

§ 359.10**§ 359.10 What is the fixed rate of return?**

The Secretary, or the Secretary's designee determines the fixed rate of return. The fixed rate is established for the life of the bond.¹ The most recently announced fixed rate is only for bonds purchased during the six months following the announcement, or for any other period of time announced by the Secretary.

§ 359.11 What is the semiannual inflation rate?

The index used to determine the semiannual inflation rate is the non-seasonally adjusted CPI-U (the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for the U.S. City Average for All Items, 1982-84=100) published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. (For further information on CPI-U considerations, see Appendix C to part 359 at section 1.) The semiannual inflation rate reflects the percentage change, if any, in the CPI-U over a six-month period. We announce this rate twice a year, in May and November. The semiannual inflation rate we announced in May 2002 reflects the percentage change between the CPI-U figures from the preceding March 2002 and September 2001. The rate of change over the six-month period, if any, will be expressed as a percentage, rounded to the nearest one-hundredth of one percent. More specifically, the semiannual inflation rate will be determined by the following formula (the resulting rate will be rounded to the nearest one-hundredth of one percent):

$$\text{Semiannual inflation rate} = \frac{\text{CPI} - \text{U}_{\text{Current}} - \text{CPI} - \text{U}_{\text{Prior}}}{\text{CPI} - \text{U}_{\text{Prior}}}$$

§ 359.12 What happens in deflationary conditions?

In certain deflationary situations, the semiannual inflation rate may be negative. Negative semiannual inflation rates will be used in the same way as positive semiannual inflation rates. However, if the semiannual inflation rate is negative to the extent that it

¹However, the fixed rate is not a guaranteed minimum rate; the composite rate could possibly be less than the fixed rate in deflationary situations.

completely offsets the fixed rate of return, the redemption value of a Series I bond for any particular month will not be less than the value for the preceding month.

§ 359.13 What are composite rates?

Composite rates are single, annual interest rates that reflect the combined effects of the fixed rate and the semiannual inflation rate.

§ 359.14 How are composite rates determined?

Composite rates are set according to the following formula (See Appendix A to part 359 for examples of calculations involving composite interest rates.):

$$\text{Composite rate} = \{(\text{Fixed rate} \div 2) + \text{Semiannual inflation rate} + [\text{Semiannual inflation rate} \times (\text{Fixed rate} \div 2)]\} \times 2. \text{ } ^2$$

§ 359.15 When is the composite rate applied to Series I savings bonds?

The most recently announced composite rate applies to a bond during its next semiannual rate period. A bond's semiannual rate periods are consecutive six-month periods, the first of which begins with the bond's issue date. This means that there can be a delay of several months from the time of a composite rate announcement to the time that rate determines interest earnings for a bond. For example, if you purchased a bond in April, its semiannual rate periods begin every April and October. At the beginning of the semiannual rate period in April, the most recently announced composite rate would have been the rate we announced the previous November. This rate will determine interest earnings for your bond for the next six months, through the end of September. At the beginning of the semiannual

²Example for I bonds issued May 2002-October 2002:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Fixed rate} &= 2.00\% \\ \text{Inflation rate} &= 0.28\% \\ \text{Composite rate} &= [0.0200 \div 2 + 0.0028 + (0.0028 \times 0.0200 \div 2)] \times 2 \\ \text{Composite rate} &= [0.0100 + 0.0028 + 0.000028] \\ &\times 2 \\ \text{Composite rate} &= 0.012828 \times 2 \\ \text{Composite rate} &= 0.025656 \\ \text{Composite rate} &= 0.0257 \text{ (rounded)} \\ \text{Composite rate} &= 2.57\% \text{ (rounded)} \end{aligned}$$