

Internal Revenue Service, Treasury

§ 1.411(a)-4

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

Example (1). Plan B provides that each employee's rights to his employer-derived accrued benefit are nonforfeitable as follows:

Completed years of service	Nonforfeitable percentage
1	0
2	10
3	25
4	45
5	65
6	75
7	100

Plan B does not satisfy the requirements of paragraph (c) of this section (relating to 3- to 7-year vesting) because the nonforfeitable percentage provided by the plan after completion of 6 years of service (75 percent) is less than the percentage required by paragraph (c) of this section at that time (80 percent). The fact that the nonforfeitable percentage provided by the plan for years prior to the 6th year of service is greater than the percentage required under paragraph (c) of this section is immaterial. The plan fails to satisfy the requirements of paragraph (c) of this section even if it is demonstrated that the value of the vesting provided by the plan to the employees is at least equal to the value of the vesting rate required by this paragraph.

Example (2). Plan C provides for plan participation after the completion of 1 year of service. The plan provides that each employee's rights to his employer-derived accrued benefits are 100 percent nonforfeitable after 5 years of plan participation rather than service. The plan does not satisfy the requirements of paragraph (b) of this section because, under the plan, an employee obtains a 100 percent nonforfeitable right to his or her employer-derived accrued benefit only after completion of more than 5 years of service.

Example (3). Plan D provides that each employee's rights to his employer-derived accrued benefits are nonforfeitable in accordance with the following schedule:

Completed years of service	Nonforfeitable percentage
0 to 4	0
5	60
6	80
7	100

The plan does not satisfy the requirements of paragraph (b) of this section after the 4th year of service. It does not satisfy the requirements of paragraph (c) of this section for years prior to the 5th year of service. The plan does not satisfy the requirements of

this section because it does not satisfy the requirements of a particular one of the two paragraphs for each of an employee's years of service.

Example (4). Plan G provides that each employee's rights to his employer-derived accrued benefit are 100 percent nonforfeitable upon completion of 3 years of service. The plan satisfies the requirements of paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section and, because it satisfies the requirements of at least one of such paragraphs for all of an employee's years of service, it satisfies the requirements of this section.

[T.D. 8170, 53 FR 240, Jan. 6, 1988]

§ 1.411(a)-4 Forfeitures, suspensions, etc.

(a) *Nonforfeitability.* Certain rights in an accrued benefit must be nonforfeitable to satisfy the requirements of section 411(a). This section defines the term "nonforfeitable" for purposes of these requirements. For purposes of section 411 and the regulations thereunder, a right to an accrued benefit is considered to be nonforfeitable at a particular time if, at that time and thereafter, it is an unconditional right. Except as provided by paragraph (b) of this section, a right which, at a particular time, is conditioned under the plan upon a subsequent event, subsequent performance, or subsequent forbearance which will cause the loss of such right is a forfeitable right at that time. Certain adjustments to plan benefits such as adjustments in excess of reasonable actuarial reductions, can result in rights being forfeitable. Rights which are conditioned upon a sufficiency of plan assets in the event of a termination or partial termination are considered to be forfeitable because of such condition. However, a plan does not violate the nonforfeitability requirements merely because in the event of a termination an employee does not have any recourse toward satisfaction of his nonforfeitable benefits from other than the plan assets or the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation. Furthermore, nonforfeitable rights are not considered to be forfeitable by reason of the fact that they may be reduced to take into account benefits which are provided under the Social Security Act or under any other Federal or State law and which are taken

into account in determining plan benefits. To the extent that rights are not required to be nonforfeitable to satisfy the minimum vesting standards, or the nondiscrimination requirements of section 401(a)(4), they may be forfeited without regard to the limitations on forfeitability required by this section. The right of an employee to repurchase his accrued benefit for example under section 411(a)(3)(D), is an example of a right which is required to satisfy such standards. Accordingly, such a right is subject to the limitations on forfeitability. Rights which are required to be prospectively nonforfeitable under the vesting standards are nonforfeitable and may not be forfeited until it is determined that such rights are, in fact, in excess of the vesting standards. Thus, employees have a right to vest in the accrued benefits if they continue in employment of employers maintaining the plan unless a forfeitable event recognized by section 411 occurs. For example, if a plan covered employees in Division A of Corporation X under a plan utilizing a 10-year 100 percent vesting schedule, the plan could not forfeit employees' rights on account of their moving to service in Division B of Corporation X prior to completion of 10 years of service even though employees are not vested at that time.

(b) *Special rules.* For purposes of paragraph (a) of this section a right is not treated as forfeitable—

(1) *Death*—(i) *General rule.* In the case of a participant's right to his employer-derived accrued benefit, merely because such accrued benefit is forfeitable by the participant to the extent it has not been paid or distributed to him prior to his death. This subparagraph shall not apply to a benefit which must be paid to a survivor in order to satisfy the requirements of section 401(a)(11).

(ii) *Employee contributions.* A participant's right in his accrued benefit derived from his own contributions must be nonforfeitable at all times. Such a right is not treated as forfeitable merely because, after commencement of annuity or pension payments in a benefit form provided under the plan, the participant dies without receiving payments equal in amount to his nonforfeitable accrued benefit derived

from his contributions determined at the time of commencement.

(2) *Suspension of benefits upon reemployment of retiree.* In the case of certain suspensions of benefits under section 411(a)(3)(B), see regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Labor under 29 CFR Part 2530 (Department of Labor regulations relating to minimum standards for employee pension benefit plans).

(3) *Retroactive plan amendment.* In the case of a participant's right to his employer-derived accrued benefit, merely because such benefit is subject to reduction to the extent provided by a plan amendment described in section 412(c)(8) and the regulations thereunder, which amendment is given retroactive effect in accordance with such section.

(4) *Other forfeiture rules*—(i) *Withdrawal of mandatory contributions.* For rules allowing forfeitures on account of the withdrawal of mandatory contributions, see § 1.411(a)-7(d) (2) and (3).

(ii) *Class year plans.* For forfeiture rules pertaining to class year plans, see § 1.411(d)-3(b).

(iii) *Additional requirements.* For additional requirements relating to nonforfeatability of benefits in the event of a withdrawal by the employee, see section 401(a)(19) and § 1.401(a)-19.

(5) *Multiemployer plan.* In the case of a multiemployer plan described in section 414(f), merely because an employee's accrued benefit which results from service with an employer before such employer was required to contribute to the plan is forfeitable on account of the cessation of contributions by the employer of the employee. This subparagraph shall not apply to an employee's accrued benefit with respect to an employer which accrued under a plan maintained by that employer prior to the adoption by that employer of the multiemployer plan.

(6) *Lost beneficiary; escheat.* In the case of a benefit which is payable, merely because the benefit is forfeitable on account of the inability to find the participant or beneficiary to whom payment is due, provided that the plan provides for reinstatement of the benefit if a claim is made by the participant or beneficiary for the forfeited benefit. In addition, a benefit which is

lost by reason of escheat under applicable state law is not treated as a forfeiture.

(7) *Certain matching contributions.* A matching contribution (within the meaning of section 401(m)(4)(A) and § 1.401(m)-1(f)(12)) is not treated as forfeitable even if under the plan it may be forfeited under § 1.401(m)-1(e)(1) because the contribution to which it relates is treated as an excess contribution (within the meaning of § 1.402(k)-1(f)(2) and (g)(7)), excess deferral (within the meaning of § 1.402(g)-1(e)(1)(iii)), or excess aggregate contribution (within the meaning of § 1.401(m)-1(f)(8)).

(c) *Examples.* The rules of this section are illustrated by the following examples:

Example (1). Corporation A's plan provides that an employee is fully vested in his employer-derived accrued benefit after completion of 5 years of service. The plan also provides that, if an employee works for a competitor he forfeits his rights in the plan. Such provision could result in the forfeiture of an employee's rights which are required to be nonforfeitable under section 411 and therefore the plan would not satisfy the requirements of section 411. If the plan limited the forfeiture to employees who completed less than 10 years of service, the plan would not fail to satisfy the requirements of section 411 because the forfeitures under this provision are limited to rights which are in excess of the minimum required to be nonforfeitable under section 411(a)(2)(A).

Example (2). Plan B provides that if an employee does not apply for benefits within 5 years after the attainment of normal retirement age, the employee loses his plan benefits. Such a plan provision could result in forfeiture of an employee's rights which are required to be nonforfeitable under section 411 and, therefore, the plan would not satisfy the requirements of section 411.

(Sec. 411 (88 Stat. 901; 26 U.S.C. 411))

[T.D. 7501, 42 FR 42326, Aug. 23, 1977, as amended by T.D. 8357, 56 FR 40549, Aug. 15, 1991]

§ 1.411(a)-4T Forfeitures, suspensions, etc. (temporary).

(a) *Nonforfeitability.* Certain rights in an accrued benefit must be nonforfeitable to satisfy the requirements of section 411(a). This section defines the term "nonforfeitable" for purposes of these requirements. For purposes of section 411 and the regulations thereunder, a right to an accrued benefit is

considered to be nonforfeitable at a particular time if, at that time and thereafter, it is an unconditional right. Except as provided by paragraph (b) of this section, a right which, at a particular time, is conditioned under the plan upon a subsequent event, subsequent performance, or subsequent forbearance which will cause the loss of such right is a forfeitable right at that time. Certain adjustments to plan benefits, such as adjustments in excess of reasonable actuarial reductions, can result in rights being forfeitable. Rights which are conditioned upon a sufficiency of plan assets in the event of a termination or partial termination are considered to be forfeitable because of such condition. However, a plan does not violate the nonforfeitability requirements merely because in the event of a termination an employee does not have any recourse toward satisfaction of his nonforfeitable benefits from other than the plan assets, the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, or a trust established and maintained pursuant to sections 401(c)(3)(B) (ii) or (iii) and section 4049 of ERISA with respect to the plan. Furthermore, nonforfeitable rights are not considered to be forfeitable by reason of the fact that they may be reduced as allowed under sections 401(a)(5) and 401(1). To the extent that rights are not required to be nonforfeitable to satisfy the minimum vesting standards, or the non-discrimination requirements of section 401(a)(4), they may be forfeited without regard to the limitations on forfeitability required by this section. The right of an employee to repurchase his accrued benefit for example under section 411(a)(3)(D), is an example of a right which is required to satisfy such standards. Accordingly, such a right is subject to the limitations on forfeitability. Rights which are required to be prospectively nonforfeitable under the vesting standards are nonforfeitable and may not be forfeited until it is determined that such rights are, in fact, in excess of the vesting standards. Thus, employees have a right to vest in the accrued benefits if they continue in employment of employers maintaining the plan unless a forfeitable event recognized by section 411 occurs. For example, if a plan covered employees in