

(3) If expenditures for research or experimentation are incurred in connection with the construction or manufacture of depreciable property by another, they are deductible under section 174(a) only if made upon the taxpayer's order and at his risk. No deduction will be allowed (i) if the taxpayer purchases another's product under a performance guarantee (whether express, implied, or imposed by local law) unless the guarantee is limited, to engineering specifications or otherwise, in such a way that economic utility is not taken into account; or (ii) for any part of the purchase price of a product in regular production. For example, if a taxpayer orders a specially-built automatic milling machine under a guarantee that the machine will be capable of producing a given number of units per hour, no portion of the expenditure is deductible since none of it is made at the taxpayer's risk. Similarly, no deductible expense is incurred if a taxpayer enters into a contract for the construction of a new type of chemical processing plant under a turn-key contract guaranteeing a given annual production and a given consumption of raw material and fuel per unit. On the other hand, if the contract contained no guarantee of quality of production and of quantity of units in relation to consumption of raw material and fuel, and if real doubt existed as to the capabilities of the process, expenses for research or experimentation under the contract are at the taxpayer's risk and are deductible under section 174(a). However, see subparagraph (4) of this paragraph.

(4) The deductions referred to in subparagraphs (2) and (3) of this paragraph for expenditures in connection with the acquisition or production of depreciable property to be used in the taxpayer's trade or business are limited to amounts expended for research or experimentation. For the purpose of the preceding sentence, amounts expended for research or experimentation do not include the costs of the component materials of the depreciable property, the costs of labor or other elements involved in its construction and installation, or costs attributable to the acquisition or improvement of the property. For example, a taxpayer undertakes to

develop a new machine for use in his business. He expends \$30,000 on the project of which \$10,000 represents the actual costs of material, labor, etc., to construct the machine, and \$20,000 represents research costs which are not attributable to the machine itself. Under section 174(a) the taxpayer would be permitted to deduct the \$20,000 as expenses not chargeable to capital account, but the \$10,000 must be charged to the asset account (the machine).

(c) *Exploration expenditures.* The provisions of section 174 are not applicable to any expenditures paid or incurred for the purpose of ascertaining the existence, location, extent, or quality of any deposit of ore, oil, gas or other mineral. See sections 617 and 263.

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#### § 1.174-3 Treatment as expenses.

(a) *In general.* Research or experimental expenditures paid or incurred by a taxpayer during the taxable year in connection with his trade or business are deductible as expenses, and are not chargeable to capital account, if the taxpayer adopts the method provided in section 174(a). See paragraph (b) of this section. If adopted, the method shall apply to all research and experimental expenditures paid or incurred in the taxable year of adoption and all subsequent taxable years, unless a different method is authorized by the Commissioner under section 174(a)(3) with respect to part or all of the expenditures. See paragraph (b)(3) of this section. Thus, if a change to the deferred expense method under section 174(b) is authorized by the Commissioner with respect to research or experimental expenditures attributable to a particular project or projects, the taxpayer, for the taxable year of the change and for subsequent taxable years, must apply the deferred expense method to all such expenditures paid or incurred during any of those taxable years in connection with the particular project or projects, even though all other research and experimental expenditures are required to be deducted as current expenses under this section.

In no event will the taxpayer be permitted to adopt the method described in this section as to part of the expenditures relative to a particular project and adopt for the same taxable year a different method of treating the balance of the expenditures relating to the same project.

(b) *Adoption and change of method*—(1) *Adoption without consent.* The method described in this section may be adopted for any taxable year beginning after December 31, 1953, and ending after August 16, 1954. The consent of the Commissioner is not required if the taxpayer adopts the method for the first such taxable year in which he pays or incurs research or experimental expenditures. The taxpayer may do so by claiming in his income tax return for such year a deduction for his research or experimental expenditures. If the taxpayer fails to adopt the method for the first taxable year in which he incurs such expenditures, he cannot do so in subsequent taxable years unless he obtains the consent of the Commissioner under section 174(a)(2)(B) and subparagraph (2) of this paragraph. See, however, subparagraph (4) of this paragraph, relating to extensions of time.

(2) *Adoption with consent.* A taxpayer may, with the consent of the Commissioner, adopt at any time the method provided in section 174(a). The method adopted in this manner shall be applicable only to expenditures paid or incurred during the taxable year for which the request is made and in subsequent taxable years. A request to adopt this method shall be in writing and shall be addressed to the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, Attention: T:R, Washington, DC, 20224. The request shall set forth the name and address of the taxpayer, the first taxable year for which the adoption of the method is requested, and a description of the project or projects with respect to which research or experimental expenditures are to be, or have already been, paid or incurred. The request shall be signed by the taxpayer (or his duly authorized representative) and shall be filed not later than the last day of the first taxable year for which the adoption of the method is requested. See, however, subparagraph (4)

of this paragraph, relating to extensions of time.

(3) *Change of method.* An application for permission to change to a different method of treating research or experimental expenditures shall be in writing and shall be addressed to the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, Attention: T:R, Washington, DC, 20224. The application shall include the name and address of the taxpayer, shall be signed by the taxpayer (or his duly authorized representative), and shall be filed not later than the last day of the first taxable year for which the change in method is to apply. See, however, subparagraph (4) of this paragraph, relating to extensions of time. The application shall:

(i) State the first year to which the requested change is to be applicable;

(ii) State whether the change is to apply to all research or experimental expenditures paid or incurred by the taxpayer, or only to expenditures attributable to a particular project or projects;

(iii) Include such information as will identify the project or projects to which the change is applicable;

(iv) Indicate the number of months (not less than 60) selected for amortization of the expenditures, if any, which are to be treated as deferred expenses under section 174(b);

(v) State that, upon approval of the application, the taxpayer will make an accounting segregation on his books and records of the research or experimental expenditures to which the change in method is to apply; and

(vi) State the reasons for the change. If permission is granted to make the change, the taxpayer shall attach a copy of the letter granting permission to his income tax return for the first taxable year in which the different method is effective.

(4) *Special rules.* If the last day prescribed by law for filing a return for any taxable year (including extensions thereof) to which section 174(a) is applicable falls before January 2, 1958, consent is hereby given for the taxpayer to adopt the expense method or to change from the expense method to a different method. In the case of a change from the expense method to a different method, the taxpayer, on or

before January 2, 1958, must submit to the district director for the internal revenue district in which the return was filed the information required by subparagraph (3) of this paragraph. For any taxable year for which the expense method or a different method is adopted pursuant to this subparagraph, an amended return reflecting such method shall be filed on or before January 2, 1958, if such return is necessary.

**§ 1.174-4 Treatment as deferred expenses.**

(a) *In general.* (1) If a taxpayer has not adopted the method provided in section 174(a) of treating research or experimental expenditures paid or incurred by him in connection with his trade or business as currently deductible expenses, he may, for any taxable year beginning after December 31, 1953, elect to treat such expenditures as deferred expenses under section 174(b), subject to the limitations of subparagraph (2) of this paragraph. If a taxpayer has adopted the method of treating such expenditures as expenses under section 174(a), he may not elect to defer and amortize any such expenditures unless permission to do so is granted under section 174(a)(3). See paragraph (b) of this section.

(2) The election to treat research or experimental expenditures as deferred expenses under section 174(b) applies only to those expenditures which are chargeable to capital account but which are not chargeable to property of a character subject to an allowance for depreciation or depletion under section 167 or 611, respectively. Thus, the election under section 174(b) applies only if the property resulting from the research or experimental expenditures has no determinable useful life. If the property resulting from the expenditures has a determinable useful life, section 174(b) is not applicable, and the capitalized expenditures must be amortized or depreciated over the determinable useful life. Amounts treated as deferred expenses are properly chargeable to capital account for purposes of section 1016(a)(1), relating to adjustments to basis of property. See section 1016(a)(14). See section 174(c) and paragraph (b)(1) of § 1.174-2 for treatment of expenditures for the acquisition or im-

provement of land or of depreciable or depletable property to be used in connection with the research or experimentation.

(3) Expenditures which are treated as deferred expenses under section 174(b) are allowable as a deduction ratably over a period of not less than 60 consecutive months beginning with the month in which the taxpayer first realizes benefits from the expenditures. The length of the period shall be selected by the taxpayer at the time he makes the election to defer the expenditures. If a taxpayer has two or more separate projects, he may select a different amortization period for each project. In the absence of a showing to the contrary, the taxpayer will be deemed to have begun to realize benefits from the deferred expenditures in the month in which the taxpayer first puts the process, formula, invention, or similar property to which the expenditures relate to an income-producing use. See section 1016(a)(14) for adjustments to basis of property for amounts allowed as deductions under section 174(b) and this section. See section 165 and the regulations thereunder for rules relating to the treatment of losses resulting from abandonment.

(4) If expenditures which the taxpayer has elected to defer and deduct ratably over a period of time in accordance with section 174(b) result in the development of depreciable property, deductions for the unrecovered expenditures, beginning with the time the asset becomes depreciable in character, shall be determined under section 167 (relating to depreciation) and the regulations thereunder. For example, for the taxable year 1954, A, who reports his income on the basis of a calendar year, elects to defer and deduct ratably over a period of 60 months research and experimental expenditures made in connection with a particular project. In 1956, the total of the deferred expenditures amounts to \$60,000. At that time, A has developed a process which he seeks to patent. On July 1, 1956, A first realized benefits from the marketing of products resulting from this process. Therefore, the expenditures deferred are deductible ratably over the 60-month period beginning with