



**TO:** All State Agencies and Employees  
**FROM:** Dhiren V. Shah, Director  
Central Payroll Bureau  
**DATE:** April 28, 2026  
**SUBJECT:** Prompt Submission of Employee's Withholding Certificate  
(IRS form W-4 and Maryland form MWH)

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Prompt submission of the "Form W-4" is to the advantage of all employees. In the absence of a Form W-4, the federal and state tax laws and regulations mandate maximum income taxes to be withheld as follows:

**Federal maximum income tax is – Single or Married Filing Separately** in Step 1(c) and made no entries in Step 2, Step 3, or Step 4 of the 2020 Form W-4. However, an employee who was paid wages before 2020 and who failed to furnish a Form W-4 should continue to be treated as Single with zero allowances on a 2019 or earlier Form W-4.

**Maryland State maximum income tax is – Single** status with one withholding exemption.

**County Tax at maximum rate** is currently 3.20%, added to the State tax.

Upon receiving the W-4 form from the employee the withholding status will be changed accordingly for future pay periods. Tax regulations preclude an employer from making retroactive adjustments to the taxes already withheld. Any overpayment of taxes is refunded to the employee when they file their taxes for that year.

Information concerning federal income tax withholding and applicable tables can be found in the IRS 2025 Publication 15 (Circular E), Employer's Tax Guide. Maryland state income tax withholding rates and personal exemption amounts may be accessed through the Comptroller's Website [Home](#).



Information on withholding should be reviewed prior to submission of any new W-4 and MWH form. For easy access we have provided the following memos on our website:

### [State Payroll Memos](#)

2026 Maryland State and Local Income Tax Withholding Information

2026 Federal Income Tax Withholding Information

2026 Annual Filing of Employee Withholding Exemption Certificate

The following link is to our forms:

### [Forms](#)

Accuracy on the W-4 gives the employee a better match between taxes withheld and taxes that may be due at year-end. As demonstrated below, maximum income tax coupled with social security taxes results in a significant tax withholding obligation for employees. Therefore, newly hired employees or employees with a changed financial status should promptly complete and submit their Form W-4 and/or MWH to the Central Payroll Bureau. Submission of W4 and/or MWH updates may be accomplished electronically by using our online system POSC. Here is the link:

### [Payroll Online Service Center](#)

An original hard copy form is required for all initial submissions and when claiming “exempt” status. Hard copy forms may be downloaded for mailing, from our web site:

### [Forms](#)

Employees should also be reminded that our Net Pay Calculator is a great tool for estimating withholding tax. This feature can be found on our web site home page under Online Services. We recommend that employees use a copy of their current wage statement (pay stub) information, to help guide them through its use.

### [Net Pay Calculator](#)

**Scenario #1** – Employee fails to submit a Form W-4 and/or MWH and maximum taxation is invoked. Employee is taxed as Single or Married Filing Separately in Step 1(c) and made no entries in Step 2, Step 3, or Step 4 of the 2020 or later Form W-4, Single with one allowance for State Income Tax and a 3.20% County Income Tax rate. The tax for Social Security purposes is 7.65% of wages and a pre-tax retirement deduction for ST EMP Pension Mod 7% was used. Taxing shown at three levels of income are:

### Biweekly Wage

	<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>
Federal Income Tax	35.29	144.75	291.14
State Income tax- including County Tax and 3.20%	61.15	140.65	220.15
Social Security Tax	76.50	153.00	229.50
Total Tax	172.94	438.40	740.79
% of Wage	17.48%	22.04%	25.00%

**Scenario #2** – Above employee submitted a Form W-4 in 2026 which shows that the employee is Married, no  in STEP 2 checkbox, claiming other dependents credit W-4 Step 3 \$2000. The County of Record of residence is Baltimore (a 3.20% County). Employee is taxed as Married with four allowances for State income Tax and a 3.20% County Income Tax rate. The employee is taxed for Social Security purposes at 7.65% of wages and a pre-tax retirement deduction for ST EMP Pension Mod 7% was used. Taxing shown at three levels of income are:

### Biweekly Wage

	<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>
Federal Income Tax	-0-	67.83	214.21
State Income tax- including County Tax and 3.20%	31.80	111.30	190.80
Social Security Tax	76.50	153.00	229.50
Total Tax	108.30	332.13	634.51
% of Wage	10.86%	16.60%	21.15%