

benefits) which matured during the decedent's lifetime so that there was no longer an insurance element under the contract at the time of the decedent's death is subject to the provisions of section 2039 (a) and (b). On the other hand, the treatment of a combination annuity contract and life insurance policy on the decedent's life which did not mature during the decedent's lifetime depends upon the nature of the contract at the time of the decedent's death. The nature of the contract is generally determined by the relation of the reserve value of the policy to the value of the death benefit at the time of the decedent's death. If the decedent dies before the reserve value equals the death benefit, there is still an insurance element under the contract. The contract is therefore considered, for estate tax purposes, to be an insurance policy subject to the provisions of section 2042. However, if the decedent dies after the reserve value equals the death benefit, there is no longer an insurance element under the contract. The contract is therefore considered to be a contract for an annuity or other payment subject to the provisions of section 2039 (a) and (b) or some other section of Part III of Subchapter A of Chapter 11. Notwithstanding the relation of the reserve value to the value of the death benefit, a contract under which the death benefit could never exceed the total premiums paid, plus interest, contains no insurance element.

Example. Pursuant to a retirement plan established January 1, 1945, the employer purchased a contract from an insurance company which was to provide the employee, upon his retirement at age 65, with an annuity of \$100 per month for life, and which was to provide his designated beneficiary, upon the employee's death after retirement, with a similar annuity for life. The contract further provided that if the employee should die before reaching the retirement age, a lump sum payment of \$20,000 would be paid to his designated beneficiary in lieu of the annuity described above. The plan at no time met the requirements of section 401(a) (relating to qualified plans). Assume that the reserve value of the contract at the retirement age would be \$20,000. If the employee died after reaching the retirement age, the death benefit to the designated beneficiary would constitute an annuity, the value of which would be includable in the employee's gross estate under section 2039 (a) and (b). If, on the other

hand, the employee died before reaching his retirement age, the death benefit to the designated beneficiary would constitute insurance under a policy on the life of the decedent since the reserve value would be less than the death benefit. Accordingly, its includability would depend upon section 2042 and § 20.2042-1.

[T.D. 6296, 23 FR 4529, June 24, 1958; 25 FR 14021, Dec. 31, 1960, as amended by T.D. 7416, 41 FR 14514, Apr. 6, 1976]

§ 20.2039-1T Limitations and repeal of estate tax exclusion for qualified plans and individual retirement plans (IRAs) (temporary).

Q-1: Are there any exceptions to the general effective dates of the \$100,000 limitation and the repeal of the estate tax exclusion for the value of interests under qualified plans and IRAs described in section 2039 (c) and (e)?

A-1: (a) Yes. Section 245 of the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982 (TEFRA) limited the estate tax exclusion to \$100,000 for estates of decedents dying after December 31, 1982. Section 525 of the Tax Reform Act of 1984 (TRA of 1984) repealed the exclusion for estates of decedents dying after December 31, 1984.

(b) Section 525(b)(3) of the TRA of 1984 amended section 245 of TEFRA to provide that the \$100,000 limitation on the exclusion for the value of a decedent's interest in a plan or IRA will not apply to the estate of any decedent dying after December 31, 1982, to the extent that the decedent-participant was in pay status on December 31, 1982, with respect to such interest and irrevocably elected the form of benefit payable under the plan or IRA (including the form of any survivor benefits) with respect to such interest before January 1, 1983.

(c) Similarly, the TRA of 1984 provides that the repeal of the estate tax exclusion for the value of a decedent's interest in a plan or IRA will not apply to the estate of a decedent dying after December 31, 1984, to the extent that the decedent-participant was in pay status on December 31, 1984, with respect to such interest and irrevocably elected the form of benefit payable under the plan or IRA (including the form of any survivor benefits) with respect to such interest before July 18, 1984.

Q-2: What is the meaning of “in pay status” on the applicable date?

A-2: A participant was in pay status on the applicable date with respect to a portion of his or her interest in a plan or IRA if such portion is to be paid in a benefit form that has been elected on or before such date and the participant has received, on or before such date, at least one payment under such benefit form.

Q-3: What is required for an election of the form of benefit payable under the plan to have been irrevocable as of any applicable date?

A-3: As of any applicable date, an election of the form of benefit payable under a plan is irrevocable if, as of such date, it was a written irrevocable election that, with respect to all payments to be received after such date, specified the form of distribution (e.g., lump sum, level dollar annuity, formula annuity) and the period over which the distribution would be made (e.g., single life, joint and survivor, term certain). An election is not irrevocable as of any applicable date if, on or after such date, the form or period of the distribution could be determined or altered by any person or persons. An election does not fail to be irrevocable as of an applicable date merely because the beneficiaries were not designated as of such date or could be changed after such date. If any interest in any IRA may not, by law or contract, be subject to an irrevocable election described in this section, any election of the form of benefit payable under the IRA does not satisfy the requirement that an irrevocable election have been made.

[T.D. 8073, 51 FR 4335, Feb. 4, 1986]

§ 20.2039-2 Annuities under “qualified plans” and section 403(b) annuity contracts.

(a) *Section 2039(c) exclusion.* In general, in the case of a decedent dying after December 31, 1953, the value of an annuity or other payment receivable under a plan or annuity contract described in paragraph (b) of this section is excluded from the decedent’s gross estate to the extent provided in paragraph (c) of this section. In the case of a plan described in paragraph (b) (1) or (2) of this section (a “qualified plan”),

the exclusion is subject to the limitation described in § 20.2039-3 (relating to lump sum distributions paid with respect to a decedent dying after December 31, 1976, and before January 1, 1979) or § 20.2039-4 (relating to lump sum distributions paid with respect to a decedent dying after December 31, 1978).

(b) *Plans and annuity contracts to which section 2039(c) applies.* Section 2039(c) excludes from a decedent’s gross estate, to the extent provided in paragraph (c) of this section, the value of an annuity or other payment receivable by any beneficiary (except the value of an annuity or other payment receivable by or for the benefit of the decedent’s estate) under—

(1) An employees’ trust (or under a contract purchased by an employees’ trust) forming part of a pension, stock bonus, or profit-sharing plan which, at the time of the decedent’s separation from employment (whether by death or otherwise), or at the time of the earlier termination of the plan, met the requirements of section 401(a);

(2) A retirement annuity contract purchased by an employer (and not by an employees’ trust) pursuant to a plan which, at the time of decedent’s separation from employment (by death or otherwise), or at the time of the earlier termination of the plan, was a plan described in section 403(a);

(3) In the case of a decedent dying after December 31, 1957, a retirement annuity contract purchased for an employee by an employer which, for its taxable year in which the purchase occurred, is an organization referred to in section 170(b)(1)(A) (ii) or (iv) or which is a religious organization (other than a trust) and is exempt from tax under section 501(a);

(4) In the case of a decedent dying after December 31, 1965, an annuity under Chapter 73 of Title 10 of the United States Code (10 U.S.C. 1431, *et seq.*); or

(5) In the case of a decedent dying after December 31, 1962, a bond purchase plan described in section 405.

For the meaning of the term “annuity or other payment”, see paragraph (b) of § 20.2039-1. For the meaning of the phrase “receivable by or for the benefit of the decedent’s estate”, see paragraph (b) of § 20.2042-1. The application