



2018 Health Savings Account Limits Released

The IRS has announced the 2018 inflation-adjusted amounts for Health Savings Accounts (HSAs).

Annual Contribution Limitation

For calendar year 2018, the annual limitation on HSA deductions for an individual with self-only coverage under a high deductible health plan is **\$3,450** (up from \$3,400 for 2017). The annual limitation on HSA deductions for an individual with family coverage under a high deductible health plan is **\$6,900** (up from \$6,750 for 2017).

High Deductible Health Plan Amounts

For calendar year 2018, a "high deductible health plan" is defined as a health plan with an annual deductible that is not less than **\$1,350 for self-only coverage** or **\$2,700 for family coverage**, and annual out-of-pocket expenses (deductibles, co-payments, and other amounts, but not premiums) that do not exceed **\$6,650 for self-only coverage** or **\$13,300 for family coverage**.

[Click here](#) to read the IRS announcement on these amounts.

Be sure to check out our [Health Savings Accounts](#) section for more on HSAs.

New OSHA Training Requirements Now Effective

Under the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) recent General Industry Walking-Working Surfaces and Fall Protection Standards final rule, employers are now required to ensure that workers who use personal fall protection and equipment are **trained about fall and equipment hazards, including fall protection systems**.

New Training Requirements

Under the recent final rule, employers whose employees use personal fall protection equipment and work in other specified high hazard situations must provide employee training as to **fall hazards**, including fall protection systems. Specifically, employees must be trained by a qualified person and must be trained in at least the following topics:

- The nature of fall hazards in the work area and how to recognize them;
- The procedures to be followed to minimize those hazards;
- The correct procedures for installing, inspecting, operating, maintaining, and disassembling the personal fall protection systems that the employee uses; and
- The correct use of personal fall protection systems including, but not limited to, proper hook-up, anchoring, and tie-off techniques.

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To read more about worker safety and health, please visit our [Safety & Wellness](#) section.

In addition, the final rule requires employers to train each employee on **equipment hazards**. This required training includes training as to the **proper care, inspection, storage, and use of certain equipment** (including, but not limited to, **dockboards and rope descent systems**) before an employee uses the equipment.

Both the fall and equipment hazard trainings must be presented to each employee in a manner that the employee understands. In addition, employers must retrain an employee when the employer has reason to believe the employee does not have the understanding and skill required by the initial training.

For additional information on the final rule and its training requirements, please [click here](#).

For additional information about worker safety and health, please visit our [Safety & Wellness](#) section.

IRS Offers Tips on Preparing for Natural Disasters

With hurricane season approaching, the IRS is offering advice to those impacted by storms and other natural disasters. The following tips may help businesses prepare for such events:

- **Use electronic records.**
Businesses may have access to bank and other financial statements online. If so, their statements are already securely stored there. Businesses can also keep an additional set of records electronically by scanning tax records and insurance policies onto an electronic format. Businesses may also want to download important records to an external hard drive or USB flash drive.
- **Document valuables.**
Take time- and date-stamped photos or videos of the contents of your business. These visual records can help prove the value of lost items, which can help with insurance claims or casualty loss deductions on a tax return. Businesses should store these records in a safe place.
- **Contact the IRS for help.**
Businesses that fall victim to a disaster may call the IRS disaster hotline at 866-562-5227 for special help with disaster-related tax issues.
- **Get copies of prior year tax records.**
If a business needs a copy of its tax return, it should file IRS [Form 4506](#), *Request for Copy of Tax Return*. While the usual fee per copy is \$50, the IRS is expected to waive this fee if a business is a victim of a federally declared disaster. For information that shows most line items from a tax return, call 1-800-908-9946 to request a free transcript. Alternatively, businesses may file IRS [Form 4506T-EZ](#), *Short Form Request for Individual Tax Return Transcript*, or IRS [Form 4506-T](#), *Request for Transcript of Tax Return*.

The IRS offers many resources to help employers plan for and recover from disasters, including IRS [Publication 584-B](#), *Business Casualty, Disaster, and Theft Loss Workbook*, and web pages devoted to [preparing for a disaster](#) and [tax relief in disaster situations](#).



Visit our [Planning for Workplace Emergencies](#) section for more on how to protect your business from natural disasters.

Tips for Hiring New Graduates

At colleges all across the country, the Class of 2017 is graduating. Thinking of staffing up your business by hiring a new college graduate? Learn some tips on how to prepare these hires for your workplace by watching the video below.



For more hiring best practices, visit our [Recruitment & Hiring](#) section.

Marshall & Sterling Insurance will continue to provide you with updates and information regarding important issues. Should you have specific questions or need more information, please contact us.

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