Vendor EIN verification checklist

ein-number.com | updated 2026-11-25 | https://ein-number.com/vendor-ein-verification-checklist/

Step 1. Collect a signed Form W-9

- ☐ Request the current Form W-9 from irs.gov before the first payment.
- ☐ Check line 1 is the legal name the IRS has (not a trade name), and line 3 the entity type.
- ☐ Check Part I has a 9-digit TIN; a company's own TIN is an EIN (XX-XXXXXXX).
- ☐ Check Part II is signed and dated; an unsigned W-9 is not a certification.

Step 2. Check the EIN's format

- ☐ Confirm 9 digits in the XX-XXXXXXX pattern; a 3-2-4 pattern is an SSN or ITIN.
- ☐ Confirm the first 2 digits are on the IRS list of valid EIN prefixes (83 of 100).
- ☐ Remember a valid format does not prove the IRS issued the number.

Step 3. Match the name and EIN

- ☐ If you file 1099s: run IRS TIN Matching (25 pairs per interactive session, 100,000 per bulk file, $0).
- ☐ Code 0 = match. Codes 2 or 3 = not issued or no match: hold payment and request a corrected W-9.
- ☐ Public company: compare with its SEC filing (company EIN lookup). Nonprofit: check the IRS exempt-organization file.
- ☐ Private company without TIN Matching access: rely on the signed W-9 and a call-back to a number you already hold.

Step 4. Document the result

- ☐ File the signed W-9, the date checked, the TIN Matching code (or source checked) and who checked it.
- ☐ Re-check when the vendor's name, bank details or entity type change.
- ☐ If a CP2100 backup-withholding notice arrives, follow IRS Publication 1281.

Vendor: _____ EIN: ____-_____ Checked by: _____ Date: _____

Result: [ ] W-9 signed [ ] Format valid [ ] TIN Matching code ____ [ ] Public record checked [ ] Filed

Sources: IRS Form W-9; IRS Publication 2108 (TIN Matching); IRS list of valid EIN prefixes; IRS Publication 1281 (backup withholding). This checklist is general information, not tax advice.