

(3) *Example.* Effective October 1, 1977, a plan is amended to change the accrual computation period from the 12-consecutive-month period beginning on January 1 to the 12-consecutive-month period beginning on October 1. The period from January 1, 1977 to September 30, 1977 must be treated as a partial accrual computation period. The plan has a requirement that a participant must be credited with 1,000 hours of service in an accrual computation period in order to be credited with a year of participation for purposes of benefit accrual. For the partial accrual computation period the plan may require a participant to be credited with 750 hours of service in the partial accrual computation period in order to receive credit for purposes of benefit accrual (1,000 hours of service multiplied by the ratio of 9 months to 12 months). To the extent permitted under paragraph (d) of this section, the plan may prorate accrual credit on whatever basis the plan uses to prorate accrual credit for employees whose service is 1,000 hours of service or more but less than service required for full accrual in a full accrual computation period.

§ 2530.204-3 Alternative computation methods for benefit accrual.

(a) *General.* Under section 204(b)(3)(A) of the Act and section 411(b)(3)(A) of the Code, a defined benefit pension plan may determine an employee's service for purposes of benefit accrual on the basis of accrual computation periods, as specified in § 2530.204-2, or on any other basis which is reasonable and consistent and which takes into account all covered service during the employee's participation in the plan which is included in a period of service required to be taken into account under section 202(b) of the Act and section 410(a)(5) of the Code. If, however, a plan determines an employee's service for purposes of benefit accrual on a basis other than computation periods, it must be possible to prove that, despite the fact that benefit accrual under the plan is not based on computation periods, the plan's provisions meet at least one of the three benefit accrual rules of section 204(b)(1) of the Act and section 411(b)(1) of the Code under all circumstances. Further, a

plan which does not provide for benefit accrual on the basis of computation periods may not disregard service under section 204(b)(3)(C) of the Act and section 411(b)(3)(C) of the Code.

(b) *Examples.* The following are examples of methods of determining an employee's period of service for purposes of benefit accrual under which an employee's period of service is not determined on the basis of computation periods but which may be used by a plan provided that the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section are met:

(1) *Career compensation.* A defined benefit formula based on a percentage of compensation earned in a participant's career or during participation, with no variance depending on hours completed in given periods.

(2) *Credited hours.* A defined benefit formula pursuant to which an employee is credited with a specified amount of accrual for each hour of service (or hour worked or regular time hour) completed by the employee during his or her career.

(3) *Elapsed time.* See § 2530.200b-9(e).

§ 2530.204-4 Deferral of benefit accrual.

For purposes of section 204(b)(1)(E) of the Act and section 411(b)(1)(E) of the Code (which permit deferral of benefit accrual until an employee has 2 continuous years of service), an employee shall be credited with a year of service for each computation period in which he or she completes 1,000 hours of service. The computation period shall be the eligibility computation period designated in accordance with § 2530.202-2.

Subpart C—Form and Payment of Benefits

§§ 2530.205-2530.206 [Reserved]

Subpart D—Plan Administration as Related to Benefits

§§ 2530.207-2530.209 [Reserved]

§ 2530.210 Employer or employers maintaining the plan.

(a) *General statutory provisions—(1) Eligibility to participate and vesting.* Except as otherwise provided in section

202(b) or 203(b)(1) of the Act and sections 410(a)(5), 411(a)(5) and 411(a)(6) of the Code, all years of service with the employer or employers maintaining the plan shall be taken into account for purposes of section 202 of the Act and section 410 of the Code (relating to minimum eligibility standards) and section 203 of the Act and section 411(a) of the Code (relating to minimum vesting standards).

(2) *Accrual of benefits.* Except as otherwise provided in section 202(b) of the Act and section 410(a)(5) of the Code, all years of participation under the plan must be taken into account for purposes of section 204 of the Act and section 411(b) of the Code (relating to benefit accrual). Section 204(b) of the Act and section 411(b) of the Code require only that periods of actual participation in the plan (e.g., covered service) be taken into account for purposes of benefit accrual.

(b) *General rules concerning service to be credited under this section.* Section 210 of the Act and sections 413(c), 414(b), and 414(c) of the Code provide rules applicable to sections 202, 203, and 204 of the Act and sections 410, 411(a), and 411(b) of the Code for purposes of determining who is an “employer or employers maintaining the plan” and, accordingly, what service is required to be taken into account in the case of a plan maintained by more than one employer. Paragraphs (c) through (e) of this section set forth the rules for determining service required to be taken into account in the case of a plan or plans maintained by multiple employers, controlled groups of corporations and trades or businesses under common control. Note throughout that every mention of multiple employer plans includes multiemployer plans. See § 2530.210(c)(3). Paragraph (f) of this section sets forth special break in service rules for such plans. Paragraph (g) of this section applies the break in service rules of sections 202(b)(4) and 203(b)(3)(D) of the Act and sections 410(a)(5)(D) and 411(a)(6)(D) of the Code (rule of parity) to such plans.

(c) *Multiple employer plans—(1) Eligibility to participate and vesting.* A multiple employer plan shall be treated as if all maintaining employers constitute a single employer so long as an em-

ployee is employed in either covered service or contiguous noncovered service. Accordingly, except as referred to in paragraph (a)(1) and provided in paragraph (f) of this section, in determining an employee’s service for eligibility to participate and vesting purposes, all covered service with an employer or employers maintaining the plan and all contiguous noncovered service with an employer or employers maintaining the plan shall be taken into account. Thus, for example, if an employee in service covered under a multiple employer plan leaves covered service with one employer maintaining the plan and is employed immediately thereafter in covered service with another employer maintaining the plan, the plan is required to credit all hours of service with both employers for purposes of participation and vesting. If an employee moves from contiguous noncovered to covered service, or from covered service to contiguous noncovered service, with the same employer, the plan is required to credit all hours of service with such employer for purposes of eligibility to participate and vesting.

(2) *Benefit accrual.* A multiple employer plan shall be treated as if all maintaining employers constitute a single employer so long as an employee is employed in covered service. Accordingly, except as referred to in paragraph (a)(2) and provided in paragraph (f) of this section, in determining a participant’s service for benefit accrual purposes, all covered service with an employer or employers maintaining the plan shall be taken into account.

(3) *Definitions.* (i) For purposes of this section, the term “multiple employer plan” shall mean a multiemployer plan as defined in section 3(37) of the Act and section 414(f) of the Code or a multiple employer plan within the meaning of sections 413 (b) and (c) of the Code and the regulations issued thereunder. Notwithstanding the preceding sentence, a plan maintained solely by members of the same controlled group of corporations within the meaning of paragraph (d) of this section or by trades or businesses which are under the common control of one person or group of persons within the meaning of paragraph (e) of this section shall not

be deemed to be a multiple employer plan for purposes of this section, and such plan is required to apply the rules under this section which are applicable to controlled groups of corporations or commonly controlled trades or businesses respectively.

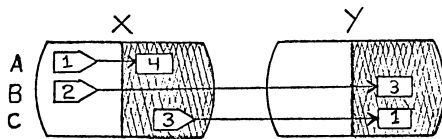
(ii) For purposes of this section, the term "covered service" shall mean service with an employer or employers maintaining the plan within a job classification or class of employees covered under the plan.

(iii) For purposes of this section the term "noncovered service" shall mean service with an employer or employers maintaining the plan which is not covered service.

(iv)(A) *General.* For purposes of this section noncovered service shall be deemed "contiguous" if (1) the noncovered service precedes or follows covered service and (2) no quit, discharge, or retirement occurs between such covered service and noncovered service.

(B) *Exception.* Notwithstanding the preceding paragraph, in the case of a controlled group of corporations within the meaning of paragraph (d) of this section or trades or businesses which are under the common control of one person or group of persons within the meaning of paragraph (e) of this section, any transfer of an employee from one member of the controlled group to another member or from one trade or business under common control to another trade or business under the common control of the same person or group of persons shall result in the period of noncovered service which immediately precedes or follows such transfer being deemed "noncontiguous" for purposes of paragraph (c) of this section.

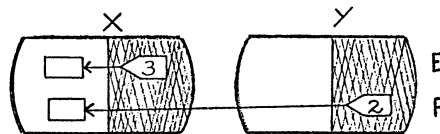
DIAGRAM NO. 1. (MULTIPLE EMPLOYER PLAN.)



Assume for purposes of diagram No. 1 that X and Y are both employers who are required to contribute to a multiple employer plan and that neither employer maintains any other plan. Covered service is represented by

the shaded segments of the diagram. After completing 1 year of noncovered service, employee A immediately enters covered service with X and completes 4 years of covered service. For purposes of eligibility to participate and vesting, the plan is required to credit employee A with 5 years of service with employer X because his period of service with X includes a period of covered service and a period of contiguous noncovered service. On the other hand, employee B, immediately after completing 2 years of noncovered service with X, enters covered service with Y. Because B quit employment with X, his period of noncovered service with X is not contiguous and, therefore, is not required to be taken into account. In the case of employee C, the plan is required to take into account all service with employers X and Y because employee C is employed in covered service with both employers.

DIAGRAM NO. 2. (MULTIPLE EMPLOYER.)



The multiple employer plan rules with respect to noncovered service are illustrated in diagram No. 2. Assume that X and Y are both employers who are required to contribute to a multiple employer plan and that neither employer maintains any other plan. Covered service is represented by the shaded segments of the diagram. Employee E completed 3 years of service with employer X in covered service and then immediately entered noncovered service with X. Because E's noncovered service is contiguous, the plan is required to take into account all service with X for purposes of eligibility to participate and vesting under the multiple employer plan. Employee F does not continue to receive credit; F quit the employment of Y and entered noncovered service with X.

(d) *Controlled groups of corporations.* (1) With respect to a plan maintained by one or more members of a controlled group of corporations (within the meaning of section 1563(a) of the Code, determined without regard to sections 1563(a)(4) and (e)(3)(C), all employees of such corporations shall be treated as employed by a single employer.

(2) Accordingly, except as referred to in paragraph (a)(1) and provided in

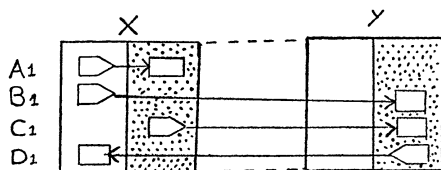
§ 2530.210

29 CFR Ch. XXV (7-1-05 Edition)

paragraph (f) of this section, in determining an employee's service for eligibility to participate and vesting purposes, all service with any employer which is a member of the controlled group of corporations shall be taken into account. Except as referred to in paragraph (a)(2) and provided in paragraph (f) of this section, in determining a participant's service for benefit accrual purposes, all service during periods of participation covered under the plan with any employer which is a member of the controlled group of corporations shall be taken into account.

(e) *Commonly controlled trades or businesses.* With respect to a plan maintained only by one or more trades or businesses (whether or not incorporated) which are under common control within the meaning of section 414(c) of the Code and the regulations issued thereunder, all employees of such trades or businesses shall be treated as employed by a single employer. Accordingly, except as referred to in paragraph (a)(1) and provided in paragraph (f) of this section, in determining an employee's service for eligibility to participate and vesting purposes, all service with any employer which is under common control shall be taken into account. Except as referred to in paragraph (a)(2) and provided in paragraph (f) of this section, in determining a participant's service for benefit accrual purposes, all service during periods of participation covered under the plan with any employer which is under common control shall be taken into account.

DIAGRAM NO. 3. (CONTROLLED GROUP OR COMMONLY CONTROLLED TRADE OR BUSINESS.)



Assume for purposes of diagram No. 3 that X and Y are either members of the same controlled group of corporations or trades or businesses which are under the same common control. The dotted segments of the diagram represent plan coverage under plans

separately maintained by X and Y. Neither employer maintains any other plans. Because A1, B1, C1, and D1 have their service with X and Y treated as if X and Y were a single employer, the plans are required to take into account all service with X and Y for eligibility to participate and vesting purposes.

(f) *Special break in service rules.* (1) In addition to service which may be disregarded under the statutory provisions referred to in paragraph (a) of this section, a multiple employer plan may disregard noncontiguous non-covered service.

(2) In the case of a plan maintained solely by one or more members of a controlled group of corporations or one or more trades or businesses which are under common control, if one of the maintaining employers is also a participating employer in a multiple employer plan which includes other employers which are not members of the controlled group or commonly controlled trades or businesses, service with such other employer maintaining the multiple employer plan may be disregarded by the controlled group or commonly controlled plan.

DIAGRAM NO. 4. (BREAK IN SERVICE RULES.)

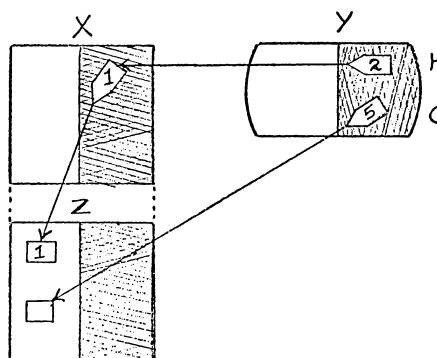


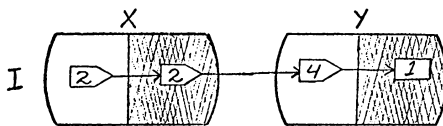
Diagram No. 4 illustrates the break in service rules of paragraph (f) of this section. Assume for purposes of diagram No. 4 that employer Z is controlled by employer X but employer Y's only relation to X and Z is that X, Y, and Z are required to contribute to a multiple employer plan. The multiple employer plan, represented by the shaded segments of the diagram, provides for 100 percent vesting after 10 years. X, Y, and Z maintain no other plans.

Employee G completed 5 years of covered service with employer Y, and then moved to noncovered service with employer Z. G's noncovered service is noncontiguous (see employee F in diagram No. 2 above), and such service may be disregarded for purposes of the multiple employer plan under the rule in paragraph (f)(1).

Employee H completed 2 years of covered service with employer Y and then entered covered service with employer X for 1 year. The multiple employer plan is required to credit H with 3 years of service. H then entered noncovered service with employer Z. H's noncovered service is noncontiguous (see employee F in diagram No. 2 above), and such service may be disregarded for purposes of the multiple employer plan under the rule in paragraph (f)(1).

(g) *Rule of parity.* For purposes of sections 202(b)(4) and 203(b)(3)(D) of the Act and sections 410(a)(5)(D) and 411(a)(6)(D) of the Code, in the case of an employee who is a nonvested participant in employer-derived accrued benefits at the time he incurs a 1-year break in service, years of service completed by such employee before such break are not required to be taken into account if at such time he incurs consecutive 1-year breaks in service which equal or exceed the aggregate number of years of service before such breaks. This is so even though the period of noncontiguous noncovered service with an employer or employers maintaining the plan may subsequently be deemed contiguous as the result of the employee entering covered service with the same employer maintaining the plan and, consequently, such plan may be required to credit such service.

DIAGRAM NO. 5. (RULE OF PARITY)



Assume for purposes of diagram No. 5 that X and Y are both employers who are required to contribute to a multiple employer plan which contains a provision applying the rule of parity. Covered service is represented by the shaded segments of the diagram. The plan has 100% vesting after 10 years. X and Y maintain no other plan.

The multiple employer plan credited employee I with 4 years of service with X when he quit employment with X and entered noncovered service with Y. As a result of 4 years

of noncontiguous noncovered service with Y, employee I incurred 4 consecutive 1-year breaks in service, so that the multiple employer plan may disregard his prior service (i.e., the 4 years of service with X).

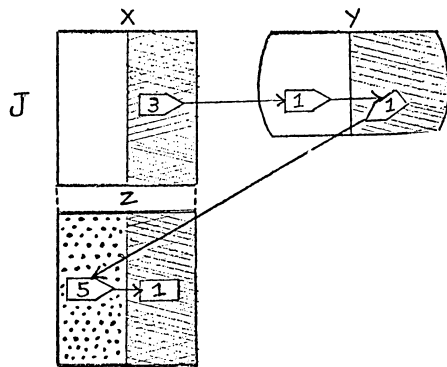
When employee I entered covered service with Y (as a "new employee"), his 4 years of noncontiguous service with Y became contiguous for purposes of the multiple employer plan. Consequently, after 1 year of covered service with Y, the plan is required to credit employee I with 5 years of service.

(h) *Example.* Under section 203(b)(1)(C) of the Act and section 411(a)(4)(C) of the Code, service with an employer prior to such employer's adoption of the plan need not be taken into account. The following example demonstrates that this rule applies even if an employee is employed in contiguous noncovered service. The example is applicable to any plan subject to the rules of this section. However, for purposes of clarity, the example assumes that X and Y are required to contribute to a multiple employer plan.

Assume that employee D completed 3 years of covered service with employer Y as of the date X adopts the plan. Immediately after X's adoption of the plan D left covered service with Y and D entered covered service with X. His prior covered service with Y is required to be counted, and D remains a participant.

On the other hand, if D had entered service with X any time prior to X's adoption of the plan and subsequently was covered by the plan when X adopted it, his prior service with Y must also be counted, unless such service may be disregarded under the break in service rules because the period of service with X before X's adoption of the plan was equal to or greater than his prior service with Y. For example, if X adopted the plan three years after D began employment with X, and consequently after D had incurred 3 consecutive 1-year breaks in service, his prior service with Y could be disregarded.

(I) COMPREHENSIVE DIAGRAM. (No. 6)



Assume for purposes of diagram No. 6 that employer Z is controlled by employer X within the meaning of paragraph (d) but employer Y's only relation to X and Z is that X, Y and Z are required to contribute to a multiple employer plan. The shaded segments represent coverage under the multiple employer plan which contains a provision applying the rule of parity. The dotted segment represents a separate plan maintained by Z. Both plans have 100% vesting after 10 years.

Employee J completed 3 years of service with employer X in covered service with the multiple employer plan. J then entered non-covered service with Y and remained with Y for 1 year, and thereby incurred a 1-year break in service under the multiple employer plan. J then entered covered service with employer Y, thereby causing the noncovered service with Y to become contiguous. Covered service with X and contiguous non-

covered and covered service with Y must be taken into account for purposes of the multiple employer plan; accordingly, that plan is required to credit J with a total of 5 years of service.

J then left service with Y and entered non-covered service (with respect to the multiple employer plan) with Z. J remained in non-covered service with Z (with respect to the multiple employer plan) for 5 years and thereby incurred 5 consecutive 1-year break in service for purposes of the multiple employer plan. Consequently, the prior service with X and Y may be disregarded for purposes of the multiple employer plan.

J then entered covered service under the multiple employer plan with Z and completed 1 year of service. Because the 5 years of noncovered service with Z is contiguous with the 1 year of covered service, the multiple employer plan is now required to credit J with 6 years of service for purposes of eligibility to participate and vesting.

For purposes of Z's controlled group plan (i.e., dotted segment), employee J is entitled to receive credit for 9 years of service. The 3 years of service with X, a member of the controlled group, may not be disregarded under the rule of parity because J incurred only 2 consecutive 1-year breaks in service while employed with Y. When J entered service with Z covered under Z's controlled group plan, the 3 years of service with X were still required to be credited by the controlled group plan. In addition, J must receive credit for the 5 years of service with Z covered under the controlled group plan. Finally, when J moved to service with Z covered under the multiple employer plan the controlled group plan was required to credit J with an additional year of service.

SUBCHAPTER E [RESERVED]