

Internal Revenue Service, Treasury

§ 1.411(a)-7

Year ending December 31	Hours of service completed
1987	500
1988	200
1989	1,000

§ 1.411(a)-7 Definitions and special rules.

(a) *Accrued benefit.* For purposes of section 411 and the regulations thereunder, the term “accrued benefit” means—

(1) *Defined benefit plan.* In the case of a defined benefit plan—

(i) If the plan provides an accrued benefit in the form of an annual benefit commencing at normal retirement age, such accrued benefit, or

(ii) If the plan does not provide an accrued benefit in the form described in subdivision (i) of this subparagraph, an annual benefit commencing at normal retirement age which is the actuarial equivalent (determined under section 411(c)(3) and § 1.411(c)-(5) of the accrued benefit determined under the plan. In general, the term “accrued benefits” refers only to pension or retirement benefits. Consequently, accrued benefits do not include ancillary benefits not directly related to retirement benefits such as payment of medical expenses (or insurance premiums for such expenses), disability benefits not in excess of the qualified disability benefit (see section 411(a)(9) and paragraph (c)(3) of this section), life insurance benefits payable as a lump sum, incidental death benefits, current life insurance protection, or medical benefits described in section 401(h). For purposes of this paragraph a subsidized early retirement benefit which is provided by a plan is not taken into account, except to the extent of determining the normal retirement benefit under the plan (see section 411(a)(9) and paragraph (c) of this section). The accrued benefit includes any optional settlement at normal retirement age under actuarial assumptions no less favorable than those which would be applied if the employee were terminating his employment at normal retirement age. The accrued benefit does not include any subsidized value in a joint and survivor annuity to the extent that the annual benefit of the joint and survivor annuity does not exceed the annual benefit of a single life annuity.

(2) *Defined contribution plan.* In the case of a defined contribution plan, the balance of the employee’s account held under the plan.

Employee A’s status as a participant during this period is determined as follows:

1978: Employee A was a plan participant on January 1, 1978, because he completed a year of service (1,000 hours) in 1977. He did not complete a year of service in 1978 because he completed fewer than 1,000 hours in that year. Because he completed more than 500 hours of service in 1978, however, Employee A did not incur a one-year break in service that year.

1979: Employee A completes a year of service in 1979. Because he did not incur a one-year break in service in 1978, the plan may not disregard his 1977 service for purposes of determining his years of service as of January 1, 1979.

1980: Employee A incurs a one-year break in service in 1980.

1981: Because Employee A had completed 2 years of service prior to 1981 and had incurred one 1-year break in service prior to 1981, under section 411(a)(6)(D), the plan may not disregard his pre-1980 service in 1981. Employee A completes a year of service in 1981.

1982: Employee A incurs a one-year break in service in 1982.

1983: Employee A incurs a one-year break in service in 1983. As of the end of 1983, he has completed 3 years of service and has incurred 2 consecutive one-year breaks in service.

1984: Employee A completes a year of service in 1984. Under section 411(a)(6)(D), his pre-1982 service may not be disregarded in 1984 because, as of the beginning of 1984, his pre-1984 years of service (3) exceed his consecutive one-year breaks in service (2).

1984-1988: Employee A incurs 4 consecutive one-year breaks in service during the years 1985 through 1988.

1989: Employee A’s pre-1989 service is disregarded in 1989 and all subsequent plan years because his years of service as of January 1, 1989, equal the number of consecutive one-year breaks he has incurred as of that date. Therefore, as of the beginning of 1989, Employee A is not a plan participant. Employee A completes a year of service in 1989. (Although section 411(a)(6)(D) does not prohibit the plan provision under which Employee A’s pre-1989 service is disregarded, that section does not require such a provision in a qualified plan.)

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

[T.D. 7501, 42 FR 42329, Aug. 23, 1977, as amended by T.D. 7703, 45 FR 40985, June 17, 1980]

(b) *Normal retirement age*—(1) *General rule.* For the purposes of section 411 and the regulations thereunder, the term “normal retirement age” means the earlier of—

(i) The time specified by a plan at which a plan participant attains normal retirement age, or

(ii) The later of—

(A) The time the plan participant attains age 65, or

(B) The 10th anniversary of the date the plan participant commences participation in the plan.

If a plan, or the employer sponsoring the plan, imposes a requirement that an employee retire upon reaching a certain age, the normal retirement age may not exceed that mandatory retirement age. The preceding sentence will apply if the employer consistently enforces a mandatory retirement age rule, whether or not set forth in the plan or any related document. For purposes of subdivision (i) of this subparagraph, if an age is not specified by a plan as the normal retirement age then the normal retirement age under the plan is the earliest age beyond which the participant's benefits under the plan are not greater solely on account of his age or service. For purposes of paragraph (b)(1)(ii)(B) of this section, participation commences on the first day of the first year in which the participant commenced his participation in the plan, except that years which may be disregarded under section 410(a)(5)(D) may be disregarded in determining when participation commenced.

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

Example (1). Plan A defines normal retirement age as age 65. Under the plan, benefits payable to participants who retire at or after age 60 are not reduced on account of early retirement. For purposes of section 411 and the vesting regulations, normal retirement age under Plan A is age 65 (determined under subparagraph (1)(i) of this paragraph). This is true even if in operation all participants retire at age 60.

Example (2). Plan B does not specify any age as the normal retirement age. Under the plan, participants who have attained age 55 are entitled to benefits commencing upon retirement but the benefits of participants who retire before attaining age 70 are subject to

reduction on account of early retirement. For purposes of section 411 and the vesting regulations the normal retirement age under Plan B is the later of (i) age 65, or (ii) the 10th anniversary of the date a plan participant commences participation in the plan (assuming such date is prior to age 70).

Example (3). The facts are the same as in example (2). Employee X first became a participant in Plan B on January 1, 1980 at age 53. His participation continued until December 31, 1980, when he separated from the service with no vested benefits. After incurring 5 consecutive 1-year breaks in service, Employee X again becomes an employee and a plan participant on January 1, 1986, at age 59. For purposes of section 411, Employee X's normal retirement age under Plan B is age 69, the 10th anniversary of the date on which his year of plan participation commenced. His participation in 1980 may be disregarded under the last sentence of paragraph (b)(1) of this section.

(c) *Normal retirement benefit*—(1) *In general.* For purposes of section 411 and the regulations thereunder, the term “normal retirement benefit” means the periodic benefit under the plan commencing upon early retirement (if any) or at normal retirement age, whichever benefit is greater.

(2) *Periodic benefit.* For purposes of subparagraph (1) of this paragraph—

(i) In the case of a plan under which a benefit is payable as an annuity in the same form upon early retirement and at normal retirement age, the greater benefit is determined by comparing the amount of such annuity payments.

(ii) In the case of a plan under which an annuity benefit payable upon early retirement is not in the same form as an annuity benefit payable at normal retirement age, the greater benefit is determined by converting the annuity benefit payable upon early retirement age into the same form of annuity benefit as is payable at normal retirement age and by comparing the amount of the converted early retirement benefit payment with the amount of the normal retirement benefit payment.

(iii) In the case of a plan which is integrated with the Social Security Act or any other Federal or State law, the periodic benefit payable upon and after early retirement age is adjusted for any increases in such benefits occurring on or after early retirement age which are taken into account under the

plan. See however, section 401(a)(15) and the regulations thereunder.

(3) *Benefits included.* For purposes of this paragraph, the normal retirement benefit under a plan shall be determined without regard to ancillary benefits such as medical benefits or disability benefits not in excess of the qualified disability benefit; see section 411(a)(7) and paragraph (a)(1) of this section. For this purpose, a qualified disability benefit is a disability benefit which is not in excess of the amount of the benefit which would be payable to the participant if he separated from service at normal retirement age.

(4) *Early retirement benefit; social security supplement.* (i) For purposes of this paragraph, the early retirement benefit under a plan shall be determined without regard to any social security supplement.

(ii) For purposes of this subparagraph, a social security supplement is a benefit for plan participants which—

(A) Commences before the age and terminates before the age when participants are entitled to old-age insurance benefits, unreduced on account of age, under title II of the Social Security Act, as amended (see section 202 (a) and (g) of such Act), and

(B) Does not exceed such old-age insurance benefit.

(5) *Special limitation.* If a defined benefit plan bases its normal retirement benefits on employee compensation, the compensation must reflect the compensation which would have been paid for a full year of participation within the meaning of section 411(b)(3). If an employee works less than a full year of participation, the compensation used to determine benefits under the plan for such year of participation must be multiplied by the ratio of the number of hours for a complete year of participation to the number of hours worked in such year. A plan whose benefit formula is computed on a computation base which cannot decrease is not required to adjust employee compensation in the manner described in the previous sentence. Thus, for example, if a plan provided a benefit based on an employee's compensation for his highest five consecutive years or a separate benefit for each year of participation

based on the employee's compensation for such year the plan would not have to so adjust compensation. However, if a plan provided a benefit based on an employee's compensation for the employee's last five years or the five highest consecutive years out of the last 10 years, the compensation, would have to be so adjusted. For special rules for applying the limitations on proration of a year of participation for benefit accrual, see regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Labor under 29 CFR Part 2530, relating to minimum standards for employee pension benefit plans.

(6) *Examples.* The provisions of this paragraph are illustrated by the following examples:

Example (1). Plan A provides for a benefit equal to 1% of high 5 years compensation for each year of service and a normal retirement age of 65. The plan also provides for a full unreduced accrued benefit without any actuarial reduction for any employee at age 55 with 30 years of service. Even though the actuarial value of the early retirement benefit could exceed the value of the benefit at the normal retirement age, the normal retirement benefit would not include the greater value of the early retirement benefit because actuarial subsidies are ignored.

Example (2). Plan B provides the following benefits: (1) at normal retirement age 65, \$300/mo. for life and (2) at early retirement age 60, \$400/mo. for life. The normal retirement benefit is \$400/mo., the greater of the benefit payable at normal retirement age (\$300) or early retirement (\$400).

Example (3). Assume the same facts as example (2) except that the early retirement benefit of \$400 is reduced to \$300 upon attainment of age 65. If each employee's social security benefit at age 65 is not less than \$100, the \$100 would be considered to be a social security supplement and would therefore be ignored. Consequently, the normal retirement benefit would be \$300.

Example (4). Plan C provides a benefit at normal retirement age equal to 1% per year of service, multiplied by the participant's compensation averaged over the 5 years immediately prior to retirement. An early retirement benefit is provided upon attainment of age 60 equal to the benefit accrued to date of early retirement reduced by 4 percent for each year by which the early retirement date precedes the normal retirement age of 65. Employee A was hired at age 30, participated immediately, and retired at age 65. Employee A's annual compensation was \$50,000 between ages 55-60 and was reduced to \$33,000 after age 60. The following table indicates the amount of annual benefit that

§ 1.411(a)-7

would have been provided by the plan formula if the employee retired at or after age 60:

Age	Final average computed	Percent accrued benefit	Reduction	Annual benefit
	(1)—	(2)—	(3)—	(4)—
60	\$50,000	30	0.80	*\$12,000
61	46,600	31	.84	12,135
62	43,200	32	.88	12,165
63	39,800	33	.92	12,083
64	36,400	34	.96	11,881
65	33,000	35	1.00	11,550

NOTE.— Col. (1) times col. (2) times col. (3) equals col. (4).

The normal retirement benefit is the greater of the benefit payable at normal retirement age or the early retirement benefit. Employee A's normal retirement benefit is \$12,165, the greatest annual benefit Employee A would be entitled to.

(d) *Rules relating to certain distributions and cash-outs of accrued benefits—*
 (1) *In general.* This paragraph sets forth vesting rules applicable to certain distributions from qualified plans and their related trusts (other than class year plans). Subparagraphs (2) and (3) set forth the exceptions to nonforfeitability on account of withdrawal of mandatory contributions provided by section 411(a)(3)(D). When a plan utilizes these exceptions with respect to a given participant's accrued benefit, such accrued benefit is not subject to the cash-out rules or vesting rules of subparagraphs (4) or (5), respectively. Section 411 prescribes certain requirements with respect to accrued benefits under a qualified plan. These requirements would generally not be satisfied if the plan disregarded service in computing accrued benefits even though amounts were distributed on account of such service. Subparagraph (4) of this paragraph sets forth rules under section 411(a)(7)(B) which allow a plan to make distributions and compute accrued benefits without regard to the accrued benefit attributable to the distribution. When a defined contribution plan utilizes this exception with respect to an accrued benefit, the plan is not required to satisfy the rules of subparagraph (5) of this paragraph. Subparagraph (5) of this paragraph sets forth a vesting requirement applicable to certain distributions from defined contribution plans. Subparagraph (6)

sets forth other rules which pertain to the distribution rules of this paragraph.

(2) *Withdrawal of mandatory contribution—*(i) *General rule.* In the case of a participant's right to his employer-derived accrued benefit, a right is not treated as forfeitable merely because all or a portion of such benefit may be forfeited on account of the withdrawal by the participant of any amount attributable to his accrued benefit derived from his mandatory contributions (within the meaning of section 411(c)(2)(C) and § 1.411(c)-1) before he has become a 50 percent vested participant (within the meaning of § 1.401(a)-19(b)(2)). For purposes of determining the vested percentage, the plan may disregard service after the withdrawal. For example, assume that a plan utilizes 1000 hours for computing years of service and that for the computation period employee A had 1000 hours of service. If A was 40 percent vested at the beginning of the period but only had 800 hours at the time of the withdrawal, the plan could treat A as only 40 percent vested because service after the withdrawal can be disregarded. On the other hand, if A had 1000 hours at the time of the withdrawal, he must receive a year of service for the computation period, even though service is not taken into account until the end of such period.

(ii) *Plan repayment provision.* (A) Subdivision (i) of this subparagraph shall not apply unless, at the time the amount described in such subdivision is withdrawn by the participant, the plan provides the employee with a right to restoration of his employer-derived accrued benefit to the extent forfeited in accordance with such subdivision upon repayment to the plan of the full amount of the withdrawal.

(B) In the case of a defined benefit plan (as defined in section 414(j)) the restoration of the employee's employer-derived accrued benefit may be conditioned upon repayment of interest on the full amount of the distribution. Such interest shall be computed on the amount of the distribution from the date of such distribution to the date of repayment, compounded annually from the date of distribution, at the rate determined under section 411(c)(2)(C) in

effect on the date of repayment. A plan may provide for repayment of interest which is less than the amount determined under the preceding sentence.

(C) In the case of both defined benefit plans and defined contribution plans, the plan repayment provision described in this subparagraph may provide that the employee must repay the full amount of the distribution in order to have the forfeited benefit restored. The plan provision may not require that such repayment be made sooner than the time described in paragraph (d)(2)(ii)(D) of this section.

(D)(I) If a distribution is on account of separation from service, the time for repayment may not end before the earlier of—

(i) 5 years after the first day the employee is subsequently employed, or

(ii) The close of the first period of consecutive 1-year breaks in service commencing after the distribution.

If the distribution occurs for any other reason, the time for repayment may not end earlier than 5 years after the date of distribution. Nevertheless, a plan provision may provide for a longer period in which the employee may repay. For example, a plan could allow repayments to be made at any time before normal retirement age.

(2) In the case of a plan utilizing the elapsed time method, described in § 1.410(a)-7, the minimum time for repayment shall be determined as in paragraph (d)(2)(ii)(D)(I) of this section except as provided in this subdivision. The 5 consecutive 1-year break periods shall be determined by substituting the term "1-year period of severance" for the term "1-year break in service". Also, the repayment period both commences and closes in a manner determined by the Commissioner that is consistent with the rules in § 1.410(a)-7 and the substitution in section 411(a)(6)(C) and (D) of a 5-year break-in-service rule for the former 1-year break-in-service rule.

(E) A defined benefit plan using the break-in-service rule described in section 410(a)(5)(D) or a defined contribution plan using the break-in-service rule described in section 411(a)(6)(C) for determining employees' accrued benefits is not required to provide for repayment by an employee whose ac-

crued benefit is disregarded by reason of a plan provision using these rules.

(iii) *Computation of benefit.* In the case of a defined contribution plan, the employer-derived accrued benefit required to be restored by this subparagraph shall not be less than the amount in the account balance of the employee which was forfeited, unadjusted by any subsequent gains or losses.

(iv) *Delayed forfeiture.* A defined contribution plan may, in lieu of the forfeiture and restoration described in this subparagraph, provide that the forfeiture does not occur until the expiration of the time for repayment described in subdivision (ii) of this subparagraph provided that the conditions of this subparagraph are satisfied.

(3) *Withdrawal of mandatory contributions; accruals before September 2, 1974—*

(i) *General rule.* In the case of a participant's right to the portion of the employer-derived benefit which accrued prior to September 2, 1974, a right is not treated as forfeitable merely because all or part of such portion may be forfeited on account of the withdrawal by the participant of an amount attributable to his benefit derived from mandatory contributions (within the meaning of section 411(c)(2)(C) and § 1.411(c)-1(c)(4)) made by the participant before September 2, 1974, if the amount so subject to forfeiture is no more than proportional to such amounts withdrawn. This subparagraph shall not apply to any plan to which any mandatory contribution (within the meaning of section 411(c)(2)(C) and § 1.411(c)-1(c)(4)) is made after September 2, 1974.

(ii) *Defined contribution plan.* In the case of a defined contribution plan, the portion of a participant's employer-derived benefit which accrued prior to September 2, 1974, shall be determined on the basis of a separate accounting between benefits accruing before and after such date. Gains, losses, withdrawals, forfeitures, and other credits or charges must be separately allocated to such benefits. Any allocation made on a reasonable and consistent basis prior to September 1, 1977, shall satisfy the requirements of this subdivision.

(iii) *Defined benefit plan.* In the case of a defined benefit plan, the portion of a participant's employer-derived benefit which accrued prior to September 2, 1974, shall be determined in a manner consistent with the determination of an accrued benefit under section 411(b)(1)(D) (see § 1.411(b)-1(c)). Any method of determining such accrued benefit which the Commissioner finds to be reasonable shall satisfy the requirements of this subdivision.

(4) *Certain cash-outs of accrued benefits—(i) Involuntary cash-outs.* For purposes of determining an employee's right to an accrued benefit derived from employer contributions under a plan, the plan may disregard service performed by the employee with respect to which—

(A) The employee receives a distribution of the present value of his entire nonforfeitable benefit at the time of the distribution;

(B) The requirements of section 411(a)(11) are satisfied at the time of the distribution;

(C) The distribution is made due to the termination of the employee's participation in the plan; and

(D) The plan has a repayment provision which satisfies the requirements of paragraph (d)(4)(iv) of this section in effect at the time of the distribution.

(ii) *Voluntary cash-outs.* For purposes of determining an employee's accrued benefit derived from employer contributions under a plan, the plan may disregard service performed by the employee with respect to which—

(A) The employee receives a distribution of the present value of his nonforfeitable benefit attributable to such service at the time of such distribution,

(B) The employee voluntarily elects to receive such distribution,

(C) The distribution is made on termination of the employee's participation in the plan, and

(D) The plan has a repayment provision in effect at the time of the distribution which satisfies the requirements of subdivision (iv) of this subparagraph.

A distribution shall be deemed to be made on termination of participation in the plan if it is made not later than the close of the second plan year fol-

lowing the plan year in which such termination occurs. For purposes of determining the nonforfeitable benefit, the plan may disregard service after the distribution as illustrated in subparagraph (2)(i) of this subparagraph.

(iii) *Disregard of service.* Service of an employee permitted to be disregarded under subdivision (i) or (ii) of the subparagraph is not required to be taken into account in computing the employee's accrued benefit under the plan. In the case of a voluntary distribution described in subdivision (ii) of this subparagraph which is less than the present value of the employee's total nonforfeitable benefit immediately prior to the distribution, the accrued benefit not required to be taken into account is such total accrued benefit multiplied by a fraction, the numerator of which is the amount of the distribution and the denominator of which is the present value of his total nonforfeitable benefit immediately prior to such distribution. For example, A who is 50 percent vested in an account balance of \$1,000 receives a voluntary distribution of \$250. The accrued benefit which can be disregarded equals \$1,000 times \$250/\$500, or \$500. However, such service may not by reason of this paragraph be disregarded for purposes of determining an employee's years of service under sections 410(a)(3) and 411(a)(4).

(iv) *Plan repayment provision.* (A) A plan repayment provision satisfies the requirements of this subdivision if, under the provision, the accrued benefit of an employee that is disregarded by a plan under this subparagraph is restored upon repayment to the plan by the employee of the full amount of the distribution. An accrued benefit is not restored unless all of the optional forms of benefit and subsidies relating to such benefit are also restored. A plan is not required to provide for repayment of an accrued benefit unless the employee—

(1) Received a distribution that is in a plan year to which section 411 applies (see § 1.411(a)-2), which distribution is less than the amount of his accrued benefit determined under the same optional form of benefit as the distribution was made, and

(2) Resumes employment covered under the plan.

(B) *Example.* Plan A provides a single sum distribution equal to the present value of the normal form of the accrued benefit payable at normal retirement age which is a single life annuity. Plan A also provides a subsidized joint and survivor annuity and a subsidized early retirement annuity benefit. A participant who is fully vested and receives a single sum distribution equal to the present value of the single life annuity normal retirement benefit is not required to be provided the right under the plan to repay the distribution upon subsequent reemployment even though the participant received a distribution that did not reflect the value of the subsidy in the joint and survivor annuity or the value of the early retirement annuity subsidy. This is true whether or not the participant had satisfied at the time of the distribution all of the conditions necessary to receive the subsidies. However, if a participant does not receive his total accrued benefit in the optional form of benefit under which his benefit was distributed, the plan must provide for repayment. If the employee repays the distribution in accordance with section 411(a)(7), the plan must restore the employee's accrued benefit which would include the right to receive the subsidized joint and survivor annuity and the subsidized early retirement annuity benefit.

(C) A plan may impose the same conditions on repayments for the restoration of employer-derived accrued benefits that are allowed as conditions for restoration of employer-derived accrued benefits upon repayment of mandatory contributions under paragraphs (d)(2)(ii) (B), (C), (D) and (E) of this section.

(v) In the case of a defined contribution plan, the employer-derived accrued benefit required to be restored by this subparagraph shall not be less than the amount in the account balance of the employee, both the amount distributed and the amount forfeited, unadjusted by any subsequent gains or losses. Thus, for example, if an employee received a distribution of \$250 when he was 25 percent vested in an account balance of \$1,000, upon repayment of \$250 the account balance may not be less than \$1,000 even if, because of plan losses, the account balance, if not distributed, would have been reduced to \$500.

(vi) For purposes of paragraph (d)(4)(i) of this section, a distribution shall be deemed to be made due to the

termination of an employee's participation in the plan if it is made no later than the close of the second plan year following the plan year in which such termination occurs, or if such distribution would have been made under the plan by the close of such second plan year but for the fact that the present value of the nonforfeitable accrued benefit then exceeded the cash-out limit in effect under § 1.411(a)-11(c)(3)(ii). For purposes of determining the entire nonforfeitable benefit, the plan may disregard service after the distribution, as illustrated in paragraph (d)(2)(i) of this section.

(vii) *Effective date.* Paragraphs (d)(4)(i) and (vi) of this section apply to distributions made on or after March 22, 1999. However, an employer is permitted to apply paragraphs (d)(4)(i) and (vi) of this section to plan years beginning on or after August 6, 1997. Otherwise, for distributions prior to March 22, 1999, §§ 1.411(a)-7 and 1.411(a)-7T, in effect prior to October 17, 2000 (as contained in 26 CFR part 1, revised as of April 1, 2000) apply.

(5) *Vesting requirement for defined contribution plans—(i) Application.* The requirements of this subparagraph apply to a defined contribution plan which makes distributions to employees from their accounts attributable to employer contributions at a time when—

(A) Employees are less than 100 percent vested in such accounts, and

(B) Under the plan, employees can increase their percentage of vesting in such accounts after the distributions.

(ii) *Requirements.* In order for a plan, to which this subparagraph applies, to satisfy the vesting requirements of section 411, account balances under the plan (with respect to which percentage vesting can increase) must be computed in a manner which satisfies either subdivision (iii) (A) or (B) of this subparagraph.

(iii) *Permissible methods.* A plan may provide for either of the following methods, but not both, for computing account balances with respect to which percentage vesting can increase and from which distributions are made:

(A)(1) A separate account is established for the employee's interest in the plan as of the time of the distribution, and

§ 1.411(a)-7

26 CFR Ch. I (4-1-02 Edition)

(2) At any relevant time the employee's vested portion of the separate account is not less than an amount ("X") determined by the formula: $X=P(AB+(R \times D)) - (R \times D)$. For purposes of applying the formula: P is the vested percentage at the relevant time; AB is the account balance at the relevant time; D is the amount of the distribution; R is the ratio of the account balance at the relevant time to the account balance after distribution; and the relevant time is the time at which, under the plan, the vested percentage in the account cannot increase.

A plan is not required to provide for separate accounts provided that account balances are maintained under a method that has the same effect as under this subdivision.

(B) At any relevant time the employee's vested portion is not less than an amount ("X") determined by the formula: $X=P(AB+D) - D$. For purposes of applying the formula, the terms have the same meaning as under subdivision (iii)(A)(2) of this subparagraph.

(C) An application of the methods described in subdivisions (iii) (A) and (B) of this subparagraph is illustrated by the following examples:

Example (1). The X defined contribution plan uses the method described in subdivision (iii)(A) of this subparagraph for computing account balances and the break in service rule described in section 411(a)(6)(C) (service after a 1-year break does not increase the vesting percentage in account balances accrued prior to the break). The plan distributes \$250 to A when A's account balance prior to the distribution equals \$1,000 and he is 25 percent vested. At the time of the distribution, A has not incurred a 1-year break so that his vesting percentage can increase. Six years later, when A is 60 percent vested, he incurs a 1-year break so that his vesting percentage cannot increase. At this time his separate account balance equals \$1,500. $R=\$1,500/\750 or 2. A's separate account must equal 60 percent $(\$1,500+(2 \times \$250)) - (2 \times \$250)$ or 60 percent $(\$1,500+\$500) - \$500$, or \$1,200 - \$500 equals \$700.

Example (2). The Y defined contribution plan uses the method described in subdivision (iii)(B) of this subparagraph for computing account balances and the break in service rule described in section 411(a)(6)(C). The plan distributes \$250 to B when B's account balance prior to the distribution equals \$1,000 and he is 25 percent vested. At the time of the distribution, B has not incurred a 1-year break so that his vesting per-

centage can increase. Six years later, when A is 60 percent vested, he incurs a 1-year break so that his vesting percentage cannot increase. At this time his account balance equals \$1,500. B's separate account must equal 60 percent $(\$1,500+\$250) - \$250$, 60% of \$1,750 - \$250 equals \$800.

(6) *Other rules*—(i) *Distributions on separation or other event.* None of the rules of this paragraph preclude distributions to employees upon separation from service or any other event recognized by the plan for commencing distributions. Such a distribution must, of course, satisfy the applicable qualification requirements pertaining to such distributions. For example, a profitsharing plan could pay the vested portion of an account balance to an employee when he separated from service, but in order to satisfy section 411 the plan might not be able to forfeit the nonvested account balance until the employee has a 1-year break in service. Similarly, the fact that a plan cannot disregard an accrued benefit attributable to service for which an employee has received a distribution because the plan does not satisfy the cash-out requirements of subparagraph (4) of this paragraph does not mean that the employee's accrued benefit (computed by taking into account such service) cannot be offset by the accrued benefit attributable to the distribution.

(ii) *Joint and survivor requirements.* See § 1.401(a)-11(a)(2) (relating to joint and survivor annuities) for special rules applicable to certain distributions described in this paragraph.

(iii) *Plan repayments.* (A) Under subparagraphs (2) and (4) of this paragraph, a plan may be required to restore accrued benefits in the event of repayment by an employee.

(B) For purposes of applying the limitations of section 415 (c) and (e), in the case of a defined contribution plan, the repayment by the employee and the restoration by the employer shall not be treated as annual additions.

(C) In the case of a defined contribution plan, the permissible sources for restoration of the accrued benefit are: income or gain to the plan, forfeitures, or employer contributions. Notwithstanding the provisions of § 1.401-1(b)(1)(ii), contributions may be made for such an accrued benefit by a profit-

sharing plan even though there are no profits. In order for such a plan to be qualified, account balances (accrued benefits) generally must correspond to assets in the plan. Accordingly, there cannot be an unfunded account balance. However, an account balance will not be deemed to be unfunded in the case of a restoration if assets for the restored benefit are provided by the end of the plan year following the plan year in which the repayment occurs.

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

[T.D. 7501, 42 FR 42329, Aug. 23, 1977, as amended by T.D. 8038, 50 FR 29374, July 19, 1985; T.D. 8219, 53 FR 31852, Aug. 22, 1988; 53 FR 48534, Dec. 1, 1988; T.D. 8794, 63 FR 70337, Dec. 21, 1998; T.D. 8891, 65 FR 44681, July 19, 2000]

§ 1.411(a)-8 Changes in vesting schedule.

(a) *Requirement of prior schedule.* Under section 411(a)(10)(A), for plan years for which section 411 applies, a plan will be treated as not meeting the minimum vesting standards of section 411(a)(2) if the plan does not satisfy the requirements of this paragraph. If the vesting schedule of a plan is amended, then as of the date such amendment is adopted, the plan satisfies the requirements of this paragraph if, under the plan as amended, in the case of an employee who is a participant on—

(1) The date the amendment is adopted, or

(2) The date the amendment is effective, if later.

The nonforfeitable percentage (determined as of such date) of such employee's right to his employer-derived accrued benefit is not less than his percentage computed under the plan without regard to such amendment.

(b) *Election of former schedule*—(1) *In general.* Under section 411 (a)(10)(B), for plan years for which section 411 applies, if the vesting schedule of a plan is amended, the plan will not be treated as meeting the minimum vesting standards of section 411 (a)(2) unless the plan as amended, provides that each participant whose nonforfeitable percentage of his accrued benefit derived from employer contributions is determined under such schedule, and who has completed at least 5 years of service with the employer, may elect,

during the election period, to have the nonforfeitable percentage of his accrued benefit derived from employer contributions determined without regard to such amendment. Notwithstanding the preceding sentence, no election need be provided for any participant whose nonforfeitable percentage under the plan, as amended, at any time cannot be less than such percentage determined without regard to such amendment.

(2) *Election period.* For purposes of subparagraph (1) of this paragraph, the election period under the plan must begin no later than the date the plan amendment is adopted and end no earlier than the latest of the following dates:

(i) The date which is 60 days after the day the plan amendment is adopted,

(ii) The date which is 60 days after the day the plan amendment becomes effective, or

(iii) The date which is 60 days after the day the participant is issued written notice of the plan amendment by the employer or plan administrator.

(3) *Service requirement.* For purposes of subparagraph (1) of this paragraph, a participant shall be considered to have completed 5 years of service if such participant has completed 5 years of service, whether or not consecutive, without regard to the exceptions of section 411(a)(4) prior to the expiration of the election period described in subparagraph (2) of this paragraph. For the meaning of the term “year of service”, see regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Labor under 29 CFR Part 2530, relating to minimum standards for employee pension benefit plans.

(4) *Election only by participant.* The election described in subparagraph (1) of this paragraph is available only to an individual who is a participant in the plan at the time such election is made.

(5) *Election may be irrevocable.* A plan, as amended, shall not fail to meet the minimum vesting standards of section 411(a)(2) by reason of section 411(a)(10)(B) merely because such plan provides that the election described in subparagraph (1) of this paragraph is irrevocable.

(6) *Relationship with section 411(a)(2).* The election described in subparagraph