

Internal Revenue Service, Treasury

§ 1.166-4

the portion of the debt classified as loss.

[T.D. 6500, 25 FR 11402, Nov. 26, 1960; 25 FR 14021, Dec. 31, 1960, as amended by T.D. 7254, 38 FR 2418, Jan. 26, 1973; T.D. 8396, 57 FR 6294, Feb. 24, 1992; T.D. 8441, 57 FR 45569, Oct. 2, 1992; T.D. 8492, 58 FR 53658, Oct. 18, 1993]

§ 1.166-3 Partial or total worthlessness.

(a) *Partial worthlessness*—(1) *Applicable to specific debts only.* A deduction under section 166(a)(2) on account of partially worthless debts shall be allowed with respect to specific debts only.

(2) *Charge-off required.* (i) If, from all the surrounding and attending circumstances, the district director is satisfied that a debt is partially worthless, the amount which has become worthless shall be allowed as a deduction under section 166(a)(2) but only to the extent charged off during the taxable year.

(ii) If a taxpayer claims a deduction for a part of a debt for the taxable year within which that part of the debt is charged off and the deduction is disallowed for that taxable year, then, in a case where the debt becomes partially worthless after the close of that taxable year, a deduction under section 166(a)(2) shall be allowed for a subsequent taxable year but not in excess of the amount charged off in the prior taxable year plus any amount charged off in the subsequent taxable year. In such instance, the charge-off in the prior taxable year shall, if consistently maintained as such, be sufficient to that extent to meet the charge-off requirement of section 166(a)(2) with respect to the subsequent taxable year.

(iii) Before a taxpayer may deduct a debt in part, he must be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the district director the amount thereof which is worthless and the part thereof which has been charged off.

(3) *Significantly modified debt*—(i) *Deemed charge-off.* If a significant modification of a debt instrument (within the meaning of § 1.1001-3) during a taxable year results in the recognition of gain by a taxpayer under § 1.1001-1(a), and if the requirements of paragraph (a)(3)(ii) of this section are met, there is a deemed charge-off of

the debt during that taxable year in the amount specified in paragraph (a)(3)(iii) of this section.

(ii) *Requirements for deemed charge-off.* A debt is deemed to have been charged off only if—

(A) The taxpayer (or, in the case of a debt that constitutes transferred basis property within the meaning of section 7701(a)(43), a transferor taxpayer) has claimed a deduction for partial worthlessness of the debt in any prior taxable year; and

(B) Each prior charge-off and deduction for partial worthlessness satisfied the requirements of paragraphs (a) (1) and (2) of this section.

(iii) *Amount of deemed charge-off.* The amount of the deemed charge-off, if any, is the amount by which the tax basis of the debt exceeds the greater of the fair market value of the debt or the amount of the debt recorded on the taxpayer's books and records reduced as appropriate for a specific allowance for loan losses. The amount of the deemed charge-off, however, may not exceed the amount of recognized gain described in paragraph (a)(3)(i) of this section.

(iv) *Effective date.* This paragraph (a)(3) applies to significant modifications of debt instruments occurring on or after September 23, 1996.

(b) *Total worthlessness.* If a debt becomes wholly worthless during the taxable year, the amount thereof which has not been allowed as a deduction from gross income for any prior taxable year shall be allowed as a deduction for the current taxable year.

[T.D. 6500, 25 FR 11402, Nov. 29, 1960, as amended by T.D. 8763, 63 FR 4396, Jan. 29, 1998]

§ 1.166-4 Reserve for bad debts.

(a) *Allowance of deduction.* A taxpayer who has established the reserve method of treating bad debts and has maintained proper reserve accounts for bad debts or who, in accordance with paragraph (b) of § 1.166-1, adopts the reserve method of treating bad debts may deduct from gross income a reasonable addition to a reserve for bad debts in lieu of deducting specific bad debt items. This paragraph applies both to bad debts owed to the taxpayer and to bad debts arising out of section

166(f)(1)(A) guaranteed debt obligations. If a reserve is maintained for bad debts arising out of section 166(f)(1)(A) guaranteed debt obligations, then a separate reserve must also be maintained for all other debt obligations of the taxpayer in the same trade or business, if any. A taxpayer may not maintain a reserve for bad debts arising out of section 166(f)(1)(A) guaranteed debt obligations if with respect to direct debt obligations in the same trade or business the taxpayer takes deductions when the debts become worthless in whole or in part rather than maintaining a reserve for such obligations. See § 1.166-10 for rules concerning section 166(f)(1)(A) guaranteed debt obligations.

(b) *Reasonableness of addition to reserve*—(1) *Relevant factors.* What constitutes a reasonable addition to a reserve for bad debts shall be determined in the light of the facts existing at the close of the taxable year of the proposed addition. The reasonableness of the addition will vary as between classes of business and with conditions of business prosperity. It will depend primarily upon the total amount of debts outstanding as of the close of the taxable year, including those arising currently as well as those arising in prior taxable years, and the total amount of the existing reserve.

(2) *Correction of errors in prior estimates.* In the event that subsequent realizations upon outstanding debts prove to be more or less than estimated at the time of the creation of the existing reserve, the amount of the excess or inadequacy in the existing reserve shall be reflected in the determination of the reasonable addition necessary in the current taxable year.

(c) *Statement required.* A taxpayer using the reserve method shall file with his return a statement showing—

(1) The volume of his charge sales or other business transactions for the taxable year and the percentage of the reserve to such amount;

(2) The total amount of notes and accounts receivable at the beginning and close of the taxable year;

(3) The amount of the debts which have become wholly or partially worthless and have been charged against the reserve account; and

(4) The computation of the addition to the reserve for bad debts.

(d) *Special rules applicable to financial institutions.* (1) For special rules for the addition to the bad debt reserves of certain banks, see §§ 1.585-1 through 1.585-3.

(2) For special rules for the addition to the bad debt reserves of small business investment companies and business development corporations, see §§ 1.586-1 and 1.586-2.

(3) For special rules for the addition to the bad debts reserves of certain mutual savings banks, domestic building and loan associations, and cooperative banks, see §§ 1.593-1 through 1.593-11.

[T.D. 6500, 25 FR 11402, Nov. 26, 1960, as amended by T.D. 6728, 29 FR 5855, May 5, 1964; T.D. 7444, 41 FR 53481, Dec. 7, 1976; T.D. 8071, 51 FR 2479, Jan. 17, 1986]

§ 1.166-5 Nonbusiness debts.

(a) *Allowance of deduction as capital loss.* (1) The loss resulting from any nonbusiness debt's becoming partially or wholly worthless within the taxable year shall not be allowed as a deduction under either section 166(a) or section 166(c) in determining the taxable income of a taxpayer other than a corporation. See section 166(d)(1)(A).

(2) If, in the case of a taxpayer other than a corporation, a nonbusiness debt becomes wholly worthless within the taxable year, the loss resulting therefrom shall be treated as a loss from the sale or exchange, during the taxable year, of a capital asset held for not more than 1 year (6 months for taxable years beginning before 1977; 9 months for taxable years beginning in 1977). Such a loss is subject to the limitations provided in section 1211, relating to the limitation on capital losses, and section 1212, relating to the capital loss carryover, and in the regulations under those sections. A loss on a nonbusiness debt shall be treated as sustained only if and when the debt has become totally worthless, and no deduction shall be allowed for a nonbusiness debt which is recoverable in part during the taxable year.

(b) *Nonbusiness debt defined.* For purposes of section 166 and this section, a nonbusiness debt is any debt other than—