

Preparing For the Census Taker

What to do when a census taker visits you.

"Conducting the census is an enormous task, and the Census Bureau goes to extraordinary measures to keep all the data we collect confidential."

-- Robert M. Groves, Director of the United States Census Bureau

If you don't send back your form, you may receive a visit from a census taker. If a census taker visits you, here's what you should do:

- First ask to see their ID. All census workers carry official government badges marked with just their name; they may also have a "U.S. Census Bureau" bag
- Note that the census taker will never ask to enter your home
- If you're still not certain about their identity, please call the [Regional Census Center's](#) to confirm they are employed by the Census Bureau
- Answer the census form questions for your entire household (you must be at least 15 years old to answer questions) so that the census taker can record the results for submission to the Census Bureau

Census takers visit local homes several times to capture resident information for the 2010 Census. If you prefer, you can schedule a visit with your census taker. Should the census taker come when you are away from your home, they will leave a contact number. If a census taker has not visited your home or you have a question about your participation with the census, call your [Census office](#).

Help for non-English speaking respondents

Census takers will have a flashcard containing a sentence about the 2010 Census written in approximately 50 languages. If a resident doesn't speak English, the census taker shows the flashcard to the resident, and the resident points to the language he/she speaks. A census crew Leader will then reassign the case to a person who speaks that language.

Protecting Your Personal Information

Federal law protects your identity and the information you give us.



"No one can get access to census data. It is rock solid secure."

-- James T. Christy, Los Angeles Regional Office Director, U.S. Census Bureau

We depend on your cooperation and trust, and promise to protect the confidentiality of your information. [Title 13 of the U.S. Code](#) protects the confidentiality of all your information and violating this law is a crime with severe penalties. In addition, other federal laws, including the Confidential Statistical Efficiency Act and the Privacy Act reinforce these protections.

* Private information is never published

It is against the law to disclose or publish any of the following information:

- Names
- Addresses including [GPS coordinates](#)
- Social Security numbers
- Telephone numbers

We Collect Information to Produce Statistics

We use your information to produce statistics. Your answers cannot be used against you by any government agency or court.

Sworn for Life to Protect Your Confidentiality

All Census Bureau employees take the [oath of nondisclosure](#) and are sworn for life to protect the confidentiality of the data.

Violating the Oath Is a Serious Crime

The penalty for unlawful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment of up to 5 years, or both.

Common Privacy Questions

Be assured, your information is safe.

 [Get e-mail updates when this information changes.](#)



" Participation in the census is not dependent on your visa or residency status. The census does not ask about your status (Your information is protected)."

-- Moin Ansari, Founding member of Children of Abraham: American Jewish-Muslim Alliance, and American Christian-Muslim Alliance and Naturalized U.S. citizen

How is my information protected?

All Census Bureau employees take the [oath of nondisclosure](#) and are sworn for life to protect the confidentiality of the data. By law, the Census Bureau cannot share respondents' answers with anyone, including the IRS, FBI, CIA or any other government agency.

Can my neighbor see my information?

No. Individual census records are not shared with anyone, including other federal agencies and law enforcement entities. By law, the Census Bureau cannot share respondents' answers with anyone, -- not the IRS, not the FBI, not the CIA, and not with any other government agency. [The penalty for unlawful disclosure is a fine of up to \\$250,000 or imprisonment of up to 5 years, or both.](#)

How can I keep my information safe?

The easiest way to keep your information safe is to fill out your census form and mail it back right away. Also, look for identification from census takers and remember that the Census Bureau will NEVER ask for any information to be submitted online.

What steps are taken if my information is compromised?

A determination of the sensitivity of the information and the specific details associated with incidents determines the action the Census Bureau takes. Actions range from sending notification letters to

providing credit-monitoring services. All incidents are reviewed and Census Bureau senior management receives regular status reports on the incidents.

Why is the Census Bureau using Global Positioning Systems (GPS)?

The Census Bureau uses Global Positioning Systems (GPS) to help locate addresses. A handheld computer is equipped with GPS and is used during our address canvassing operation. Address canvassing is a field operation where census workers systematically travel all known and new streets and roads to identify every structure where people live or could potentially live and update our address list and maps. For the 2010 Census, we attempted to collect GPS coordinates for each structure to make sure it is recorded in the correct location. The census workers also confirmed, added and deleted addresses using a GPS-equipped handheld computer. All this work was done to ensure a complete and accurate address list for delivering the 2010 Census questionnaires next year.

Are the GPS coordinates collected during the 2010 Census operation kept confidential?

Yes. All address information, including GPS coordinates, is protected by the confidentiality requirements of Title 13 of the United States Code. All Census Bureau [employees take an oath for life](#) to protect identifiable information about individuals and businesses gathered by the agency. By law, the Census Bureau cannot share respondents' answers with the IRS, FBI, CIA or any other government agency. The penalty for unlawful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment of up to 5 years, or both.

How your data is used

If you're curious to as to exactly how the data the census collects is used, visit the 2000 Census overview for an in-depth description. [Visit the 2000 Census website.](#)