or claim for refund even though any one error, in isolation, would have qualified for the reasonable cause and good faith exception.

(3) *Materiality of errors.* Whether the understatement was material in relation to the correct tax liability. The reasonable cause and good faith exception generally applies if the understatement is of a relatively immaterial amount. Nevertheless, even an immaterial understatement may not qualify for the reasonable cause and good faith exception if the error or errors creating the understatement are sufficiently obvious or numerous.

(4) *Preparer's normal office practice.* Whether the preparer's normal office practice, when considered together with other facts and circumstances such as the knowledge of the preparer, indicates that the error in question would rarely occur and the normal office practice was followed in preparing the return or claim in question. Such a normal office practice must be a system for promoting accuracy and consistency in the preparation of returns or claims and generally would include, in the case of a signing preparer, checklists, methods for obtaining necessary information from the taxpayer, a review of the prior year's return, and review procedures. Notwithstanding the above, the reasonable cause and good faith exception does not apply if there is a flagrant error on a return or claim for refund, a pattern of errors on a return or claim for refund, or a repetition of the same or similar errors on numerous returns or claims.

(5) *Reliance on advice of another preparer.* Whether the preparer relied on the advice of or schedules prepared by (''advice'') another preparer as defined in §1.6694–1(b). The reasonable cause and good faith exception applies if the preparer relied in good faith on the advice of another preparer (or a person who would be considered a preparer under §1.6694–1(b) had the advice constituted preparation of a substantial portion of the return or claim for refund) who the preparer had reason to believe was competent to render such advice. A preparer is not considered to have relied in good faith if—

(i) The advice is unreasonable on its face;

(ii) The preparer knew or should have known that the other preparer was not aware of all relevant facts; or

(iii) The preparer knew or should have known (given the nature of the preparer's practice), at the time the return or claim for refund was prepared, that the advice was no longer reliable due to developments in the law since the time the advice was given.

The advice may be written or oral, but in either case the burden of establishing that the advice was received is on the preparer.

(e) *Burden of proof.* In any proceeding with respect to the penalty imposed by section 6694(a), the issues on which the preparer bears the burden of proof include whether—

(1) The preparer knew or reasonably should have known that the questioned position was taken on the return;

(2) There is reasonable cause and good faith with respect to such position; and

(3) The position was disclosed adequately in accordance with paragraph (c) of this section.

[T.D. 8382, 56 FR 67516, Dec. 31, 1991; T.D. 8382, 57 FR 6061, Feb. 19, 1992]

§ 1.6694–3 Penalty for understatement due to willful, reckless, or intentional conduct.

(a) *In general*—(1) *Proscribed conduct.* If any part of an understatement of liability relating to a return of tax under subtitle A of the Internal Revenue Code or claim for refund of tax under subtitle A of the Internal Revenue Code is due to—

(i) A willful attempt in any manner to understate the liability for tax by a preparer of the return or claim for refund; or

(ii) Any reckless or intentional disregard of rules or regulations by any such person,

such preparer is subject to a penalty of $1,000 with respect to such return or claim for refund.

(2) *Special rule for employers and partnerships.* An employer or partnership of a preparer subject to penalty under section 6694(b) is also subject to penalty only if—

(i) One or more members of the principal management (or principal officers) of the firm or a branch office participated in or knew of the conduct proscribed by section 6694(b);

(ii) The employer or partnership failed to provide reasonable and appropriate procedures for review of the position for which the penalty is imposed; or

(iii) Such review procedures were disregarded in the formulation of the advice, or the preparation of the return or claim for refund, that included the position for which the penalty is imposed.

(b) *Willful attempt to understate liability.* A preparer is considered to have willfully attempted to understate liability if the preparer disregards, in an attempt wrongfully to reduce the tax liability of the taxpayer, information furnished by the taxpayer or other persons. For example, if a preparer disregards information concerning certain items of taxable income furnished by the taxpayer or other persons, the preparer is subject to the penalty. Similarly, if a taxpayer states to a preparer that the taxpayer has only two dependents, and the preparer reports six dependents on the return, the preparer is subject to the penalty.

(c) *Reckless or intentional disregard.* (1) Except as provided in paragraphs (c)(2) and (c)(3) of this section, a preparer is considered to have recklessly or intentionally disregarded a rule or regulation if the preparer takes a position on the return or claim for refund that is contrary to a rule or regulation (as defined in paragraph (f) of this section) and the preparer knows of, or is reckless in not knowing of, the rule or regulation in question. A preparer is reckless in not knowing of a rule or regulation if the preparer makes little or no effort to determine whether a rule or regulation exists, under circumstances which demonstrate a substantial deviation from the standard of conduct that a reasonable preparer would observe in the situation.

(2) A preparer is not considered to have recklessly or intentionally disregarded a rule or regulation if the position contrary to the rule or regulation is not frivolous as defined in §1.6694–2(c)(2), is adequately disclosed in accordance with paragraph (e) of this section and, in the case of a position contrary to a regulation, the position represents a good faith challenge to the validity of the regulation.

(3) In the case of a position contrary to a revenue ruling or notice (other than a notice of proposed rulemaking) published by the Service in the Internal Revenue Bulletin, a preparer also is not considered to have recklessly or intentionally disregarded the ruling or notice if the position has a realistic possibility of being sustained on its merits.

(d) *Examples.* The provisions of paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section are illustrated by the following examples:

Example 1. A taxpayer provided a preparer with detailed check registers reflecting personal and business expenses. One of the expenses was for domestic help, and this expense was identified as personal on the check register. The preparer knowingly deducted the expenses of the taxpayer's domestic help as wages paid in the taxpayer's business. The preparer is subject to the penalty under section 6694(b).

Example 2. A taxpayer provided a preparer with detailed check registers to compute the taxpayer's expenses. However, the preparer knowingly overstated the expenses on the return. After adjustments by the examiner, the tax liability increased significantly. Because the preparer disregarded information provided in the check registers, the preparer is subject to the penalty under section 6694(b).

Example 3. A revenue ruling holds that certain expenses incurred in the purchase of a business must be capitalized. The Code is silent as to whether these expenses must be capitalized or may be deducted currently, but several cases from different courts hold that these particular expenses may be deducted currently. There is no other authority. Under these facts, a position taken contrary to the revenue ruling on a return or claim for refund is not a reckless or intentional disregard of a rule, since the position contrary to the revenue ruling has a realistic possibility of being sustained on its merits. Therefore, the preparer will not be subject to a penalty under section 6694(b) even though the position is not adequately disclosed.

Example 4. Final regulations provide that certain expenses incurred in the purchase of a business must be capitalized. One Tax Court case has expressly invalidated that portion of the regulations. Under these facts, a position contrary to the regulation will subject the preparer to the section 6694(b) penalty even though the position may have a realistic possibility of being sustained on its

merits. However, because the contrary position on these facts represents a good faith challenge to the validity of the regulations, the preparer will not be subject to the section 6694(b) penalty if the position is adequately disclosed in the manner provided in paragraph (e) of this section.

(e) *Adequate disclosure*—(1) *Signing preparers.* In the case of a signing preparer, disclosure of a position that is contrary to a rule or regulation is adequate only if the disclosure is made in accordance with §1.6662–4(f) (1), (3), (4) and (5) (which permit disclosure on a properly completed and filed Form 8275 or 8275–R, as appropriate). In addition, the disclosure of a position that is contrary to a rule or regulation must adequately identify the rule or regulation being challenged. The provisions of §1.6662–4(f)(2) (which permit disclosure on the return in accordance with an annual revenue procedure) do not apply for purposes of this section.

(2) *Nonsigning preparers.* In the case of a nonsigning preparer, disclosure of a position that is contrary to a rule or regulation is adequate if the position is disclosed in the manner provided in paragraph (e)(1) of this section. In addition, disclosure of a position is adequate in the case of a nonsigning preparer if, with respect to that position, the preparer complies with the provisions of paragraph (e)(2) (i) or (ii) of this section, whichever is applicable.

(i) *Advice to taxpayers.* In the case of a nonsigning preparer who provides advice to the taxpayer with respect to a position that is contrary to a rule or regulation, disclosure of that position is adequate if the advice includes a statement that—

(A) The position is contrary to a specified rule or regulation and, therefore, is subject to a penalty described in section 6662(c) unless adequately disclosed in the manner provided in §1.6662–3(c)(2) (which permits disclosure on a properly completed and filed Form 8275 or 8275–R, as appropriate, and which requires adequate identification of any rule or regulation being challenged); and

(B) In the case of a position contrary to a regulation, the position must represent a good faith challenge to the validity of the regulation.

If the advice with respect to the position is in writing, the statement concerning disclosure also must be in writing. If the advice with respect to the position is oral, advice to the taxpayer concerning the need to disclose also may be oral. The determination as to whether oral advice as to disclosure was in fact given is based on all facts and circumstances. Contemporaneously prepared documentation of the oral advice regarding disclosure generally is sufficient to establish that the advice was given to the taxpayer.

(ii) *Advice to another preparer.* If a nonsigning preparer provides advice to another preparer with respect to a position that is contrary to a rule or regulation, disclosure of that position is considered adequate if the advice includes a statement that disclosure under section 6694(b) is required. If the advice with respect to the position is in writing, the statement concerning disclosure also must be in writing. If the advice with respect to the position is oral, advice to the preparer concerning the need to disclose also may be oral. The determination as to whether oral advice as to disclosure was in fact given is based on all facts and circumstances. Contemporaneously prepared documentation of the oral advice regarding disclosure generally is sufficient to establish that the advice was given to the other preparer.

(f) *Rules or regulations.* The term ''rules or regulations'' includes the provisions of the Internal Revenue Code, temporary or final Treasury regulations issued under the Code, and revenue rulings or notices (other than notices of proposed rulemaking) issued by the Internal Revenue Service and published in the Internal Revenue Bulletin.

(g) *Section 6694(b) penalty reduced by section 6694(a) penalty.* The amount of any penalty to which a preparer may be subject under section 6694(b) for a return or claim for refund is $1,000 reduced by any amount assessed and collected against the preparer under section 6694(a) for the same return or claim.

(h) *Burden of proof.* In any proceeding with respect to the penalty imposed by section 6694(b), the Government bears the burden of proof on the issue of

whether the preparer willfully attempted to understate the liability for tax. See section 7427. The preparer bears the burden of proof on such other issues as whether—

(1) The preparer recklessly or intentionally disregarded a rule or regulation;

(2) A position contrary to a regulation represents a good faith challenge to the validity of the regulation; and

(3) Disclosure was adequately made in accordance with paragraph (e) of this section.

[T.D. 8382, 56 FR 67518, Dec. 31, 1991]

§ 1.6694–4 Extension of period of collection where preparer pays 15 percent of a penalty for understatement of taxpayer's liability and certain other procedural matters.

(a) *In general.* (1) The Internal Revenue Service will investigate the preparation by a preparer of a return of tax under subtitle A of the Internal Revenue Code or claim for refund of tax under subtitle A of the Internal Revenue Code and will send a report of the examination to the preparer before the assessment of either—

(i) A penalty for understating tax liability due to a position for which there was not a realistic possibility of being sustained on its merits under section 6694(a); or

(ii) A penalty for willful understatement of liability or reckless or intentional disregard of rules or regulations under section 6694(b).

Unless the period of limitations (if any) under section 6696(d) may expire without adequate opportunity for assessment, the Internal Revenue Service will also send, before assessment of either penalty, a 30-day letter to the preparer notifying him of the proposed penalty or penalties and offering an opportunity to the preparer to request further administrative consideration and a final administrative determination by the Internal Revenue Service concerning the assessment. If the preparer then makes a timely request, assessment may not be made until the Internal Revenue Service makes a final administrative determination adverse to the preparer.

(2) If the Internal Revenue Service assesses either of the two penalties described in section 6694(a) and section 6694(b), it will send to the preparer a statement of notice and demand, separate from any notice of a tax deficiency, for payment of the amount assessed.

(3) Within 30 days after the day on which notice and demand of either of the two penalties described in section 6694(a) and section 6694(b) is made against the preparer, the preparer must either—

(i) Pay the entire amount assessed (and may file a claim for refund of the amount paid at any time not later than 3 years after the date of payment); or

(ii) Pay an amount which is not less than 15 percent of the entire amount assessed with respect to each return or claim for refund and file a claim for refund of the amount paid.

(4) If the preparer pays an amount and files a claim for refund under paragraph (a)(3)(ii) of this section, the Internal Revenue Service may not make, begin, or prosecute a levy or proceeding in court for collection of the unpaid remainder of the amount assessed until the later of—

(i) A date which is more than 30 days after the earlier of—

(A) The day on which the preparer's claim for refund is denied; or

(B) The expiration of 6 months after the day on which the preparer filed the claim for refund; and

(ii) Final resolution of any proceeding begun as provided in paragraph (b) of this section.

However, the Internal Revenue Service may counterclaim in any proceeding begun as provided in paragraph (b) of this section for the unpaid remainder of the amount assessed. Final resolution of a proceeding includes any settlement between the Internal Revenue Service and the preparer, any final determination by a court (for which the period for appeal, if any, has expired) and, generally, the types of determinations provided under section 1313(a) (relating to taxpayer deficiencies). Notwithstanding section 7421(a) (relating to suits to restrain assessment or collection), the beginning of a levy or proceeding in court by the Internal Revenue Service in contravention of this paragraph (a)(4) may be enjoined by a proceeding in the proper court.