

Internal Revenue Service, Treasury

§ 301.6104(a)-5

material relating to the plan which is received or issued by the Internal Revenue Service after the date of receipt of that application, will be open to inspection only by plan participants or their authorized representatives. In either case, material open to public inspection pursuant to the number of plan participants indicated on previous annual returns or applications for a determination letter will remain open to public inspection.

(3) *Increasing number of plan participants.* If a plan having fewer than 26 plan participants, as indicated on an annual return or application for a determination letter, files a subsequent return or application indicating 26 or more plan participants, all the plan's prior applications and other material received or issued by the Internal Revenue Service after September 2, 1974, will be open to public inspection regardless of the number of plan participants indicated on any prior return or application.

(c) *Plan participant.* Solely for purposes of determining who is a plan participant permitted to inspect material relating to a plan having fewer than 26 participants, the term "plan participant" includes, but is not limited to, former employees (such as certain retired and terminated employees) who have a nonforfeitable right to benefits under the plan. An individual who is merely a beneficiary of an employee or former employee is not a plan participant, unless the individual is a beneficiary of a deceased former employee and is receiving benefits or entitled to receive future benefits under the plan. The term "plan participant" also includes the administrator, executor, or trustee of the estate of a deceased plan participant if such administrator, executor, or trustee is receiving benefits or entitled to receive future benefits under the plan in his or her official capacity. That material may be available for inspection to an individual under this paragraph does not constitute a determination by the Internal Revenue Service that the individual is a plan participant for any purpose other than inspection under section 6104(a)(1)(B).

(d) *Authorized representative.* "Authorized representative" means the representative of a plan participant des-

ignated by the participant in writing to inspect material described in §§ 301.6104(a)-2 and 301.6104(a)-3. The document designating the authorized representative must be signed by the plan participant and must specify that the representative is authorized to inspect the material. The document, or a copy, must be filed with the office of the Internal Revenue Service in which the authorized representative is to inspect the material. A copy which is reproduced by a photographic process need not be certified as a true and correct copy of the original.

(Secs. 6104(a)(1)(A), 6104(a)(1)(B), and 7805 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (72 Stat. 1660, 88 Stat. 940, 68A Stat. 917; 26 U.S.C. 6104(a)(1)(A), 6104(a)(1)(B), 7805))

[T.D. 7845, 47 FR 50488, Nov. 8, 1982]

§ 301.6104(a)-5 Withholding of certain information from public inspection.

(a) *Tax exempt organizations—(1) Trade secrets, patents, processes, styles of work, or apparatus.* An organization whose application for tax exemption is open to public inspection under section 6104(a)(1)(A) and § 301.6104(a)-1 may in writing request the withholding of information contained in the application or supporting documents which relates to any trade secret, patent, process, style of work, or apparatus of the organization. The information will be withheld from public inspection if the Commissioner determines that the disclosure of such information would adversely affect the organization. Requests for withholding information from public inspection should be filed with the office with which the organization files the documents containing the information. The request must clearly identify the material desired to be withheld (the document, page, paragraph, and line) and must state why the information should not be open to public inspection. The organization will be notified of the Commissioner's determination as to whether the information will be withheld from public inspection. If the Commissioner determines that the information will be disclosed, the organization will be given 15 days after notification of the Commissioner's decision to contest that decision before the document is disclosed.

(2) *National defense material.* The Internal Revenue Service will withhold from public inspection any information which is submitted by an organization whose application for tax exemption is open to inspection under section 6104(a)(1)(A) and § 301.6104(a)-1, if the Commissioner determines that public disclosure would adversely affect the national defense.

(b) *Pension and other plans—(1) Applicant's exclusion of certain information.* Except as provided in subparagraph (2) of this paragraph, information that, in the opinion of the applicant, is of the type described in section 6104(a)(1) (C) or (D) should not be included in an application for a determination letter, supporting documents, or any other document open to inspection under section 6104(a)(1)(B). Accordingly, an applicant should not include in an application for a determination letter or supporting documents confidential compensation information as described in subparagraph (4) of this paragraph. Neither should an applicant include information relating to any trade secret, patent, process, style of work or apparatus, the disclosure of which would be adverse to the applicant.

(2) *Exception for separate document.* The rule that an applicant should exclude from an application for a determination letter or other documents information of the type in section 6104(a)(1) (C) or (D) does not apply—

(i) In the case of the separate schedule to certain applications for a determination letter which is provided for the purpose of setting forth confidential compensation information (as described in subparagraph (4) of this paragraph) which must be submitted by the applicant.

(ii) If the applicant determines that it is impossible to provide the Internal Revenue Service with sufficient information to support an application for a determination letter without submitting what is believed to be information of the type described in section 6104(a)(1) (C) or (D), or

(iii) If the Internal Revenue Service requests that the applicant submit information of the type described in section 6104(a)(1) (C) and (D).

In a case described in subdivision (ii) or (iii) of this subparagraph, the applicant

is to set forth the information in a document separate from the remainder of the application for a determination letter or other documents. The separate document is to state why the information is to be withheld from public inspection under section 6104(a)(1) (C) or (D). If the Internal Revenue Service has not requested the information, the separate document is to also state why it is impossible to provide the Internal Revenue Service sufficient information to support the application for a determination letter without including information which is to be withheld. The separate document should clearly identify the relevant portion of the application for a determination letter or other document (the document, page, paragraph, and line) to which the information set forth in the separate document relates. The Internal Revenue Service will withhold from public inspection (including inspection by a plan participant or authorized representative) information contained in the separate document if the Commissioner determines that the information is in fact information of the type described in section 6104(a)(1) (C) or (D), and, in the case of information relating to any trade secret, patent, process, style of work or apparatus, the Commissioner further determines that disclosure would be adverse to the applicant. If the Commissioner determines that the information will be disclosed, the organization will be given 15 days after notification of the Commissioner's decision to contest the decision before the document is disclosed.

(3) *National defense material.* The Internal Revenue Service will withhold from public inspection (including inspection by a plan participant or authorized representative) any information which is included in an application for a determination letter or supporting documents if the Commissioner determines that public disclosure would adversely affect the national defense. The information will be withheld whether or not submitted on a separate document pursuant to subparagraph (2) of this paragraph.

(4) *Confidential compensation information.* If an application for a determination letter, supporting document, or related letter or document referred to in

section 6104(a)(1)(B) and §§ 301.6104(a)-2 and 301.6104(a)-3 contains information (including aggregate figures) from which an individual's compensation (including deferred compensation) may be ascertained, that information is not open to public inspection (including inspection by a plan participant or authorized representative). Confidential compensation information includes the amount of benefit a specific plan participant may expect to receive at normal or early retirement age and the amount of the employer's contributions under the plan that may be allocated to a specific plan participant. However, so long as a plan has more than one participant, the amount of benefit provided under the plan to plan participants, in general, at normal or early retirement age, or the amount of the employer's contributions under the plan that are allocable to plan participants, in general, does not constitute confidential compensation information. Further, a description of the numbers of individuals covered and not covered by a plan, listed by compensation range, does not constitute confidential compensation information.

(Secs. 6104(a)(1)(A), 6104(a)(1)(B), and 7805 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (72 Stat. 1660, 88 Stat. 940, 68A Stat. 917; 26 U.S.C. 6104(a)(1)(A), 6104(a)(1)(B), 7805))

[T.D. 7845, 47 FR 50489, Nov. 8, 1982]

§ 301.6104(a)-6 Procedural rules for inspection.

(a) *Place of inspection; tax exempt organizations and pension and other plans.* Material relating either to tax exempt organizations or to pension and other plans that is open to public inspection under section 6104(a)(1) and § 301.6104(a)-1 through § 301.6104(a)-3 will be made available for inspection at the Freedom of Information Reading Room, National Office, Internal Revenue Service, 1111 Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20224, and in the office of any district director of internal revenue.

(b) *Request for inspection*—(1) *Tax exempt organizations and pension and other plans; public inspection.* Material relating to either tax exempt organizations or pension and other plans that is open to public inspection under section 6104(a)(1) and §§ 301.6104(a)-1 through

§ 301.6104(a)-3 will be available for inspection only upon request. If inspection at the National Office is desired, a request should be made in writing to the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, Attention: Freedom of Information Reading Room, 1111 Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, D.C. 20224. Requests for inspection in the office of a district director should be made in writing to the district director's office. The request must describe the material to be inspected in reasonably sufficient detail so that Internal Revenue Service personnel can locate the material. If a tax-exempt organization has more than one application for tax exemption open to public inspection, or if a pension or other plan has more than one application for a determination letter open to public inspection, only the most recent application and related material will be made available for inspection unless the request states otherwise. Further, in the case of a pension or other plan, only Internal Revenue Service documents issued or delivered after the date of the filing of the most recent application for a determination letter will be made available for inspection, unless the request states otherwise.

(2) *Pension and other plans; inspection by plan participant or authorized representative.* As described in § 301.6104(a)-4, material relating to plans having fewer than 26 participants is only open to inspection by a plan participant or authorized representative. In the case of such a plan, the rules described in subparagraph (1) of this paragraph apply. The request for inspection must include satisfactory evidence that the person requesting inspection is a plan participant (see § 301.6104(a)-4(c)) or an authorized representative of such a plan participant within the meaning of § 301.6104(a)-4(d).

(c) *Time and extent of inspection.* A person requesting inspection will be notified when the material will be made available for inspection. The material will be made available for inspection at times that will not interfere with its use by the Internal Revenue Service or exclude other persons from inspecting it. In addition, the Commissioner or district director may limit