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§ 1.402(g)-1 Limitation on exclusion for elective deferrals.

(a) *In general.* The excess of an individual's elective deferrals for any taxable year over the applicable limit for the year may not be excluded from gross income under sections 402(a)(8), 402(h)(1)(B), 403(b), 408(k)(6), or 501(c)(18). Thus, an individual's elective deferrals in excess of the applicable limit for a taxable year (i.e., the individual's excess deferrals for the year) must be included in gross income for the year.

(b) *Elective deferrals.* An individual's elective deferrals for a taxable year are the sum of the following:

(1) Any elective contribution under a qualified cash or deferred arrangement (as defined in section 401(k)) to the extent not includible in the individual's gross income for the taxable year on account of section 402(a)(8) (before applying the limits of section 402(g) or this section).

(2) Any employer contribution to a simplified employee pension (as defined in section 408(k)) to the extent not includible in the individual's gross income for the taxable year on account of section 402(h)(1)(B) (before applying the limits of section 402(g) or this section).

(3) Any employer contribution to an annuity contract under section 403(b) under a salary reduction agreement (within the meaning of section 3121(a)(5)(D)) to the extent not includible in the individual's gross income for the taxable year on account of section 403(b) (before applying the limits of section 402(g) or this section).

(4) Any employee contribution designated as deductible under a trust described in section 501(c)(18) to the extent deductible from the individual's income for the taxable year on account of section 501(c)(18) (before applying the

limits of section 402(g) or this section). For purposes of this section, the employee contribution is treated as though it were excluded from the individual's gross income.

(c) *Certain one-time irrevocable elections.* An employer contribution is not treated as an elective deferral under paragraph (b) of this section if the contribution is made pursuant to a one-time irrevocable election made by the employee:

(1) In the case of an annuity contract under section 403(b), at the time of initial eligibility to participate in the salary reduction agreement;

(2) In the case of a qualified cash or deferred arrangement, at a time when, under § 1.401(k)-1(a)(3)(iv), the election is not treated as a cash or deferred election;

(3) In the case of a trust described in section 501(c)(18), at the time of initial eligibility to have the employer contribute on the employee's behalf to the trust.

(d) *Applicable limit*—(1) *In general.* Except as adjusted under paragraphs (d)(2) and (d)(3) of this section, the applicable limit for an individual's taxable year beginning in the 1987 calendar year is \$7,000. This amount is increased for the taxable year beginning in 1988 and subsequent calendar years in the same manner as the \$90,000 amount is adjusted under section 415(d).

(2) *Special adjustment for elective deferrals with respect to a section 403(b) annuity contract.* The applicable limit for an individual who makes elective deferrals described in paragraph (b)(3) of this section for a taxable year is adjusted by increasing the applicable limit otherwise determined under paragraph (d)(1) of this section by the amount of the individual's elective deferrals described in paragraph (b)(3) of this section for the taxable year. This adjustment cannot cause the applicable limit for any taxable year to exceed \$9,500.

(3) *Special adjustment for elective deferrals with respect to a section 403(b) annuity contract for certain long-term employees.* The applicable limit for an individual who is a qualified employee (as defined in section 402(g)(8)(C)) and has

elective deferrals described in paragraph (b)(3) of this section for a taxable year is adjusted by increasing the applicable limit otherwise determined under paragraphs (d)(1) and (d)(2) of this section in accordance with section 402(g)(8)(A).

(4) *Example.* The provisions of this paragraph (d) are illustrated by the following example.

Example. Employer X maintains a cash or deferred arrangement under section 401(k), and offers its employees section 403(b) contracts to which elective deferrals may be made. For the 1987 taxable year, three of X's employees, A, B, and C, contribute \$3,500, \$1,000, and \$8,500, respectively, as elective deferrals under the section 403(b) contract. The maximum amounts that A, B, and C may contribute to the cash or deferred arrangement are \$6,000, \$7,000, and \$1,000, respectively. B may only contribute \$7,000 under the cash or deferred arrangement because the special adjustment under paragraph (d)(2) of this section applies only to section 403(b) annuity contracts. B could, of course, contribute up to \$2,500 under the section 403(b) contract (to the extent otherwise permitted), in addition to the \$7,000 under the cash or deferred arrangement.

(e) *Treatment of excess deferrals—(1) Plan qualification—(i) Effect of excess deferrals.* For plan years beginning before January 1, 1988, a plan, annuity contract, simplified employee pension, or trust does not fail to meet the requirements of section 401(a), section 403(b), section 408(k), or section 501(c)(18), respectively, merely because excess deferrals are made with respect to the plan, contract, pension, or trust. For plan years beginning after December 31, 1987, see section 401(a)(30) and § 1.401(a)-30 for the effect of excess deferrals on the qualification of a plan or trust under section 401(a). For purposes of determining whether a plan or trust complies in operation with section 401(a)(30), excess deferrals that are distributed under paragraph (e)(2) or (3) of this section are disregarded. Similar rules apply to annuity contracts under section 403(b), simplified employee pensions under section 408(k), and plans or trusts under section 501(c)(28).

(ii) *Treatment of excess deferrals as employer contributions.* For other purposes of the Code, including sections 401(a)(4), 401(k)(3), 404, 409, 411, 412, and 416, excess deferrals must be treated as

employer contributions even if they are distributed in accordance with paragraph (e)(2) or (3) of this section. However, excess deferrals of a non-highly compensated employee are not taken into account under section 401(k)(3) (the actual deferral percentage test) to the extent the excess deferrals are prohibited under section 401(a)(30). Excess deferrals are also treated as employer contributions for purposes of section 415 unless distributed under paragraph (e)(2) or (3) of this section.

(iii) *Definition of excess deferrals.* The term “excess deferrals” means the excess of an individual’s elective deferrals for any taxable year, as defined in § 1.402(g)-1(b), over the applicable limit under section 402(g)(1) for the taxable year.

(2) *Correction of excess deferrals after the taxable year.* A plan may provide that if any amount is included in the gross income of an individual under paragraph (a) of this section for a taxable year:

(i) Not later than the first April 15 (or such earlier date specified in the plan) following the close of the individual’s taxable year, the individual may notify each plan under which deferrals were made of the amount of the excess deferrals received by that plan. A plan may provide that an individual is deemed to have notified the plan of excess deferrals to the extent the individual has excess deferrals for the taxable year calculated by taking into account only elective deferrals under the plan and other plans of the same employer. A plan may instead provide that the employer may notify the plan on behalf of the individual under these circumstances.

(ii) Not later than the first April 15 following the close of the taxable year, the plan may distribute to the individual the amount designated under paragraph (e)(2)(i) of this section (and any income allocable to that amount).

(3) *Correction of excess deferrals during taxable year—(i)* A plan may provide that an individual who has excess deferrals for a taxable year may receive a corrective distribution of excess deferrals during the same year. This corrective distribution may be made only if

all of the following conditions are satisfied:

(A) The individual designates the distribution as an excess deferral. A plan may provide that an individual is deemed to have designated the distribution to the extent the individual has excess deferrals for the taxable year calculated by taking into account only elective deferrals under the plan and other plans of the same employer. A plan may instead provide that the employer may make the designation on behalf of the individual under these circumstances.

(B) The correcting distribution is made after the date on which the plan received the excess deferral.

(C) The plan designates the distribution as a distribution of excess deferrals.

(ii) The provisions of this paragraph (e)(3) are illustrated by the following example:

Example. S is a 62 year old individual who participates in Employer Y's qualified cash or deferred arrangement. In January 1991, S withdraws \$5,000 from Y's cash or deferred arrangement. From February through September, S defers \$900 per month. On October 1, S leaves Employer Y and becomes employed by Employer Z (unrelated to Y). During the remainder of 1991, S defers \$1,800 under Z's qualified cash or deferred arrangement. In January 1992, S realizes that S has deferred a total of \$9,000 in 1991, and therefore has a \$525 excess deferral (\$9,000 minus \$8,475, the applicable limit for 1991). An additional \$525 must be distributed to S before April 15, 1992, to correct the excess deferral. The \$5,000 withdrawal did not correct the excess deferral because it occurred before the excess deferral was made.

(4) *Plan provisions.* In order to distribute excess deferrals pursuant to paragraphs (e)(2) or (e)(3) of this section, a plan must contain language permitting distribution of excess deferrals. A plan may require the notification in paragraphs (e)(2) and (e)(3) of this section to be in writing and may require that the employee certify or otherwise establish that the designated amount is an excess deferral. A plan need not permit distribution of excess deferrals.

(5) *Income allocable to excess deferrals—(i) General rule.* The income allocable to excess deferrals is equal to the sum of the allocable gain or loss for the

taxable year of the individual and, if the plan so provides, the allocable gain or loss for the period between the end of the taxable year and the date of distribution (the "gap period").

(ii) *Method of allocating income.* A plan may use any reasonable method for computing the income allocable to excess deferrals, provided that the method does not violate section 401(a)(4), is used consistently for all participants and for all corrective distributions under a plan for the plan year, and is used by the plan for allocating income to participants' accounts. See § 1.401(a)(4)-1(c)(8).

(iii) *Alternative method of allocating income.* A plan may allocate income to excess deferrals by multiplying the income for the taxable year (and the gap period, if the plan so provides) allocable to elective contributions by a fraction. The numerator of the fraction is the excess deferrals by the employee for the taxable year. The denominator of the fraction is equal to the sum of:

(A) The total account balance of the employee attributable to elective contributions as of the beginning of the taxable year, plus

(B) The employee's elective contributions for the taxable year (and the gap period, if the plan so provides).

(iv) *Safe harbor method of allocating gap period income.* Under the safe harbor method, income on excess deferrals for the gap period is equal to 10 percent of the income allocable to excess deferrals for the taxable year (calculated under the method described in paragraph (e)(5)(iii) of this section), multiplied by the number of calendar months that have elapsed since the end of the taxable year. For purposes of calculating the number of calendar months that have elapsed under the safe harbor method, a corrective distribution that is made on or before the fifteenth day of the month is treated as made on the last day of the preceding month. A distribution made after the fifteenth day of the month is treated as made on the first day of the next month.

(6) *Coordination with distribution or re-characterization of excess contributions.* The amount of excess deferrals that may be distributed under this paragraph (e) with respect to an employee

for a taxable year is reduced by any excess contributions previously distributed or recharacterized with respect to the employee for the plan year beginning with or within the taxable year. In the event of a reduction under this paragraph (e)(6), the amount of excess contributions includible in the gross income of the employee and reported by the employer as a distribution of excess contributions is reduced by the amount of the reduction under this paragraph (e)(6). See § 1.401(k)-1(f)(5)(i). In no case may an individual receive from a plan as a corrective distribution for a taxable year under paragraph (e)(2) or (e)(3) of this section an amount in excess of the individual's total elective deferrals under the plan for the taxable year.

(7) *No employee or spousal consent required.* A corrective distribution of excess deferrals (and income) may be made under the terms of the plan without regard to any notice or consent otherwise required under sections 411(a)(11) or 417.

(8) *Tax treatment—(i) Corrective distributions on or before April 15 after close of taxable year.* A corrective distribution of excess deferrals within the period described in paragraph (e)(2) or (e)(3) of this section is excludable from the employee's gross income. However, the income allocable to excess deferrals is includible in the employee's gross income for the taxable year in which the allocable income is distributed. The corrective distribution of excess deferrals (and income) is not subject to the early distribution tax of section 72(t) and is not treated as a distribution for purposes of applying the excise tax under section 4980A.

(ii) *Special rule for 1987 and 1988 excess deferrals.* Income on excess deferrals for 1987 or 1988 that were timely distributed on or before April 17, 1989, may be reported by the recipient either in the year described in paragraph (e)(8)(i) of this section, or in the year in which the employee would have received the elective deferrals had the employee originally elected to receive the amounts in cash.

(iii) *Distributions of excess deferrals after correction period.* If excess deferrals (and income) for a taxable year are not distributed within the period de-

scribed in paragraphs (e)(2) and (e)(3) of this section, they may only be distributed when permitted under section 401(k)(2)(B). These amounts are includible in gross income when distributed, and are treated for purposes of the distribution rules otherwise applicable to the plan as elective deferrals (and income) that were excludable from the individual's gross income under section 402(g). Thus, any amount includible in gross income for any taxable year under this section that is not distributed by April 15 of the following taxable year is not treated as an investment in the contract for purposes of section 72 and is includible in the employee's gross income when distributed from the plan. Excess deferrals that are distributed under this paragraph (e)(8)(iii) are treated as employer contributions for purposes of section 415 when they are contributed to the plan.

(9) *No reduction of required minimum distribution.* A distribution of excess deferrals (and income) under paragraphs (e)(2) and (e)(3) of this section is not treated as a distribution for purposes of determining whether the plan meets the minimum distribution requirements of section 401(a)(9).

(10) *Partial correction.* Any distribution under paragraphs (e)(2) or (e)(3) of this section of less than the entire amount of excess deferrals (and income) is treated as a pro rata distribution of excess deferrals and income.

(11) *Examples.* The provisions of this paragraph are illustrated by the following examples. Assume in *Examples 1* and *2* that there is no income or loss allocable to the elective deferrals.

Example 1. Employee A is a 60-year old highly compensated employee who participates in Employer M's cash or deferred arrangement. During the period of January through September of 1988, A contributed \$7,000 to the arrangement in elective deferrals. During the same period A also contributed \$813 in elective deferrals under a plan of an unrelated employer. In December of 1988, A made a withdrawal of \$1,000 from Employer M's plan but did not designate this as a withdrawal of an excess deferral. In January of 1989, A notifies Employer M of an excess deferral, specifying a distribution of \$500 for 1988. To correct the excess deferrals, A must receive this additional \$500 even though A has already withdrawn \$1,000 for 1988. A may exclude from income in 1988 only \$7,313. However, if the \$500 is distributed by

April 25, 1989, the distribution is excludable from A's gross income in 1989. Even if A withdraws the \$500, M must take into account the entire \$7,000 in computing A's actual deferral percentage for 1988.

Example 2. (i) Corporation X maintains a cash or deferred arrangement. The plan year is the calendar year. For plan year 1989, all 10 of X's employees are eligible to participate in the plan. The employees' compensation, contributions, and actual deferral ratios are shown in the following table:

Employee	Compensation	Contribution	Actual deferral ratio (percent)
A	\$140,000	\$7,000	5.0
B	70,000	7,000	10.0
C	70,000	7,000	10.0
D	45,000	2,250	5.0
E	40,000	4,000	10.0
F	35,000	1,750	5.0
G	35,000	350	1.0
H	30,000	3,000	10.0
I	17,500	0	0
J	17,500	0	0.0

(ii) Employees A, B, and C are highly compensated employees within the meaning of section 414(q). Employees D, E, F, G, H, I, and J are nonhighly compensated employees. The actual deferral percentages for the highly compensated employees and nonhighly compensated employees are 8.33 percent and 4.43 percent, respectively. These percentages do not satisfy the requirements of section 401(k)(3)(A)(ii). The actual deferral percentage for the highly compensated employees may not exceed 6.43 percent.

(iii) The plan reduces the actual deferral ratios of B and C to 7.14 percent by distributing \$2,002 ($\$7,000 - .0714 \times \$70,000$) to each in January 1990. Section 401(k)(3)(A)(ii) is therefore satisfied.

(iv) In February 1990, B notifies X that B made elective deferrals of \$2,000 under a qualified cash or deferred arrangement maintained by an unrelated employer in 1989, and requests distribution of \$2,000 from X's plan. However, since B has already received a distribution of \$2,002 to meet the ADP test, no additional amounts are required or are permitted to be distributed as excess deferrals by this plan, and the prior distribution of excess contributions has corrected the excess deferrals. But X must report \$2,000 as a distribution of an excess deferral and \$2 as a distribution of an excess contribution.

Example 3. Employee T has excess deferrals of \$1,000. The income attributable to excess deferrals is \$100. T properly notifies the employer, and requests a distribution of the excess deferral (and income) on February 1. The plan distributes \$1,000 to T by April 15. Because the plan did not distribute any additional amount as income, \$909 is treated as a distribution of excess deferrals, and \$91 is

treated as a distribution of earnings. With respect to amounts remaining in the account, \$91 is treated as an elective deferral and is not included in T's investment in the contract. Because it was not distributed by the required date, the \$91 is includible in gross income upon distribution as well as in the year of deferral.

(f) *Community property laws.* This section is applied without regard to community property laws.

(g) *Effective date—(1) In general.* Except as otherwise provided, the provisions of this section are effective for taxable years beginning after December 31, 1986.

(2) *Deferrals under collective bargaining agreements.* In the case of a plan maintained pursuant to one or more collective bargaining agreements between employee representatives and one or more employers ratified before March 1, 1986, the provisions of this section do not apply to contributions made pursuant to the collective bargaining agreement for taxable years beginning before the earlier of January 1, 1989, or the date on which the agreement terminates (determined without regard to any extension thereof after February 28, 1986). These contributions under a collective bargaining agreement are taken into account for purposes of applying this section to elective deferrals under plans not described in this paragraph (g)(2).

(3) *Transition rule.* For taxable years beginning before January 1, 1992, a plan or an individual may rely on a reasonable interpretation of the rules set forth in section 402(g), as in effect during those years.

(4) *Partnership cash or deferred arrangements.* For purposes of section 402(g), employer contributions for any plan year beginning after December 31, 1986, and before January 1, 1989, under an arrangement that directly or indirectly permits individual partners to vary the amount of contributions made on their behalf will be treated as elective contributions only if the arrangement was intended to satisfy and did satisfy the nondiscrimination test of section 401(k)(3) and § 1.401(k)-1(b) for the plan year.

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