

following the procedures of paragraph (c)(2) of this section. An S corporation is described in this paragraph if the S corporation is otherwise qualified to make a section 444 election, and its previous election was terminated under § 1.444-2T(a) solely because—

(i) In the case of a taxable year beginning after December 31, 1996, a trust that is treated as an electing small business trust became a shareholder of such S corporation; or

(ii) In the case of a taxable year beginning after December 31, 1997, a trust that is described in section 401(a) or 501(c)(3), and is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) became a shareholder of such S corporation.

(2) *Procedure*—(i) *In general*. An S corporation described in paragraph (c)(1) of this section that wishes to make the request described in paragraph (c)(1) of this section must do so by filing Form 8716, “Election To Have a Tax Year Other Than a Required Tax Year,” and typing or printing legibly at the top of such form—“CONTINUATION OF SECTION 444 ELECTION UNDER § 1.444-4.” In order to assist the Internal Revenue Service in updating the S corporation’s account, on Line 5 the Box “Changing to” should be checked. Additionally, the election month indicated must be the last month of the S corporation’s previously elected section 444 election year, and the effective year indicated must end in 2002.

(ii) *Time and place for filing Form 8716*. Such form must be filed on or before October 15, 2002, with the service center where the S corporation’s returns of tax (Forms 1120S) are filed. In addition, a copy of the Form 8716 should be attached to the S corporation’s short period Federal income tax return for the first election year beginning on or after January 1, 2002.

(3) *Effect of request*—(i) *Taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2002*. An S corporation described in paragraph (c)(1) of this section that requests, in accordance with this paragraph, that a termination of its election under section 444 be disregarded will be permitted to resume use of the year it previously elected under section 444, commencing with its first taxable year beginning on or after January 1, 2002. Such S corporation will be required to

file a return under § 1.7519-2T for each taxable year beginning on or after January 1, 2002. No payment under section 7519 will be due with respect to the first taxable year beginning on or after January 1, 2002. However, a required payment will be due on or before May 15, 2003, with respect to such S corporation’s second continued section 444 election year that begins in calendar year 2002.

(ii) *Taxable years beginning prior to January 1, 2002*. An S corporation described in paragraph (c)(1) of this section that requests, in accordance with this paragraph, that a termination of its election under section 444 be disregarded will not be required to amend any prior Federal income tax returns, make any required payments under section 7519, or file any returns under § 1.7519-2T, with respect to taxable years beginning on or after the date the termination of its section 444 election was effective and prior to January 1, 2002.

(iii) *Section 7519: required payments and returns*. The Internal Revenue Service waives any requirement for an S corporation described in paragraph (c)(1) of this section to file the federal tax returns and make any required payments under section 7519 for years prior to the taxable year of continuation as described in paragraph (c)(3)(i) of this section, if for such years the S corporation filed its federal income tax returns on the basis of its required taxable year.

[T.D. 8994, 67 FR 34394, May 14, 2002]

METHODS OF ACCOUNTING

METHODS OF ACCOUNTING IN GENERAL

§ 1.446-1 General rule for methods of accounting.

(a) *General rule*. (1) Section 446(a) provides that taxable income shall be computed under the method of accounting on the basis of which a taxpayer regularly computes his income in keeping his books. The term “method of accounting” includes not only the overall method of accounting of the taxpayer but also the accounting treatment of any item. Examples of such over-all methods are the cash receipts and disbursements method, an accrual

method, combinations of such methods, and combinations of the foregoing with various methods provided for the accounting treatment of special items. These methods of accounting for special items include the accounting treatment prescribed for research and experimental expenditures, soil and water conservation expenditures, depreciation, net operating losses, etc. Except for deviations permitted or required by such special accounting treatment, taxable income shall be computed under the method of accounting on the basis of which the taxpayer regularly computes his income in keeping his books. For requirement respecting the adoption or change of accounting method, see section 446(e) and paragraph (e) of this section.

(2) It is recognized that no uniform method of accounting can be prescribed for all taxpayers. Each taxpayer shall adopt such forms and systems as are, in his judgment, best suited to his needs. However, no method of accounting is acceptable unless, in the opinion of the Commissioner, it clearly reflects income. A method of accounting which reflects the consistent application of generally accepted accounting principles in a particular trade or business in accordance with accepted conditions or practices in that trade or business will ordinarily be regarded as clearly reflecting income, provided all items of gross income and expense are treated consistently from year to year.

(3) Items of gross income and expenditures which are elements in the computation of taxable income need not be in the form of cash. It is sufficient that such items can be valued in terms of money. For general rules relating to the taxable year for inclusion of income and for taking deductions, see sections 451 and 461, and the regulations thereunder.

(4) Each taxpayer is required to make a return of his taxable income for each taxable year and must maintain such accounting records as will enable him to file a correct return. See section 6001 and the regulations thereunder. Accounting records include the taxpayer's regular books of account and such other records and data as may be necessary to support the entries on his books of account and on his return, as

for example, a reconciliation of any differences between such books and his return. The following are among the essential features that must be considered in maintaining such records:

(i) In all cases in which the production, purchase, or sale of merchandise of any kind is an income-producing factor, merchandise on hand (including finished goods, work in process, raw materials, and supplies) at the beginning and end of the year shall be taken into account in computing the taxable income of the year. (For rules relating to computation of inventories, see section 263A, 471, and 472 and the regulations thereunder.)

(ii) Expenditures made during the year shall be properly classified as between capital and expense. For example, expenditures for such items as plant and equipment, which have a useful life extending substantially beyond the taxable year, shall be charged to a capital account and not to an expense account.

(iii) In any case in which there is allowable with respect to an asset a deduction for depreciation, amortization, or depletion, any expenditures (other than ordinary repairs) made to restore the asset or prolong its useful life shall be added to the asset account or charged against the appropriate reserve.

(b) *Exceptions.* (1) If the taxpayer does not regularly employ a method of accounting which clearly reflects his income, the computation of taxable income shall be made in a manner which, in the opinion of the Commissioner, does clearly reflect income.

(2) A taxpayer whose sole source of income is wages need not keep formal books in order to have an accounting method. Tax returns, copies thereof, or other records may be sufficient to establish the use of the method of accounting used in the preparation of the taxpayer's income tax returns.

(c) *Permissible methods*—(1) In general. Subject to the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section, a taxpayer may compute his taxable income under any of the following methods of accounting:

(i) *Cash receipts and disbursements method.* Generally, under the cash receipts and disbursements method in

the computation of taxable income, all items which constitute gross income (whether in the form of cash, property, or services) are to be included for the taxable year in which actually or constructively received. Expenditures are to be deducted for the taxable year in which actually made. For rules relating to constructive receipt, see §1.451-2. For treatment of an expenditure attributable to more than one taxable year, see section 461(a) and paragraph (a)(1) of §1.461-1.

(ii) *Accrual method.* (A) Generally, under an accrual method, income is to be included for the taxable year when all the events have occurred that fix the right to receive the income and the amount of the income can be determined with reasonable accuracy. Under such a method, a liability is incurred, and generally is taken into account for Federal income tax purposes, in the taxable year in which all the events have occurred that establish the fact of the liability, the amount of the liability can be determined with reasonable accuracy, and economic performance has occurred with respect to the liability. (See paragraph (a)(2)(iii)(A) of §1.461-1 for examples of liabilities that may not be taken into account until after the taxable year incurred, and see §§1.461-4 through 1.461-6 for rules relating to economic performance.) Applicable provisions of the Code, the Income Tax Regulations, and other guidance published by the Secretary prescribe the manner in which a liability that has been incurred is taken into account. For example, section 162 provides that a deductible liability generally is taken into account in the taxable year incurred through a deduction from gross income. As a further example, under section 263 or 263A, a liability that relates to the creation of an asset having a useful life extending substantially beyond the close of the taxable year is taken into account in the taxable year incurred through capitalization (within the meaning of §1.263A-1(c)(3)) and may later affect the computation of taxable income through depreciation or otherwise over a period including subsequent taxable years, in accordance with applicable Internal Revenue Code sections and related guidance.

(B) The term “liability” includes any item allowable as a deduction, cost, or expense for Federal income tax purposes. In addition to allowable deductions, the term includes any amount otherwise allowable as a capitalized cost, as a cost taken into account in computing cost of goods sold, as a cost allocable to a long-term contract, or as any other cost or expense. Thus, for example, an amount that a taxpayer expends or will expend for capital improvements to property must be incurred before the taxpayer may take the amount into account in computing its basis in the property. The term “liability” is not limited to items for which a legal obligation to pay exists at the time of payment. Thus, for example, amounts prepaid for goods or services and amounts paid without a legal obligation to do so may not be taken into account by an accrual basis taxpayer any earlier than the taxable year in which those amounts are incurred.

(C) No method of accounting is acceptable unless, in the opinion of the Commissioner, it clearly reflects income. The method used by the taxpayer in determining when income is to be accounted for will generally be acceptable if it accords with generally accepted accounting principles, is consistently used by the taxpayer from year to year, and is consistent with the Income Tax Regulations. For example, a taxpayer engaged in a manufacturing business may account for sales of the taxpayer’s product when the goods are shipped, when the product is delivered or accepted, or when title to the goods passes to the customers, whether or not billed, depending on the method regularly employed in keeping the taxpayer’s books.

(iii) *Other permissible methods.* Special methods of accounting are described elsewhere in chapter 1 of the Code and the regulations thereunder. For example, see the following sections and the regulations thereunder: Sections 61 and 162, relating to the crop method of accounting; section 453, relating to the installment method; section 460, relating to the long-term contract methods. In addition, special methods of accounting for particular items of income and expense are provided under

other sections of chapter 1. For example, see section 174, relating to research and experimental expenditures, and section 175, relating to soil and water conservation expenditures.

(iv) *Combinations of the foregoing methods.* (a) In accordance with the following rules, any combination of the foregoing methods of accounting will be permitted in connection with a trade or business if such combination clearly reflects income and is consistently used. Where a combination of methods of accounting includes any special methods, such as those referred to in subdivision (iii) of this subparagraph, the taxpayer must comply with the requirements relating to such special methods. A taxpayer using an accrual method of accounting with respect to purchases and sales may use the cash method in computing all other items of income and expense. However, a taxpayer who uses the cash method of accounting in computing gross income from his trade or business shall use the cash method in computing expenses of such trade or business. Similarly, a taxpayer who uses an accrual method of accounting in computing business expenses shall use an accrual method in computing items affecting gross income from his trade or business.

(b) A taxpayer using one method of accounting in computing items of income and deductions of his trade or business may compute other items of income and deductions not connected with his trade or business under a different method of accounting.

(2) *Special rules.* (i) In any case in which it is necessary to use an inventory the accrual method of accounting must be used with regard to purchases and sales unless otherwise authorized under subdivision (ii) of this subparagraph.

(ii) No method of accounting will be regarded as clearly reflecting income unless all items of gross profit and deductions are treated with consistency from year to year. The Commissioner may authorize a taxpayer to adopt or change to a method of accounting permitted by this chapter although the method is not specifically described in the regulations in this part if, in the opinion of the Commissioner, income is

clearly reflected by the use of such method. Further, the Commissioner may authorize a taxpayer to continue the use of a method of accounting consistently used by the taxpayer, even though not specifically authorized by the regulations in this part, if, in the opinion of the Commissioner, income is clearly reflected by the use of such method. See section 446(a) and paragraph (a) of this section, which require that taxable income shall be computed under the method of accounting on the basis of which the taxpayer regularly computes his income in keeping his books, and section 446(e) and paragraph (e) of this section, which require the prior approval of the Commissioner in the case of changes in accounting method.

(iii) The timing rules of § 1.1502-13 are a method of accounting for intercompany transactions (as defined in § 1.1502-13(b)(1)(i)), to be applied by each member of a consolidated group in addition to the member's other methods of accounting. See § 1.1502-13(a)(3)(i). This paragraph (c)(2)(iii) is applicable to consolidated return years beginning on or after November 7, 2001.

(d) *Taxpayer engaged in more than one business.* (1) Where a taxpayer has two or more separate and distinct trades or businesses, a different method of accounting may be used for each trade or business, provided the method used for each trade or business clearly reflects the income of that particular trade or business. For example, a taxpayer may account for the operations of a personal service business on the cash receipts and disbursements method and of a manufacturing business on an accrual method, provided such businesses are separate and distinct and the methods used for each clearly reflect income. The method first used in accounting for business income and deductions in connection with each trade or business, as evidenced in the taxpayer's income tax return in which such income or deductions are first reported, must be consistently followed thereafter.

(2) No trade or business will be considered separate and distinct for purposes of this paragraph unless a complete and separable set of books and

records is kept for such trade or business.

(3) If, by reason of maintaining different methods of accounting, there is a creation or shifting of profits or losses between the trades or businesses of the taxpayer (for example, through inventory adjustments, sales, purchases, or expenses) so that income of the taxpayer is not clearly reflected, the trades or businesses of the taxpayer will not be considered to be separate and distinct.

(e) *Requirement respecting the adoption or change of accounting method.* (1) A taxpayer filing his first return may adopt any permissible method of accounting in computing taxable income for the taxable year covered by such return. See section 446(c) and paragraph (c) of this section for permissible methods. Moreover, a taxpayer may adopt any permissible method of accounting in connection with each separate and distinct trade or business, the income from which is reported for the first time. See section 446(d) and paragraph (d) of this section. See also section 446(a) and paragraph (a) of this section.

(2)(i) Except as otherwise expressly provided in chapter 1 of the Code and the regulations thereunder, a taxpayer who changes the method of accounting employed in keeping his books shall, before computing his income upon such new method for purposes of taxation, secure the consent of the Commissioner. Consent must be secured whether or not such method is proper or is permitted under the Internal Revenue Code or the regulations thereunder.

(ii) (a) [Reserved]. For further guidance, see § 1.446-1T(e)(2)(ii)(a).

(b) [Reserved]. For further guidance, see § 1.446-1T(e)(2)(ii)(b).

(c) A change in an overall plan or system of identifying or valuing items in inventory is a change in method of accounting. Also a change in the treatment of any material item used in the overall plan for identifying or valuing items in inventory is a change in method of accounting.

(d) *Changes involving depreciable or amortizable assets.* [Reserved]. For further guidance, see § 1.446-1T(e)(2)(ii)(d).

(iii) *Examples.* [Reserved]. For further guidance, see § 1.446-1T(e)(2)(iii).

(3)(i) Except as otherwise provided under the authority of paragraph (e)(3)(ii) of this section, to secure the Commissioner's consent to a taxpayer's change in method of accounting the taxpayer must file an application on Form 3115 with the Commissioner during the taxable year in which the taxpayer desires to make the change in method of accounting. To the extent applicable, the taxpayer must furnish all information requested on the Form 3115. This information includes all classes of items that will be treated differently under the new method of accounting, any amounts that will be duplicated or omitted as a result of the proposed change, and the taxpayer's computation of any adjustments necessary to prevent such duplications or omissions. The Commissioner may require such other information as may be necessary to determine whether the proposed change will be permitted. Permission to change a taxpayer's method of accounting will not be granted unless the taxpayer agrees to the Commissioner's prescribed terms and conditions for effecting the change, including the taxable year or years in which any adjustment necessary to prevent amounts from being duplicated or omitted is to be taken into account. See section 481 and the regulations thereunder, relating to certain adjustments resulting from accounting method changes, and section 472 and the regulations thereunder, relating to adjustments for changes to and from the last-in, first-out inventory method. For any Form 3115 filed on or after May 15, 1997, see § 1.446-1T(e)(3)(i)(B).

(ii) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (e)(3)(i) of this section, the Commissioner may prescribe administrative procedures under which taxpayers will be permitted to change their method of accounting. The administrative procedures shall prescribe those terms and conditions necessary to obtain the Commissioner's consent to effect the change and to prevent amounts from being duplicated or omitted. The terms and conditions that may be prescribed by the Commissioner may include terms and conditions that require the change in method of accounting to be effected on a cut-off basis or by an adjustment under

section 481(a) to be taken into account in the taxable year or years prescribed by the Commissioner.

(iii) This paragraph (e)(3) applies to Forms 3115 filed on or after December 31, 1997. For other Forms 3115, see § 1.446-1(e)(3) in effect prior to December 31, 1997 (§ 1.446-1(e)(3) as contained in the 26 CFR part 1 edition revised as of April 1, 1997).

(4) *Effective date.* [Reserved]. For further guidance, see § 1.446(e)-1T(e)(4)(i) and (ii).

[T.D. 6500, 25 FR 11708, Nov. 26, 1960, as amended by T.D. 7073, 35 FR 17710, Nov. 18, 1970; T.D. 7285, 38 FR 26184, Sept. 19, 1973; T.D. 8067, 51 FR 378, Jan. 6, 1986; T.D. 8131, 52 FR 10084, Mar. 30, 1987; T.D. 8408, 57 FR 12419, Apr. 10, 1992; T.D. 8482, 58 FR 42233, Aug. 9, 1993; T.D. 8608, 60 FR 40078, Aug. 7, 1995; T.D. 8719, 62 FR 26741, May 15, 1997; T.D. 8742, 62 FR 68169, Dec. 31, 1997; T.D. 8929, 66 FR 2223, Jan. 11, 2001; T.D. 9025, 67 FR 76985, Dec. 16, 2002; T.D. 9105, 69 FR 8, Jan. 2, 2004]

§ 1.446-1T General rule for methods of accounting (temporary).

(a) through (e)(2)(i) [Reserved]. For further guidance, see § 1.446-1(a) through (e)(2)(i).

(e)(2)(ii)(a) A change in the method of accounting includes a change in the overall plan of accounting for gross income or deductions or a change in the treatment of any material item used in such overall plan. Although a method of accounting may exist under this definition without the necessity of a pattern of consistent treatment of an item, in most instances a method of accounting is not established for an item without such consistent treatment. A material item is any item that involves the proper time for the inclusion of the item in income or the taking of a deduction. Changes in method of accounting include a change from the cash receipts and disbursement method to an accrual method, or vice versa, a change involving the method or basis used in the valuation of inventories (see sections 471 and 472 and the regulations under sections 471 and 472), a change from the cash or accrual method to a long-term contract method, or vice versa (see § 1.460-4), certain changes in computing depreciation or amortization (see paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d) of this section), a change involving the adoption, use or discontinuance of any

other specialized method of computing taxable income, such as the crop method, and a change where the Internal Revenue Code and regulations under the Code specifically require that the consent of the Commissioner must be obtained before adopting such a change.

(b) A change in method of accounting does not include correction of mathematical or posting errors, or errors in the computation of tax liability (such as errors in computation of the foreign tax credit, net operating loss, percentage depletion, or investment credit). Also, a change in method of accounting does not include adjustment of any item of income or deduction that does not involve the proper time for the inclusion of the item of income or the taking of a deduction. For example, corrections of items that are deducted as interest or salary, but that are in fact payments of dividends, and of items that are deducted as business expenses, but which are in fact personal expenses, are not changes in method of accounting. In addition, a change in the method of accounting does not include an adjustment with respect to the addition to a reserve for bad debts. Although such adjustment may involve the question of the proper time for the taking of a deduction, such items are traditionally corrected by adjustment in the current and future years. For the treatment of the adjustment of the addition to a bad debt reserve (for example, for banks under section 585 of the Internal Revenue Code), see the regulations under section 166 of the Internal Revenue Code. A change in the method of accounting also does not include a change in treatment resulting from a change in underlying facts. For further guidance on changes involving depreciable or amortizable assets, see paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d) of this section and § 1.1016-3T(h).

(c) [Reserved]. For further guidance, see § 1.446-1(e)(2)(ii)(c).

(d) *Changes involving depreciable or amortizable assets—(1) Scope.* This paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d) applies to property subject to section 167, 168, 197, 1400I, 1400L(b), or 1400L(c), or to section 168 prior to its amendment by the Tax Reform Act of 1986 (100 Stat. 2121) (former section 168).