

§ 1.466-2 Special protective election for certain taxpayers.

(a) *General rule.* Section 373(c) of the Revenue Act of 1978 (92 Stat. 2865) allows certain taxpayers, who in prior years have accounted for discount coupons under a method of accounting reasonably similar to the method described in § 1.451-4, to elect to treat that method of accounting as a proper one for those prior years. There are several differences between this protective election and the section 466(d) election. First, the protective election applies only to a single continuous period of taxable years the last year of which ends before January 1, 1979. Second, an otherwise qualifying protective election may apply to coupons which are discount coupons but which would not be treated as qualified discount coupons under Code section 466. Third, certain expenses such as the cost of redemption center service fees, and amounts that are payable to the retailer (or other person redeeming the coupons from the person receiving the price discount) for services in redeeming the coupons but that are not stated on the coupon, can be subtracted from gross receipts for prior years covered by a protective election (if treated as deductible under the accounting method for such years), even though such expenses would not be deductible under Code section 466.

(b) *Requirements.* In order to qualify for this special protective election, the following conditions must be met:

(1) For a continuous period of one or more prior taxable years, (the last year of which ends before Jan. 1, 1979), the taxpayer must have used a method of accounting for discount coupons that is reasonably similar to the method provided in § 1.451-4 or its predecessors under the Internal Revenue Code of 1954;

(2) The taxpayer must make an election under section 466 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 according to the rules contained in § 1.466-3 for its first taxable year ending after December 31, 1978; and

(3) The taxpayer must make an election under section 373(c) of the Revenue Act of 1978 according to the rules contained in § 1.466-4 for its first tax-

able year ending after December 31, 1978.

(c) *Amount to be subtracted from gross receipts.* The amount the taxpayer may subtract under this section for the redemption costs of coupons shall include only:

(1) Costs of the type permitted by § 1.451-4 to be included in the estimated average cost of redeeming coupons, plus

(2) Any amount designated or referred to on the coupon payable by the taxpayer to the person who allowed the discount on a sale by such person to the user of the coupon.

Nothing in this paragraph shall allow an item to be deducted more than once.

(d) *Right to amend prior tax returns.* This paragraph applies only to those taxpayers who have agreed in a prior year to discontinue the use of the method of accounting described in § 1.451-4 for discount coupon redemptions. If the taxpayer used such method of accounting on the original return filed for the prior taxable year, and if any such year is not closed under the statute of limitations or by reason of a closing agreement with the Internal Revenue Service, a taxpayer who has made a protective election may file an amended return and a claim for refund for such years. In this amended return, the taxpayer should account for its discount coupon redemptions, according to the method of accounting described in § 1.451-4. This is not to be construed, however, to abrogate in any way the rules regarding the close of taxable years due to the statute of limitations or a binding closing agreement between the Internal Revenue Service and the taxpayer.

(e) *Suspense account not required.* If the following three conditions are satisfied, the taxpayer need not establish the suspense account otherwise required by section 466(e). First, the taxpayer must make a timely election under these rules to protect prior years. Second, the method of accounting used in those years must have been used for all discount coupons issued by the taxpayer in those years in all the taxpayer's separate trades or

businesses in which coupons were issued. Third, either before or after an

amendment to the taxpayer's tax returns as described in paragraph (d) of this section, a method of accounting reasonably similar to the method of accounting described in §1.451-4 must have been used for the taxable year ending on or before December 31, 1978. If these conditions are met, the taxpayer will treat the election of the method under section 466 as a change in method of accounting to which the rules in section 481 and the regulations thereunder apply.

(f) *Definition: reasonably similar.* For purposes of paragraphs (b)(1) and (e) of this section, a taxpayer will be considered to have used a method of accounting for discount coupons that is "reasonably similar" to the method of accounting provided in §1.451-4 if the taxpayer followed the method of accounting described in §1.451-4 as if that method were a valid method of accounting for discount coupon redemptions.

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§ 1.466-3 Manner of and time for making election under section 466.

(a) *In general.* Section 466 provides a special method of accounting for accrual basis taxpayers who issue qualified discount coupons (as defined in section 466(b)). In order to use the special method under section 466, a taxpayer must make an election with respect to the trade or business in connection with which the qualified discount coupons are issued. If a taxpayer issues qualified discount coupons in connection with more than one trade or business, the taxpayer may use the special method of accounting under section 466 only with respect to the qualified discount coupons issued in connection with a trade or business for which an election is made. The election must be made in the manner prescribed in this section. The election does not require the prior consent of the Internal Revenue Service. An election under section 466 is effective for the taxable year for which it is made and for all subsequent taxable years, unless the taxpayer secures the prior consent of the Internal Revenue Service to revoke such election.

(b) *Manner of and time for making election—(1) General rule.* Except as pro-

vided in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, an election is made under section 466 and this section by filing a statement of election containing the information described in paragraph (c) of this section with the taxpayer's income tax return for the taxpayer's first taxable year for which the election is made. The election must be made not later than the time prescribed by law (including extensions thereof) for filing the income tax return for the first taxable year for which the election is made. Thus, the election may not be made for a taxable year by filing an amended income tax return after the time prescribed (including extensions) for filing the original return for such year.

(2) *Transitional rule.* If the last day of the time prescribed by law (including extensions thereof) for filing a taxpayer's income tax return for the taxpayer's first taxable year ending after December 31, 1978, falls before December 3, 1979, and the taxpayer does not make an election under section 466 with respect to such taxable year in the manner prescribed by paragraph (b)(1) of this section, an election is made under section 466 and this section with respect to such taxable year if—

(i) Within the time prescribed by law (including extensions thereof) for filing the taxpayer's income tax return for such taxable year, the taxpayer has made a reasonable effort to notify the Commissioner of the taxpayer's intent to make an election under section 466 with respect to such taxable year, and

(ii) Before January 2, 1980, the taxpayer files a statement of election containing the information described in paragraph (c) of this section to be associated with the taxpayer's income tax return for such taxable year.

For purposes of paragraph (b)(2)(i) of this section, a reasonable effort to notify the Commissioner of an intent to make an election under section 466 with respect to a taxable year includes the timely filing of an income tax return for such taxable year if the taxable income reported on the return reflects a deduction for the redemption costs of qualified discount coupons as determined under section 466(a).

(c) *Required information.* The statement of election required by paragraph