

Understanding W-2 Box 12 Codes

On the W-2 form, box 12 has a number of sub-categories ranging from A to HH. The W-2 box 12 codes provide more information and determine if the amount listed is taxable. Each W-2 Form box 12 code is either a single or double letter code.

Code	Explanation
A	Uncollected social security tax on tips
B	Uncollected Medicare tax on tips
C	Taxable cost of group-term life insurance over \$50,000
D	Elective deferrals to a section 401(k) cash or deferred arrangement
E	Elective deferrals under a section 403(b) salary reduction agreement
F	Elective deferrals under a section 408(k)(6) salary reduction SEP
G	Elective deferrals and employer contributions to a section 457(b) deferred compensation plan
H	Elective deferrals to a section 501(c)(18)(D) tax-exempt organization plan
J	Nontaxable sick pay
K	20% excise tax on excess golden parachute payments ¹
L	Substantiated employee business reimbursements
M	Uncollected social security tax on taxable cost of group-term life over \$50,000 (for former employees)
N	Uncollected Medicare tax on taxable cost of group-term insurance over \$50,000 (former)
P	Excludable moving expense reimbursement paid directly to employee
Q	Nontaxable combat pay
R	Employer contributions to a Medical Savings Account

	Explanation
S	Employee salary reduction Contributions under a section 408(p) SIMPLE
T	Adoption benefits
V	Income from the exercise of non-statutory stock options
W	Employer contributions to an employee's Health Savings Account
Y	Deferrals under a section 409A nonqualified deferred compensation plan
Z	Income under a section 409A nonqualified deferred compensation plan
AA	Designated Roth contributions under section 401(k) plan
BB	Designated Roth contributions under a section 403(b) plan
DD	Cost of employer-sponsored health coverage (non-taxable to employee)
EE	Designated Roth contributions under governmental section 457(b) plan
FF	Permitted benefits under a qualified small employer health reimbursement arrangement. Information only.
GG	Income from qualified equity grants under Section 83(i). Information only. This amount is includible in gross income from qualified equity grants under section 83(i)(1)(A) for the calendar year. This amount is wages for box 1.
HH	Aggregate deferrals under Section 83(i) elections as of the close of the calendar year. Information only.

¹ Such payments are generally considered to be "out of scope" for VITA volunteers. Refer golden parachute payment recipients to a paid tax professional.