

Benefits Buzz

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DID YOU KNOW

On Aug. 27, 2013, the IRS issued [final regulations](#) on the Affordable Care Act's individual mandate. The individual mandate requires individuals to have minimum essential coverage (MEC) or pay a penalty.

The final regulations provide further clarification on whether certain types of coverage constitute MEC.

For example, government programs that do not provide full coverage for medical expenses will not qualify as MEC.

Contact Gowrie Group for more information on the health care reform law and the individual mandate.



IRS to Recognize All Legal Same-sex Marriages for Tax Purposes

On Aug. 29, 2013, the U.S. Dept. of the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued Revenue Ruling 2013-17, ruling that same-sex couples who are legally married in jurisdictions that recognize their marriages will be treated as married for federal tax purposes, regardless of their state of residence.

Employers may wish to file refund claims for payroll taxes paid on previously-taxed health insurance and fringe benefits provided to same-sex spouses. The Treasury and the IRS intend to issue streamlined procedures for these claims.

The Treasury and the IRS also intend to issue further guidance on cafeteria plans and on how qualified retirement plans and other tax-favored arrangements should treat same-sex spouses for periods before the effective date of the ruling.

Any same-sex marriage legally entered into in one of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, a U.S. territory or a foreign country will be covered by the ruling.

However, the ruling does not apply to registered domestic partnerships, civil unions or similar formal relationships recognized under state law.

The Treasury and the IRS will begin applying the terms of Revenue Ruling 2013-17 on Sept. 16, 2013. However, taxpayers may rely on the ruling for prior years, as long as the statute of limitations has not expired.

For additional information, please consult the following resources:

- [Revenue Ruling 2013-17](#)
- [Updated IRS FAQs for same-sex couples](#)
- [Updated IRS FAQs for registered domestic partners and individuals in civil unions](#)

Large Employer Reporting Requirements

The Affordable Care Act (ACA), specifically Section 6056, requires large employers to file information returns with the IRS and to provide statements to employees each year.

On Sept. 5, 2013, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued [proposed regulations](#) on the information reporting requirements. Section 6056 returns must be filed with the IRS annually, no later than Feb. 28 (March 31 if filed electronically) of the year after the calendar year to which the return relates.

Employers that don't comply, and had at least 50 full-time employees during the prior calendar year, may be subject to penalties.

Please contact Gowrie Group for more information on the ACA's employer reporting requirements.