

Internal Revenue Service, Treasury

§ 1.401-6

For rules applicable to plan years beginning on or after January 1, 1996, see §§ 1.401(a)(4)-1 through 1.401(a)(4)-13.

(Secs. 411 (d)(2) and (3) and 7805 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (68A Stat. 917, 88 Stat. 912; 26 U.S.C. 411(d)(2) and (3) and 7805))

[T.D. 6500, 25 FR 11674, Nov. 26, 1960, as amended by T.D. 6675, 28 FR 10119, Sept. 17, 1963; T.D. 7934, 49 FR 1183, Jan. 10, 1984; 49 FR 2104, Jan. 18, 1984; T.D. 8360, 56 FR 47536, Sept. 19, 1991; T.D. 8485, 58 FR 46778, Sept. 3, 1993]

§ 1.401-5 Period for which requirements of section 401(a) (3), (4), (5), and (6) are applicable with respect to plans put into effect before September 2, 1974.

A pension, profit-sharing, stock bonus, or annuity plan shall be considered as satisfying the requirements of section 401(a) (3), (4), (5), and (6) for the period beginning with the date on which it was put into effect and ending with the 15th day of the third month following the close of the taxable year of the employer in which the plan was put into effect, if all the provisions of the plan which are necessary to satisfy such requirements are in effect by the end of such period and have been made effective for all purposes with respect to the whole of such period. Thus, if an employer in 1954 adopts such a plan as of January 1, 1954, and makes a return on the basis of the calendar year, he will have until March 15, 1955, to amend his plan so as to make it satisfy the requirements of section 401(a) (3), (4), (5), and (6) for the calendar year 1954 provided that by March 15, 1955, all provisions of such plan necessary to satisfy such requirements are in effect and have been made retroactive for all purposes to January 1, 1954, the effective date of the plan. If an employer is on a fiscal year basis, for example, April 1 to March 31, and in 1954 adopts such a plan effective as of April 1, 1954, he will have until June 15, 1955, to amend his plan so as to make it satisfy the requirements of section 401(a) (3), (4), (5), and (6) for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 1954, provided that by June 15, 1955, all provisions of such plan necessary to satisfy such requirements are in effect and have been made retroactive for all purposes to April 1, 1954, the effective date of the plan. It should be noted that under section

401(b) the period in which a plan may be amended to qualify under section 401(a) ends before the date on which taxpayers other than corporations are required to file income tax returns. See section 6072. This section shall not apply to any pension, profit-sharing, stock bonus, or annuity plan put into effect after September 1, 1974, and shall not apply with respect to any disqualifying provision to which § 1.401(b)-1 applies.

[T.D. 6500, 25 FR 11674, Nov. 26, 1960; as amended by T.D. 7436, 41 FR 42653, Sept. 28, 1976]

§ 1.401-6 Termination of a qualified plan.

(a) *General rules.* (1) In order for a pension, profit-sharing, or stock bonus trust to satisfy the requirements of section 401, the plan of which such trust forms a part must expressly provide that, upon the termination of the plan or upon the complete discontinuance of contributions under the plan, the rights of each employee to benefits accrued to the date of such termination or discontinuance, to the extent then funded, or the rights of each employee to the amounts credited to his account at such time, are nonforfeitable. As to what constitutes nonforfeitable rights of an employee, see paragraph (a)(2) of § 1.402(b)-1.

(2)(i) A qualified plan must also provide for the allocation of any previously unallocated funds to the employees covered by the plan upon the termination of the plan or the complete discontinuance of contributions under the plan. Such provision may be incorporated in the plan at its inception or by an amendment made prior to the termination of the plan or the discontinuance of contributions thereunder.

(ii) Any provision for the allocation of unallocated funds is acceptable if it specifies the method to be used and does not conflict with the provisions of section 401(a)(4) and the regulations thereunder. The allocation of unallocated funds may be in cash or in the form of other benefits provided under the plan. However, the allocation of the funds contributed by the employer among the employees need not necessarily benefit all the employees

covered by the plan. For example, an allocation may be satisfactory if priority is given to benefits for employees over the age of 50 at the time of the termination of the plan, or those who then have at least 10 years of service, if there is no possibility of discrimination in favor of employees who are officers, shareholders, employees whose principal duties consist in supervising the work of other employees, or highly compensated employees.

(iii) Subdivisions (i) and (ii) of this subparagraph do not require the allocation of amounts to the account of any employee if such amounts are not required to be used to satisfy the liabilities with respect to employees and their beneficiaries under the plan (see section 401(a)(2)).

(b) *Termination defined.* (1) Whether a plan is terminated is generally a question to be determined with regard to all the facts and circumstances in a particular case. For example, a plan is terminated when, in connection with the winding up of the employer's trade or business, the employer begins to discharge his employees. However, a plan is not terminated, for example, merely because an employer consolidates or replaces that plan with a comparable plan. Similarly, a plan is not terminated merely because the employer sells or otherwise disposes of his trade or business if the acquiring employer continues the plan as a separate and distinct plan of its own, or consolidates or replaces that plan with a comparable plan. See paragraph (d)(4) of § 1.381(c)(11)-1 for the definition of comparable plan. In addition, the Commissioner may determine that other plans are comparable for purposes of this section.

(2) For purposes of this section, the term *termination* includes both a partial termination and a complete termination of a plan. Whether or not a partial termination of a qualified plan occurs when a group of employees who have been covered by the plan are subsequently excluded from such coverage either by reason of an amendment to the plan, or by reason of being discharged by the employer, will be determined on the basis of all the facts and circumstances. Similarly, whether or not a partial termination occurs when

benefits or employer contributions are reduced, or the eligibility or vesting requirements under the plan are made less liberal, will be determined on the basis of all the facts and circumstances. However, if a partial termination of a qualified plan occurs, the provisions of section 401(a)(7) and this section apply only to the part of the plan that is terminated.

(c) *Complete discontinuance defined.* (1) For purposes of this section, a complete discontinuance of contributions under the plan is contrasted with a suspension of contributions under the plan, which is merely a temporary cessation of contributions by the employer. A complete discontinuance of contributions may occur although some amounts are contributed by the employer under the plan if such amounts are not substantial enough to reflect the intent on the part of the employer to continue to maintain the plan. The determination of whether a complete discontinuance of contributions under the plan has occurred will be made with regard to all the facts and circumstances in the particular case, and without regard to the amount of any contributions made under the plan by employees.

(2) In the case of a pension plan, a suspension of contributions will not constitute a discontinuance if—

(i) The benefits to be paid or made available under the plan are not affected at any time by the suspension, and

(ii) The unfunded past service cost at any time (which includes the unfunded prior normal cost and unfunded interest on any unfunded cost) does not exceed the unfunded past service cost as of the date of establishment of the plan, plus any additional past service or supplemental costs added by amendment.

(3) In any case in which a suspension of a profit-sharing plan is considered a discontinuance, the discontinuance becomes effective not later than the last day of the taxable year of the employer following the last taxable year of such employer for which a substantial contribution was made under the profit-sharing plan.

(d) *Contributions or benefits which remain forfeitable.* The provisions of this

section do not apply to amounts which are reallocated to prevent the discrimination prohibited by section 401(a)(4) (see paragraph (c) of § 1.401-4).

(e) *Effective date.* This section shall apply to taxable years of a qualified plan commencing after September 30, 1963. In the case of the termination or complete discontinuance (as defined in this section) of any qualified plan during any such taxable year, the rights accorded to each employee covered under the plan must conform to the requirements of this section. However, a plan which is qualified on September 30, 1963, will not be disqualified merely because it does not expressly include the provisions prescribed by this section.

[T.D. 6675, 28 FR 10120, Sept. 17, 1963]

§ 1.401-7 Forfeitures under a qualified pension plan.

(a) *General rules.* In the case of a trust forming a part of a qualified pension plan, the plan must expressly provide that forfeitures arising from severance of employment, death, or for any other reason, must not be applied to increase the benefits any employee would otherwise receive under the plan at any time prior to the termination of the plan or the complete discontinuance of employer contributions thereunder. The amounts so forfeited must be used as soon as possible to reduce the employer's contributions under the plan. However, a qualified pension plan may anticipate the effect of forfeitures in determining the costs under the plan. Furthermore, a qualified plan will not be disqualified merely because a determination of the amount of forfeitures under the plan is made only once during each taxable year of the employer.

(b) *Examples.* The rules of paragraph (a) of this section may be illustrated by the following examples:

Example (1). The B Company Pension Trust forms a part of a pension plan which is funded by individual level annual premium annuity contracts. The plan requires ten years of service prior to obtaining a vested right to benefits under the plan. One of the company's employees resigns his position after two years of service. The insurance company paid to the trustees the cash surrender value of the contract—\$750. The B Company must reduce its next contribution to the pension trust by this amount.

Example (2). The C Corporation's trustee pension plan has been in existence for 20 years. It is funded by individual contracts issued by an insurance company, and the premiums thereunder are paid annually. Under such plan, the annual premium accrued for the year 1966 is due and is paid on January 2, 1966, and on July 1 of the same year the plan is terminated due to the liquidation of the employer. Some forfeitures were incurred and collected by the trustee with respect to those participants whose employment terminated between January 2 and July 1. The plan provides that the amount of such forfeitures is to be applied to provide additional annuity benefits for the remaining employees covered by the plan. The pension plan of the C Corporation satisfies the provisions of section 401(a)(8). Although forfeitures are used to increase benefits in this case, this use of forfeitures is permissible since no further contributions will be made under the plan.

(c) *Effective date.* This section applies to taxable years of a qualified plan commencing after September 30, 1963. However, a plan which is qualified on September 30, 1963, will not be disqualified merely because it does not expressly include the provisions prescribed by this section.

[T.D. 6675, 28 FR 10121, Sept. 17, 1963]

§ 1.401-8 Custodial accounts prior to January 1, 1974.

(a) *Treatment of a custodial account as a qualified trust.* For taxable years of a plan beginning after December 31, 1962, a custodial account may be used, in lieu of a trust, under any pension, profit-sharing, or stock bonus plan, described in section 401 if the requirements of paragraph (b) of this section are met. A custodial account may be used under such a plan, whether the plan covers common-law employees, self-employed individuals who are treated as employees by reason of section 401(c), or both. The use of a custodial account as part of a plan does not preclude the use of a trust or another custodial account as part of the same plan. A plan under which a custodial account is used may be considered in connection with other plans of the employer in determining whether the requirements of section 401 are satisfied. For regulations relating to the period after December 31, 1973, see § 1.401(f)-11.

(b) *Rules applicable to custodial accounts.* (1) A custodial account shall be