

equal to the individual's benefit or benefits for the last month for which he was entitled to such benefit or benefits during the taxable year, except that with respect to any deductions imposed on or after January 2, 1968, if the amount of the deduction imposed for the taxable year is less than the benefit or benefits for the last month of the taxable year for which he was entitled to a benefit under section 202 of the Act, the penalty deduction is an amount equal to the amount of the deduction imposed but not less than \$10.

(2) *Second failure to file timely report.* The penalty deduction for the second failure to file a timely report is an amount equal to twice the amount of the individual's benefit or benefits for the last month for which he was entitled to such benefit or benefits during such taxable year.

(3) *Subsequent failures to file timely reports.* The penalty deduction for the third or subsequent failure to file a timely report is an amount equal to three times the amount of the individual's benefit or benefits for the last month for which he was entitled to such benefit or benefits during such taxable year.

(c) *Determining whether a failure to file a timely report is first, second, or subsequent failure—*(1) *No prior failure.* Where no penalty deduction under this section has previously been imposed against the beneficiary for failure to make a timely report of his earnings, all taxable years (and this may include 2 or more years) for which a report of earnings is overdue as of the date the first delinquent report is made are included in the first failure. The latest of such years for which *good cause* for failure to make the required report (see § 404.454) is not found is considered the first failure to file a timely report.

Example: X became entitled to benefits in 1964 and had reportable earnings for 1964, 1965, and 1966. He did not make his annual reports for those years until July 1967. At that time it was found that 1966 was the only year for which he has good cause for not making a timely report of his earnings. Since all taxable years for which a report is overdue as of the date of the first delinquent report are included in the first failure period, it was found that his first failure to make a timely report was for 1965. The penalty is equal to his December 1965 benefit rate. If good cause

had also been found for both 1965 and 1964, then X would have *no prior failure* within the meaning of this subsection.

(2) *Second and subsequent failures.* After one penalty deduction under paragraph (b) of this section has been imposed against an individual, each taxable year for which a timely report of earnings is not made (and the count commences with reports of earnings which become delinquent after the date the first delinquent report described in paragraph (c)(1) of this section was made), and for which *good cause* for failure to make the required report is not found, is considered separately in determining whether the failure is the second or subsequent failure to report timely.

Example: Y incurred a penalty deduction for not making his 1963 annual report until July 1964. In August 1966 it was found that he had not made a timely report of either his 1964 or 1965 earnings, and good cause was not present with respect to either year. The penalty for 1964 is equal to twice his benefit rate for December 1964. The penalty for 1965 is equal to three times his benefit rate for December 1965.

(3) *Penalty deduction imposed under § 404.451 not considered.* A failure to make a report as required by § 404.450, for which a penalty deduction is imposed under § 404.451, is not counted as a failure to report in determining, under this section, whether a failure to report earnings or wages is the first or subsequent failure to report.

(d) *Limitation on amount of penalty deduction.* Notwithstanding the provisions described in paragraph (b) of this section, the amount of the penalty deduction imposed for failure to file a timely report of earnings for a taxable year may not exceed the number of months in that year for which the individual received and accepted a benefit and for which deductions are imposed by reason of his earnings for such year. (See § 404.458 for other limitations on the amount of the penalty deduction.)

[32 FR 19159, Dec. 20, 1967, as amended at 38 FR 3597, Feb. 8, 1973; 38 FR 9431, Apr. 16, 1973]

§ 404.454 Good cause for failure to make required reports.

(a) *General.* The failure of an individual to make a timely report under the provisions described in §§ 404.450

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and 404.452 will not result in a penalty deduction if the individual establishes to the satisfaction of the Administration that his failure to file a timely report was due to good cause. Before making any penalty determination as described in §§ 404.451 and 404.453, the individual shall be advised of the penalty and good cause provisions and afforded an opportunity to establish good cause for failure to report timely. The failure of the individual to submit evidence to establish good cause within a specified time may be considered a sufficient basis for a finding that good cause does not exist (see § 404.705). In determining whether good cause for failure to report timely has been established by the individual, consideration is given to whether the failure to report within the proper time limit was the result of untoward circumstances, misleading action of the Social Security Administration, confusion as to the requirements of the Act resulting from amendments to the Act or other legislation, or any physical, mental, educational, or linguistic limitations (including any lack of facility with the English language) the individual may have. For example, *good cause* may be found where failure to file a timely report was caused by:

(1) Serious illness of the individual, or death or serious illness in his immediate family;

(2) Inability of the individual to obtain, within the time required to file the report, earnings information from his employer because of death or serious illness of the employer or one in the employer's immediate family; or unavoidable absence of his employer; or destruction by fire or other damage of the employer's business records;

(3) Destruction by fire, or other damage, of the individual's business records;

(4) Transmittal of the required report within the time required to file the report, in good faith to another Government agency even though the report does not reach the Administration until after the period for reporting has expired;

(5) Unawareness of the statutory provision that an annual report of earnings is required for the taxable year in which the individual attained age 72

provided his earnings for such year exceeded the applicable amount, e.g., \$1,680 for a 12-month taxable year ending after December 1967;

(6) Failure on the part of the Administration to furnish forms in sufficient time for an individual to complete and file the report on or before the date it was due, provided the individual made a timely request to the Administration for the forms;

(7) Belief that an extension of time for filing income tax returns granted by the Internal Revenue Service was also applicable to the annual report to be made to the Social Security Administration;

(8) Reliance upon a written report to the Social Security Administration made by, or on behalf of, the beneficiary before the close of the taxable year, if such report contained sufficient information about the beneficiary's earnings or work, to require suspension of his benefits (see § 404.456) and the report was not subsequently refuted or rescinded; or

(9) Failure of the individual to understand reporting responsibilities due to his or her physical, mental, educational, or linguistic limitation(s).

(b) *Notice of determination.* In every case in which it is determined that a penalty deduction should be imposed, the individual shall be advised of the penalty determination and of his reconsideration rights. If it is found that good cause for failure to file a timely report does not exist, the notice will include an explanation of the basis for this finding; the notice will also explain the right to partial adjustment of the overpayment, in accordance with the provisions of § 404.502(c).

(c) *Good cause for subsequent failure.* Where circumstances are similar and an individual fails on more than one occasion to make a timely report, good cause normally will not be found for the second or subsequent violation.

[38 FR 3597, Feb. 8, 1973, as amended at 43 FR 8133, Feb. 28, 1978; 59 FR 1634, Jan. 12, 1994]