

September 1997  
FS-97-17

## **USE OF PSEUDONYMS BY IRS EMPLOYEES**

IRS employees must identify themselves by name when dealing with the public in the performance of their jobs. This applies not only to employees who provide information to the public via telephone or in person, but also to employees in Compliance functions -- tax auditors and tax collection officers.

Occasionally, some IRS employees -- especially Collection employees -- may face unusual situations when they feel they may be harassed, threatened or assaulted in the performance of their duties. Since 1992, under a negotiated settlement between IRS and its employee union, employees have had the option of using only their last names to identify themselves to taxpayers or requesting and registering a pseudonym.

If employees do not believe that identifying themselves only by using their last name is sufficient protection from harassment, they may register a pseudonym with their supervisor. Only registered pseudonyms may be used. About 350 pseudonyms are currently registered and in use.

The District or Service Center Director who approves the use of a pseudonym for his or her employee must notify the appropriate IRS Regional Inspector. Information about the pseudonym is then entered into a computer database, which provides a safeguard for both the employee and the public. The database allows the IRS to cross reference the pseudonym to the actual employee name so we can identify the employee should we receive a complaint of misconduct. We can also verify that a person is actually an employee if a taxpayer suspects someone is posing as an IRS employee.

X X X