

which such employee first satisfied the minimum age and service requirements.

(2) *Examples.* The rules provided by this paragraph are illustrated by the following examples:

Example (1). A calendar year plan provides that an employee may enter the plan only on the first semi-annual entry date, January 1 or July 1, after he has satisfied the applicable minimum age and service requirements specified in section 410(a)(1). The plan satisfies the requirements of this paragraph because an employee is eligible to participate no later than the earlier of (1) the first day of the first plan year beginning after he satisfied the applicable minimum age and service requirements, or (2) the date 6 months after he satisfied such requirements.

Example (2). A plan provides that an employee is not eligible to participate until the first day of the first plan year beginning after he has satisfied the minimum age and service requirements of section 410(a)(1). In this case, an employee who satisfies the "6 month" rule described in subparagraph (1) of this paragraph will not be eligible to participate in the plan. Therefore, the plan does not satisfy the requirements of this paragraph.

Example (3). A calendar year plan provides that an employee may enter the plan only on the first semi-annual entry date, January 1 or July 1, after he has satisfied the applicable minimum age and service requirements specified in section 410(a)(1). Employee A after 10 years of service separated from service in 1976 with a vested benefit. On February 1, 1990, A returns to employment covered by the plan. Assuming A completes a year of service after his return, A must participate immediately on his return, February 1. A's prior service cannot be disregarded, because he had a vested benefit when he separated from service. Therefore, the plan may not postpone his participation until July 1.

Example (4). Assume the same facts as in example (3). The plan has the break-in-service rule described in section 410(a)(5)(D) and §1.410(a)-5(c)(4). Employee B, after he had 5 years of service but no vested benefit incurs 5 consecutive 1-year breaks. Because B's prior service can be disregarded, the plan may postpone B's participation in the plan under the rule described in section 410(a)(4) and this paragraph.

(Sec. 410 (88 Stat. 898; 26 U.S.C. 410))

[T.D. 7508, 42 FR 47195, Sept. 20, 1977, as amended by T.D. 7703, 45 FR 40980, June 17, 1980]

§ 1.410(a)-5 Year of service; break in service.

(a) *Year of service.* For the rules relating to years of service under subparagraphs (A), (C), and (D) of section 410(a)(3), see regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Labor under 29 CFR Part 2530, relating to minimum standards for employee pension benefit plans.

Rules relating to a general rule for a year of service, hours of service, and maritime industries apply for purposes of section 410(a) and the regulations thereunder.

(b) *Seasonal industries.* For rules which relate to seasonal industries under section 410(a)(3)(B), see regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Labor under 29 CFR Part 2530, relating to minimum standards for employee pension benefits plans.

(c) *Breaks in service—(1) General rule.* This paragraph provides rules with respect to breaks in service under section 410(a)(5). Except as provided in subparagraphs (2), (3), (4), and (5) of this paragraph, all of an employee's years of service with the employer or employers maintaining a plan are taken into account in computing his period of service under the plan for purposes of section 410(a)(1) and §1.410(a)-3.

(2) *Employees under 3-year 100 percent vesting schedule—(i) General rule.* In the case of an employee who incurs a 1-year break in service under a plan which provides that after not more than 3 years of service, each participant's right to his accrued benefit under the plan in completely non-forfeitable (within the meaning of section 411 and the regulations thereunder) at the time such benefit accrues, the employee's service before the break in service is not required to be taken into account after the break in service in determining the employee's years of service under section 410(a)(1) and §1.410(a)-3 if such employee has not satisfied such service requirement.

(ii) *Example.* The rules of this subparagraph are illustrated by the following example.

Example. A qualified plan computing service by the actual counting of hours provides full and immediate vesting. The plan can not require as a condition of participation that

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an employee complete 3 consecutive years of service with the employer because the requirement as to consecutive years is not permitted under section 410(a) (5). However, such a plan can require 3 years without a break in service, i.e., 3 years with no intervening years in which the employee fails to complete more than 500 hours of service. Under a plan containing such a participation requirement, the following example illustrates when employees would become eligible to participate.

Year	Hours of service completed		
	Employee A	Employee B	Employee C
1	1,000	1,000	1,000
2	1,000	1,000	500
3	1,000	700	1,000
4	1,000	1,000	700
5	1,000	1,000	1,000
6	1,000	1,000	1,000

NOTE.— Employee A will have satisfied the plan's service requirement at the end of year 3. Employee B at the end of year 4, and Employee C at the end of year 6.

(3) *One-year break in service*—(i) *In general.* In computing the period of service of an employee who has incurred a 1-year break in service, for purposes of section 410(a)(1) and § 1.410(a)-3, a plan may disregard the employee's service before the break until the employee completes a year of service after such break in service.

(ii) *Examples.* The rules provided by this subparagraph are illustrated by the following examples.

Example (1). Employee A completes a year of service under a plan computing service by the actual counting of hours for the 12-month period ending December 31, 1980, and incurs a 1-year break in service for the 12-month period ending December 31, 1981. The plan does not contain the provisions permitted by section 410(a)(5)(B) (relating to 3-year 100 percent vesting) and section 410(a)(5)(D) (relating to nonvested participants). Thereafter, he does not complete a year of service. As of January 1, 1982, in computing his period of service under the plan his service prior to December 31, 1981, is not required to be taken into account for purposes of section 410(a)(1) and § 1.410(a)-3.

Example (2). The employee in example (1) completes a year of service for the 12-month period ending December 31, 1982. Prior to December 31, 1982, in computing the employee's period of service as of any date occurring in 1982, the employee's service before December 31, 1981, is not required to be taken into account for purposes of section 410(a)(1) and § 1.410(a)-3. Because the employee completed a year of service for the 12-month period ending December 31, 1982, however, his period of

service is redetermined as of January 1, 1982. Upon completion of a year of service for 1982, the employee's period of service, determined as of any date occurring in 1982, includes service prior to December 31, 1981.

(4) *Nonvested participants*—(i) *General rule.* In the case of a participant in a plan who does not have any nonforfeitable right under the plan to his employer-derived accrued benefit and who incurs a 1-year break in service, for purposes of section 410(a)(1) and § 1.410(a)-3 the plan may disregard his years of service prior to such break if the number of his consecutive 1-year breaks in service equals or exceeds his aggregate number of years of service prior to such break. In the case of a plan using the elapsed time method described in Department of Labor regulations, the plan may disregard such years of service prior to such break if the period of severance is at least 1 year and the period of severance equals or exceeds the prior period of service, whether or not consecutive, completed before such period of severance. The plan may in computing such aggregate number of years of service prior to such break disregard any years of service which could have been disregarded under this subparagraph by reason of any prior break in service.

(ii) *Examples.* The rules of this subparagraph are illustrated by the following example:

Example. In 1980, A, who was hired at age 35, separates from the service of X Corporation after completing 4 years of service. At this time A had no vested benefits. In 1985, after incurring 5 consecutive one-year breaks in service, A was reemployed. Under section 410(a)(5)(D), A's 4 years of service may be disregarded because they are exceeded by the number of years of consecutive one-year breaks (5) after such service.

(d) *Special continuity rule for certain plans.* For special rules for computing years of service in the case of a plan maintained by more than one employer, see regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Labor under 29 CFR Part 2530, relating to minimum standards for employee pension benefit plans.

(Sec. 410 (88 Stat. 898; 26 U.S.C. 410))

[T.D. 7508, 42 FR 47196, Sept. 20, 1977; T.D. 7508, 42 FR 57123, Nov. 1, 1977, as amended by T.D. 7703, 45 FR 40980, June 17, 1980]