

Notice to Customers: A CTR Reference Guide

Why is my financial institution asking me for identification and personal information?

Federal law requires financial institutions to report currency (cash or coin) transactions over \$10,000 conducted by, or on behalf of, one person, as well as multiple currency transactions that aggregate to be over \$10,000 in a single day. These transactions are reported on Currency Transaction Reports (CTRs). The federal law requiring these reports was passed to safeguard the financial industry from threats posed by money laundering and other financial crime. To comply with this law, financial institutions must obtain personal identification information about the individual conducting the transaction such as a Social Security number as well as a driver's license or other government issued document. This requirement applies whether the individual conducting the transaction has an account relationship with the institution or not.

There is no general prohibition against handling large amounts of currency and the filing of a CTR is required regardless of the reasons for the currency transaction. The financial institution collects this information in a manner consistent with a customer's right to financial privacy.

Can I break up my currency transactions into multiple, smaller amounts to avoid being reported to the government?

No. This is called "structuring." Federal law makes it a crime to break up transactions into smaller amounts for the purpose of evading the CTR reporting requirement and this may lead to a required disclosure from the financial institution to the government. Structuring transactions to prevent a CTR from being reported can result in imprisonment for not more than five years and/or a fine of up to \$250,000. If structuring involves more than \$100,000 in a twelve month period or is performed while violating another law of the United States, the penalty is doubled.



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