use all of the letters; "Cat" would be CAT.
- Business: name control (box in the Business name line) - the name control will be the first four letters of the business name. If the business name is "Sooner Grocery", the name control would be SOON. If the name starts with "The", do not use "The" and begin the four character name control with the first letter after "The". For example, if the company name is "The Cliff", the name control would be CLIF. Ampersands and dashes are allowable in the name control. The "Run & Shop Corporation" would have the name control of RUN&.
- Tax Period (box at the end of the tax period ending date) - enter the tax period ending date in the MMY format. For example, "06/30/12" would be 0612.

Intelligent Character Recognition (ICR) readable boxes are:

- Social Security number/Employer Identification Number
- Name Control
- Tax Due
- Refund
- Amended box

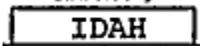
Intelligent Character Recognition (ICR) Guidelines

In order to receive a successful read in these fields, here are some guidelines when creating these boxes.

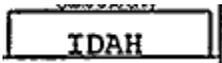
Numbers in the boxes and the amended indicator must be centered. Do not left or right justify them. The fields containing ICR data should be larger than the other fields. Smaller fields are more difficult to scan and read. For example, the Amended Return box below is too small to be scanned. In the scenario below, the Amended Return box should be at least twice the size shown.



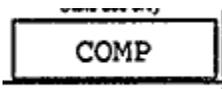
As a general rule, the boxes of information containing ICR data should be roughly twice the size of non-ICR fields. For the boxes that contain numeric or text data, the size of the box should be twice the height of the font used for data entry into that box of information. Below is an example of a box that's too small in relation to the font size:



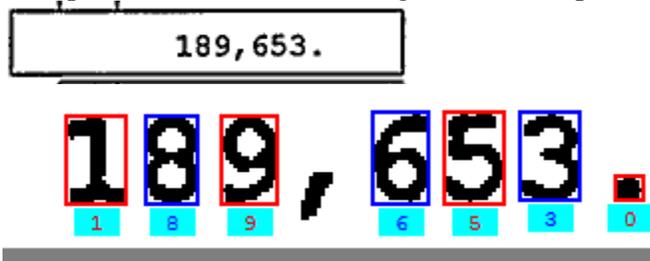
When typing information into ICR fields, avoid inserting data near the borders of the field. The following data is typed too close to the bottom border:



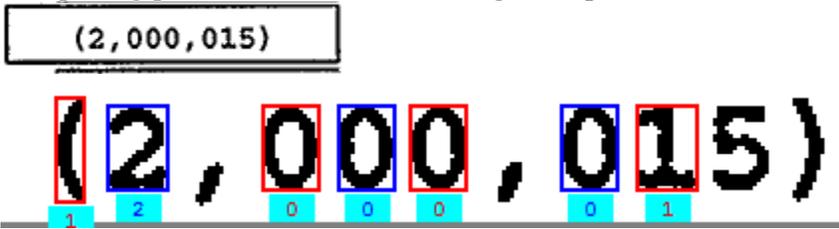
When the data in the ICR fields is half the size of the box, our imaging scanners will have a successful read. Below is an example of a field that will have a successful ICR read.



When entering data, there should be no additional markings or characters within the ICR field. The ICR scanners may interpret invalid markings as actual numerical data. One particular example is the use of decimal points in the ICR field. Our equipment may read the decimal point as a numerical value of zero. Below is an example of our software reading the decimal point as a number:



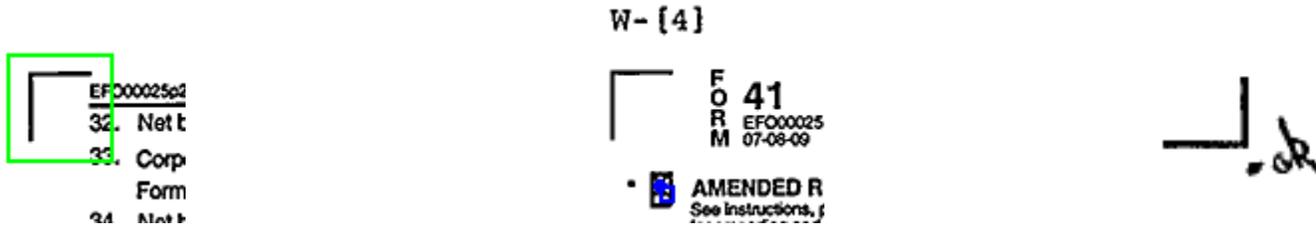
Another common error is using a negative sign or parentheses to represent a refund within the ICR Refund Field. A positive number is what is expected and the extra characters are misread by our scanner. For example, the opening parenthesis in the following example is read as a numerical value of “1”.



Anchors

Anchors are the fixed markers located at the upper left and lower right corners of Idaho’s income tax forms that allow the scanner to orient each page of each form and line up the data fields. An anchor consists of an angle bar formed by the intersection of one horizontal line and one vertical line ¼ of an inch in length with a 2-point (2/72”) thickness.

There must be ½ of an inch clearance from the edge of the form to the outside edge of the anchor. No solid, black area should be within ½ inch of any anchors inside edges. No markings or form data should be above the top target or below the bottom target. The following examples of page targets are too close to other fields, text, and lines of information on the form.



1-D Barcode

The Tax Commission uses an Interleaved 2 of 5 human readable 1-D barcode using 36 pt. barcode font. The barcode is located in the lower right corner of each page of the scannable income tax form. Each barcode consists of bars representing six characters as shown in the example below:

1-digit year	Form number	2-digit Vendor code
1	150	90

Your specific barcode data must contain different data than the “Idaho Draft Forms.” This data varies by form and form page number. A list of your barcode data may be obtained via e-mail from substituteforms@tax.idaho.gov or by calling (208) 334-7783.

Leave at least ½ of an inch of space between the lower right target and the barcode. In the first two examples below, the lower right page target is too close to the barcode, and the second barcode is too close to the other lines on the form. The font size that is used to enter numerical value on the barcode should be no less than 10 points with a reasonable amount of space between consecutive characters in a word or number. The third example doesn't have enough space between consecutive digits in the barcode.



Approval for Reproduced or Substitute Income Tax Forms

To obtain approval to generate official Idaho income tax substitute forms, software developers must:

- Check the Tax Commission's website for new or updated forms and instructions at tax.idaho.gov (click on "Forms" under the "Popular Searches" section).
- Adhere to the NACTP standards (<http://www.nactp.org/>).
- Provide one contact that coordinates development.
- Include a cover letter/e-mail with contact information with the substitute form(s) request(s). Please include your e-mail address, NACTP vendor ID number, and a list of the submitted forms.
- Submit one sample copy of each form for approval; this sample copy must contain variable data in all possible locations and positions on each form. Variable data may be sample data rather than actual taxpayer data.

Helpful hints:

- Substitute forms must contain all annual changes prior to submission to the state.
- Substitute forms must be proofread prior to submission to the state.
- Substitute forms must include your NACTP vendor ID number and the form version date. Place the NACTP vendor ID above the year of the tax form. It's not necessary to put your vendor number on the schedules attached to the primary form.
- You may reproduce any Idaho scannable income tax form listed. The reproductions must be identical to the official Tax Commission forms.
- The Tax Commission will verify that line references, data dots, indicator boxes, and any reference to percentages are correct. The Tax Commission will verify that revision dates, header of the returns, form name, and year matches our return and will check anchors, response boxes, and barcodes for accuracy. The Tax Commission won't verify the verbiage or spelling of words.
- Substitute forms will not be accepted or approved until the final versions of our official forms have been published on our website.

Forms will be returned if they contain significant errors or are not the most current version of our form.

Substitute forms will not be accepted by fax. Submit all substitute income tax forms in:

PDF format to: substituteforms@tax.idaho.gov.

Paper format to: Substitute Forms Document Coordinator
Idaho State Tax Commission
800 Park Blvd, Plaza IV
PO Box 36
Boise, ID 83712

Approval Turnaround Time for Reproduced or Substitute Income Tax Forms

The approval process begins with a visual verification of all scan lines, data fields, barcode validation, and anchor placement to quickly identify layout errors. The approval process is completed through our imaging equipment for intelligent character recognition and system validation.

Developers will receive notification of their forms results within 10 business days. All reviewed returns will be faxed or e-mailed with a cover letter indicating approval or notice of required changes.