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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Internal Revenue Service

26 CFR Part 1

TD 9307

RIN 1545-BC18

Changes in Computing Depreciation

AGENCY: Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Treasury.

ACTION: Final and temporary regulations.

SUMMARY: This document contains regulations relating to a change in computing depreciation or amortization as well as a change from a nondepreciable or nonamortizable asset to a depreciable or amortizable asset (or vice versa). Specifically, these regulations provide guidance to any taxpayer that makes a change in depreciation or amortization on whether such a change is a change in method of accounting under section 446(e) of the Internal Revenue Code and on the application of section 1016(a)(2) in determining whether the change is a change in method of accounting.

DATES: Effective Date. These regulations are effective December 28, 2006.

Applicability Dates. For dates of applicability, see §§1.167(e)-1(e), 1.446-1(e)(4), and 1.1016-3(j).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Douglas H. Kim, (202) 622-3110 (not a toll-free number).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

**Background**

This document contains amendments to 26 CFR part 1. On January 2, 2004, the IRS and Treasury Department published temporary regulations (TD 9105) in the **Federal Register** (69 FR 5) relating to the application of section 446(e) of the Internal Revenue Code (Code) and §1.167(e)-1 to a change in depreciation or amortization and the application of section 1016(a)(2) in determining whether a change in depreciation or amortization is a change in method of accounting. On the same date, the IRS published a notice of proposed rulemaking (REG-126459-03) cross-referencing the temporary regulations in the **Federal Register** (69 FR 42). No public hearing was requested or held. Several comments responding to the notice of proposed rulemaking were received. After consideration of all the comments, the proposed regulations are adopted as amended by this Treasury decision, and the corresponding temporary regulations are removed. The revisions are discussed here in this preamble.

Section 1400N(d), which was added to the Code by section 101(a) of the Gulf Opportunity Zone Act of 2005, Public Law 109-135 (119 Stat. 2577), generally allows a 50-percent additional first year depreciation deduction for qualified Gulf Opportunity Zone property. The final regulations reflect the enactment of section 1400N(d).

## **Explanation of Provisions**

### Scope

The final regulations provide the changes in depreciation or amortization (depreciation) for property for which depreciation is determined under section 167, 168, 197, 1400I, 1400L(b), 1400L(c), or 1400N(d), or former section 168, of the Code that are, and those changes that are not, changes in method of accounting under section 446(e). The final regulations also clarify that the rules in §1.167(e)-1 with respect to a

change in the depreciation method made without the consent of the Commissioner apply only to property for which depreciation is determined under section 167 (other than under section 168, 1400I, 1400L, or 1400N(d), or former section 168).

Additionally, the final regulations provide that section 1016(a)(2) does not permanently affect a taxpayer's lifetime income for purposes of determining whether a change in depreciation is a change in method of accounting under section 446(e) and §1.446-1(e).

#### I. Changes in Depreciation Method under Section 167

The final regulations retain the rules contained in the temporary regulations providing that the rules in §1.167(e)-1 with respect to a change in depreciation method under §1.167(e)-1(b), (c), and (d) made without the consent of the Commissioner apply only to property for which depreciation is determined under section 167 (other than under section 168, 1400I, 1400L, or 1400N(d), or former section 168). No comments were received suggesting changes to these rules.

#### II. Changes in Depreciation That Are, and Are Not, a Change in Method of Accounting Under Section 446(e)

The final regulations provide rules on the changes in depreciation that are, and are not, a change in method of accounting under section 446(e).

##### A. Changes in Depreciation That Are Changes in Method of Accounting

The final regulations retain the rules contained in the temporary regulations providing the changes in depreciation that are a change in method of accounting under section 446(e). These changes are a change in the treatment of an asset from nondepreciable or nonamortizable to depreciable or amortizable, or vice versa.

Additionally, a correction to require depreciation in lieu of a deduction for the cost of depreciable or amortizable assets that had been consistently treated as an expense in

the year of purchase, or vice versa, is a change in method of accounting. Further, changes in computing depreciation generally are a change in method of accounting, including a change in the depreciation method, period of recovery, or convention of a depreciable or amortizable asset, and a change to or from claiming the additional first year depreciation deduction provided by section 168(k), 1400L(b), or 1400N(d) under certain circumstances.

No comments were received suggesting changes to these rules. However, a commentator inquired whether a calendar-year taxpayer that has not claimed the 30-percent additional first year depreciation for qualified property acquired after September 10, 2001, and placed in service prior to January 1, 2002, may claim the 30-percent additional first year depreciation by requesting a change in method of accounting. To claim the 30-percent additional first year depreciation for this property, Rev. Proc. 2003-50 (2003-2 C.B. 119) provides that the taxpayer had to file an amended return on or before December 31, 2003, or file a Form 3115, "Application for Change in Accounting Method," with the taxpayer's timely filed 2003 Federal tax return. If the taxpayer did not file this amended return or Form 3115, the taxpayer has made the deemed election not to deduct the additional first year depreciation for the 2001 taxable year. Accordingly, the taxpayer's change to claiming the 30-percent additional first year depreciation for qualified property placed in service in the taxable year that included September 11, 2001, is not a change in method of accounting under the temporary and final regulations. Instead, the taxpayer must file a request for a letter ruling to revoke the election.

Another commentator questioned whether the temporary regulations affected the

procedures for obtaining consent to make a change in method of accounting. The regulations did not change these procedures and, accordingly, the rules in §1.446-1(e)(3) apply to a change in depreciation that is a change in method of accounting. Other commentators inquired whether a change in depreciation due to a posting or mathematical error, or a change in underlying facts, is a change in method of accounting. A change in depreciation due to a posting or mathematical error, or a change in underlying facts, is not a change in method of accounting because the rules in §1.446-1(e)(2)(ii)(a) and (b) also apply to a change in depreciation. Accordingly, the final regulations clarify this point.

#### **B. Changes in Depreciation That Are Not Changes in Method of Accounting**

The final regulations retain the rule contained in the temporary regulations that a change in method of accounting does not include an adjustment in the useful life of a depreciable or amortizable asset for which depreciation is determined under section 167 (other than under section 168, 1400I, 1400L, or 1400N(d), or former section 168). This rule does not apply, however, if a taxpayer is changing to or from a useful life (or recovery period or amortization period) that is specifically assigned by the Code, the regulations under the Code, or other guidance published in the Internal Revenue Bulletin. Several commentators questioned whether the useful life exception from change in method of accounting treatment that was in effect before the issuance of the temporary regulations has any remaining application. Section 1.446-1(e)(2)(ii)(b), as in effect before the issuance of the temporary regulations (see §1.446-1(e) as contained in 26 CFR part 1 edition revised as of April 1, 2003), provided that a change in the method of accounting does not include an adjustment in the useful life of a depreciable asset.

The rule still applies but is limited by the temporary and final regulations to only a depreciable or amortizable asset for which depreciation is determined under section 167 (other than under section 168, 1400I, 1400L, or 1400N(d), or former section 168) and to only an adjustment in useful life that is not specifically assigned by the Code, the regulations under the Code, or other guidance published in the Internal Revenue Bulletin.

The final regulations also retain the rules contained in the temporary regulations of when an adjustment in useful life that is not a change in method of accounting is implemented. The final regulations clarify that these rules apply regardless of whether the adjustment in useful life is initiated by the IRS or a taxpayer. Furthermore, the final regulations clarify that in implementing a n adjustment in useful life that is not a change in method of accounting, no section 481 adjustment is required or permitted.

The final regulations retain the rule contained in the temporary regulations providing that the making of a late depreciation election or the revocation of a timely valid depreciation election is not a change in method of accounting, except as otherwise provided by the Code, the regulations under the Code, or other guidance published in the Internal Revenue Bulletin. A commentator inquired whether a late section 179 election may be made by requesting a change in method of accounting. Under section 179 and the regulations under section 179, a late section 179 election generally is made by submitting a request for a letter ruling. However, for a taxable year beginning after 2002 and before 2010, a taxpayer may make a section 179 election by filing an amended return. Accordingly, the IRS and Treasury Department have included a cross-reference to section 179(c) and §1.179-5.

The final regulations retain the rule contained in the temporary regulations providing that any change in the placed-in-service date of a depreciable or amortizable asset is not treated as a change in method of accounting. The final regulations, however, clarify that this rule does not apply when the Code, the regulations under the Code, or other guidance published in the Internal Revenue Bulletin, provide that a change in placed-in-service date is treated as a change in method of accounting. A commentator requested that the final regulations clarify what constitutes a change in placed-in-service date. To illustrate the rule, the IRS and Treasury Department provided additional clarification in the final regulations. For example, the final regulations provide that if a taxpayer changes the placed-in-service date of a depreciable or amortizable asset because the taxpayer incorrectly determined the date on which the asset was placed in service, this change is not a change in method of accounting. However, if a taxpayer incorrectly determines that a depreciable or amortizable asset is nondepreciable property and later changes the treatment of the asset to depreciable property, this change is not a change in the placed-in-service date of the asset but is a change from nondepreciable to depreciable property and, therefore, the change is a change in method of accounting. The final regulations also clarify that a change in the convention of a depreciable or amortizable asset is not a change in the placed-in-service date of the asset and, therefore, is a change in method of accounting. Additionally, the final regulations provide examples illustrating what constitutes a change in placed-in-service date.

The final regulations retain the rules contained in the temporary regulations as to how and when a change in placed-in-service date that is not a change in method of

accounting is implemented. The final regulations also clarify that these rules apply regardless of whether the change in placed-in-service date is made by the IRS or a taxpayer. Finally, the final regulations provide that in implementing a change in placed-in-service date that is not a change in method of accounting, no section 481 adjustment is required or permitted.

#### C. Item Being Changed

The final regulations retain the rule contained in the temporary regulations providing that for purposes of a change in depreciation, the item being changed is the depreciation treatment of each individual depreciable or amortizable asset or the depreciation treatment of each vintage account with respect to a depreciable asset for which depreciation is determined under §1.167(a)-11 (CLADR). Because general asset accounts and mass asset accounts are similar to vintage accounts, the final regulations clarify that the item is the depreciable treatment of each general asset account with respect to a depreciable asset for which general asset account treatment has been elected under section 168(i)(4) or the item is the depreciation treatment of each mass asset account with respect to a depreciable asset for which mass asset account treatment has been elected under former section 168(d)(2)(A). The final regulations also retain the rule contained in the temporary regulations providing that a change in depreciation under section 167 (other than under section 168, 1400I, 1400L, or 1400N(d), or former section 168) is permitted only with respect to all assets in a particular account (as defined in §1.167(a)-7) or vintage account.

#### D. Effective Dates

Several commentators questioned the application of the effective date of the



temporary regulations. In response, the IRS, in Chief Counsel Notice 2004-007 (CC-2004-007, January 28, 2004) and Chief Counsel Notice 2004-024 (CC-2004-024, July 12, 2004) (see [www.irs.gov/foia](http://www.irs.gov/foia)), clarified that the temporary regulations apply to property placed in service in a taxable year ending on or after December 30, 2003. In accordance with this clarification, the final regulations apply only to a change in depreciation made by a taxpayer for a depreciable or amortizable asset placed in service by the taxpayer in a taxable year ending on or after December 30, 2003, regardless of whether or not the change in depreciation is a change in method of accounting. Additionally, the examples in the final regulations relating to a change in depreciation have been revised to reflect this effective date.

### III. Application of Section 1016(a)(2) to a Change in Method of Accounting

The final regulations contain the same rule as the temporary regulations, providing that section 1016(a)(2) does not permanently affect a taxpayer's lifetime income for purposes of determining whether a change in depreciation for property subject to section 167, 168, 1400I, 1400L, or 1400N(d), or former section 168, is a change in method of accounting under section 446(e) and the regulations under section 446(e). No comments were received suggesting changes to this rule.

### **Special Analyses**

It has been determined that this Treasury decision is not a significant regulatory action as defined in Executive Order 12866. Therefore, a regulatory assessment is not required. It has also been determined that section 553(b) of the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. chapter 5) does not apply to these regulations and, because these regulations do not impose on small entities a collection of information

requirement, the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. chapter 6) does not apply. Therefore, a Regulatory Flexibility Analysis is not required. Pursuant to section 7805(f) of the Code, the notice of proposed rulemaking was submitted to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration for comment on its impact on small business.

### **Drafting Information**

The principal author of these regulations is Douglas H. Kim, Office of Associate Chief Counsel (Passthroughs and Special Industries). However, other personnel from the IRS and Treasury Department participated in their development.

### **List of Subjects in 26 CFR Part 1**

Income taxes, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

### **Adoption of Amendments to the Regulations**

Accordingly, 26 CFR part 1 is amended as follows:

#### **PART 1--INCOME TAXES**

Paragraph 1. The authority citation for part 1 continues to read in part as follows:

Authority: 26 U.S.C. 7805 \* \* \*

Par. 2. Section 1.167(e)-1 is amended by revising paragraphs (a) and (e) to read as follows:

#### **§1.167(e)-1 Change in method.**

(a) In general. (1) Any change in the method of computing the depreciation allowances with respect to a particular account (other than a change in method permitted or required by reason of the operation of former section 167(j)(2) and §1.167(j)-3(c)) is a change in method of accounting, and such a change will be

permitted only with the consent of the Commissioner, except that certain changes to the straight line method of depreciation will be permitted without consent as provided in former section 167(e)(1), (2), and (3). Except as provided in paragraphs (c) and (d) of this section, a change in method of computing depreciation will be permitted only with respect to all the assets contained in a particular account as defined in §1.167(a)-7. Any change in the percentage of the current straight line rate under the declining balance method, for example, from 200 percent of the straight line rate to any other percent of the straight line rate, or any change in the interest factor used in connection with a compound interest or sinking fund method, will constitute a change in method of depreciation. Any request for a change in method of depreciation shall be made in accordance with section 446(e) and the regulations under section 446(e). For rules covering the use of depreciation methods by acquiring corporations in the case of certain corporate acquisitions, see section 381(c)(6) and the regulations under section 381(c)(6).

(2) Paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section apply to property for which depreciation is determined under section 167 (other than under section 168, section 1400I, section 1400L(c), under section 168 prior to its amendment by the Tax Reform Act of 1986 (100 Stat. 2121), or under an additional first year depreciation deduction provision (for example, section 168(k), 1400L(b), or 1400N(d))) of the Internal Revenue Code.

\* \* \* \* \*

(e) Effective date. This section applies on or after December 30, 2003. For the applicability of regulations before December 30, 2003, see §1.167(e)-1 in effect prior to

December 30, 2003 (§1.167(e)-1 as contained in 26 CFR part 1 edition revised as of April 1, 2003).

**§1.167(e)-1T [Removed]**

Par. 3. Section 1.167(e)-1T is removed.

Par. 4. Section 1.168(i)-4 is amended as follows:

1. Paragraph (f) is amended by removing the language “§1.446-1T(e)(2)(ii)(d)(3)(ii)” at the end of the paragraph and adding “§1.446-1(e)(2)(ii)(d)(3)(ii)” in its place.

2. Paragraph (g)(2)(ii) is amended by removing the language “as modified by Rev. Proc. 2004-11 (2004-3 I.R.B. 311).”

Par. 5. Section 1.168(i)-6T is amended as follows:

1. Paragraph (k)(2)(i) is amended by removing the language “§1.446-1T(e)(3)(ii)” and adding “§1.446-1(e)(3)(ii)” in its place.

2. The last sentence in paragraph (k)(2)(ii) is amended by removing the language “§1.446-1T(e)(3)(ii)” and adding “§1.446-1(e)(3)(ii)” in its place.

Par. 6. Section 1.446-1 is amended by revising paragraphs (e)(2)(ii)(a), (e)(2)(ii)(b), (e)(2)(ii)(d), (e)(2)(iii), and (e)(4) to read as follows:

§1.446-1 General rule for methods of accounting.

\* \* \* \* \*

(e) \* \* \*

(2) \* \* \*

(ii) (a) A change in the method of accounting includes a change in the overall plan of accounting for gross income or deductions or a change in the treatment of any

material item used in such overall plan. Although a method of accounting may exist under this definition without the necessity of a pattern of consistent treatment of an item, in most instances a method of accounting is not established for an item without such consistent treatment. A material item is any item that involves the proper time for the inclusion of the item in income or the taking of a deduction. Changes in method of accounting include a change from the cash receipts and disbursement method to an accrual method, or vice versa, a change involving the method or basis used in the valuation of inventories (see sections 471 and 472 and the regulations under sections 471 and 472), a change from the cash or accrual method to a long-term contract method, or vice versa (see §1.460-4), certain changes in computing depreciation or amortization (see paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d) of this section), a change involving the adoption, use or discontinuance of any other specialized method of computing taxable income, such as the crop method, and a change where the Internal Revenue Code and regulations under the Internal Revenue Code specifically require that the consent of the Commissioner must be obtained before adopting such a change.

(b) A change in method of accounting does not include correction of mathematical or posting errors, or errors in the computation of tax liability (such as errors in computation of the foreign tax credit, net operating loss, percentage depletion, or investment credit). Also, a change in method of accounting does not include adjustment of any item of income or deduction that does not involve the proper time for the inclusion of the item of income or the taking of a deduction. For example, corrections of items that are deducted as interest or salary, but that are in fact payments of dividends, and of items that are deducted as business expenses, but that are in fact

personal expenses, are not changes in method of accounting. In addition, a change in the method of accounting does not include an adjustment with respect to the addition to a reserve for bad debts. Although such adjustment may involve the question of the proper time for the taking of a deduction, such items are traditionally corrected by adjustment in the current and future years. For the treatment of the adjustment of the addition to a bad debt reserve (for example, for banks under section 585 of the Internal Revenue Code), see the regulations under section 166 of the Internal Revenue Code. A change in the method of accounting also does not include a change in treatment resulting from a change in underlying facts. For further guidance on changes involving depreciable or amortizable assets, see paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d) of this section and §1.1016-3(h).

\* \* \* \* \*

(d) Changes involving depreciable or amortizable assets--(1) Scope. This paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d) applies to property subject to section 167, 168, 197, 1400I, 1400L(c), to section 168 prior to its amendment by the Tax Reform Act of 1986 (100 Stat. 2121) (former section 168), or to an additional first year depreciation deduction provision of the Internal Revenue Code (for example, section 168(k), 1400L(b), or 1400N(d)).

(2) Changes in depreciation or amortization that are a change in method of accounting. Except as provided in paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(3) of this section, a change in the treatment of an asset from nondepreciable or nonamortizable to depreciable or amortizable, or vice versa, is a change in method of accounting. Additionally, a correction to require depreciation or amortization in lieu of a deduction for the cost of

depreciable or amortizable assets that had been consistently treated as an expense in the year of purchase, or vice versa, is a change in method of accounting. Further, except as provided in paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(3) of this section, the following changes in computing depreciation or amortization are a change in method of accounting:

(i) A change in the depreciation or amortization method, period of recovery, or convention of a depreciable or amortizable asset.

(ii) A change from not claiming to claiming the additional first year depreciation deduction provided by, for example, section 168(k), 1400L(b), or 1400N(d), for, and the resulting change to the amount otherwise allowable as a depreciation deduction for the remaining adjusted depreciable basis (or similar basis) of, depreciable property that qualifies for the additional first year depreciation deduction (for example, qualified property, 50-percent bonus depreciation property, qualified New York Liberty Zone property, or qualified Gulf Opportunity Zone property), provided the taxpayer did not make the election out of the additional first year depreciation deduction (or did not make a deemed election out of the additional first year depreciation deduction; for further guidance, for example, see Rev. Proc. 2002-33 (2002-1 C.B. 963), Rev. Proc. 2003-50 (2003-2 C.B. 119), Notice 2006-77 (2006-40 I.R.B. 590), and §601.601(d)(2)(ii)(b) of this chapter) for the class of property in which the depreciable property that qualifies for the additional first year depreciation deduction (for example, qualified property, 50-percent bonus depreciation property, qualified New York Liberty Zone property, or qualified Gulf Opportunity Zone property) is included.

(iii) A change from claiming the 30-percent additional first year depreciation deduction to claiming the 50-percent additional first year depreciation deduction for

depreciable property that qualifies for the 50-percent additional first year depreciation deduction, provided the property is not included in any class of property for which the taxpayer elected the 30-percent, instead of the 50-percent, additional first year depreciation deduction (for example, 50-percent bonus depreciation property or qualified Gulf Opportunity Zone property) , or a change from claiming the 50-percent additional first year depreciation deduction to claiming the 30-percent additional first year depreciation deduction for depreciable property that qualifies for the 30-percent additional first year depreciation deduction, including property that is included in a class of property for which the taxpayer elected the 30-percent, instead of the 50-percent, additional first year depreciation deduction (for example, qualified property or qualified New York Liberty Zone property), and the resulting change to the amount otherwise allowable as a depreciation deduction for the property's remaining adjusted depreciable basis (or similar basis). This paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(2)(iii) does not apply if a taxpayer is making a late election or revoking a timely valid election under the applicable additional first year depreciation deduction provision of the Internal Revenue Code (for example, section 168(k), 1400L(b), or 1400N(d)) (see paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(3)(iii) of this section).

(iv) A change from claiming to not claiming the additional first year depreciation deduction for an asset that does not qualify for the additional first year depreciation deduction, including an asset that is included in a class of property for which the taxpayer elected not to claim any additional first year depreciation deduction (for example, an asset that is not qualified property, 50-percent bonus depreciation property, qualified New York Liberty Zone property, or qualified Gulf Opportunity Zone property), and the resulting change to the amount otherwise allowable as a depreciation deduction



for the property's depreciable basis.

(v) A change in salvage value to zero for a depreciable or amortizable asset for which the salvage value is expressly treated as zero by the Internal Revenue Code (for example, section 168(b)(4)), the regulations under the Internal Revenue Code (for example, §1.197-2(f)(1)(ii)), or other guidance published in the Internal Revenue Bulletin.

(vi) A change in the accounting for depreciable or amortizable assets from a single asset account to a multiple asset account (pooling), or vice versa, or from one type of multiple asset account (pooling) to a different type of multiple asset account (pooling).

(vii) For depreciable or amortizable assets that are mass assets accounted for in multiple asset accounts or pools, a change in the method of identifying which assets have been disposed. For purposes of this paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(2)(vii), the term mass assets means a mass or group of individual items of depreciable or amortizable assets that are not necessarily homogeneous, each of which is minor in value relative to the total value of the mass or group, numerous in quantity, usually accounted for only on a total dollar or quantity basis, with respect to which separate identification is impracticable, and placed in service in the same taxable year.

(viii) Any other change in depreciation or amortization as the Secretary may designate by publication in the **Federal Register** or in the Internal Revenue Bulletin (see §601.601(d)(2) of this chapter).

(3) Changes in depreciation or amortization that are not a change in method of accounting. Section 1.446-1(e)(2)(ii)(b) applies to determine whether a change in

depreciation or amortization is not a change in method of accounting. Further, the following changes in depreciation or amortization are not a change in method of accounting:

(i) Useful life. An adjustment in the useful life of a depreciable or amortizable asset for which depreciation is determined under section 167 (other than under section 168, section 1400I, section 1400L(c), former section 168, or an additional first year depreciation deduction provision of the Internal Revenue Code (for example, section 168(k), 1400L(b), or 1400N(d))) is not a change in method of accounting. This paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(3)(i) does not apply if a taxpayer is changing to or from a useful life (or recovery period or amortization period) that is specifically assigned by the Internal Revenue Code (for example, section 167(f)(1), section 168(c), section 168(g)(2) or (3), section 197), the regulations under the Internal Revenue Code, or other guidance published in the Internal Revenue Bulletin and, therefore, such change is a change in method of accounting (unless paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(3)(v) of this section applies). See paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(5)(iv) of this section for determining the taxable year in which to correct an adjustment in useful life that is not a change in method of accounting.

(ii) Change in use. A change in computing depreciation or amortization allowances in the taxable year in which the use of an asset changes in the hands of the same taxpayer is not a change in method of accounting.

(iii) Elections. Generally, the making of a late depreciation or amortization election or the revocation of a timely valid depreciation or amortization election is not a change in method of accounting, except as otherwise expressly provided by the Internal Revenue Code, the regulations under the Internal Revenue Code, or other guidance

published in the Internal Revenue Bulletin. This paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(3)(iii) also applies to making a late election or revoking a timely valid election made under section 13261(g)(2) or (3) of the Revenue Reconciliation Act of 1993 (107 Stat. 312, 540) (relating to amortizable section 197 intangibles). A taxpayer may request consent to make a late election or revoke a timely valid election by submitting a request for a private letter ruling. For making or revoking an election under section 179 of the Internal Revenue Code, see section 179(c) and §1.179-5.

(iv) Salvage value. Except as provided under paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(2)(v) of this section, a change in salvage value of a depreciable or amortizable asset is not treated as a change in method of accounting.

(v) Placed-in-service date. Except as otherwise expressly provided by the Internal Revenue Code, the regulations under the Internal Revenue Code, or other guidance published in the Internal Revenue Bulletin, any change in the placed-in-service date of a depreciable or amortizable asset is not treated as a change in method of accounting. For example, if a taxpayer changes the placed-in-service date of a depreciable or amortizable asset because the taxpayer incorrectly determined the date on which the asset was placed in service, such a change is a change in the placed-in-service date of the asset and, therefore, is not a change in method of accounting. However, if a taxpayer incorrectly determines that a depreciable or amortizable asset is nondepreciable property and later changes the treatment of the asset to depreciable property, such a change is not a change in the placed-in-service date of the asset and, therefore, is a change in method of accounting under paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(2) of this section. Further, a change in the convention of a depreciable or amortizable asset is

not a change in the placed-in-service date of the asset and, therefore, is a change in method of accounting under paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(2)(i) of this section. See paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(5)(v) of this section for determining the taxable year in which to make a change in the placed-in-service date of a depreciable or amortizable asset that is not a change in method of accounting.

(vi) Any other change in depreciation or amortization as the Secretary may designate by publication in the **Federal Register** or in the Internal Revenue Bulletin (see §601.601(d)(2) of this chapter).

(4) Item being changed. For purposes of a change in depreciation or amortization to which this paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d) applies, the item being changed generally is the depreciation treatment of each individual depreciable or amortizable asset. However, the item is the depreciation treatment of each vintage account with respect to a depreciable asset for which depreciation is determined under §1.167(a)-11 (class life asset depreciation range (CLADR) property). Similarly, the item is the depreciable treatment of each general asset account with respect to a depreciable asset for which general asset account treatment has been elected under section 168(i)(4) or the item is the depreciation treatment of each mass asset account with respect to a depreciable asset for which mass asset account treatment has been elected under former section 168(d)(2)(A). Further, a change in computing depreciation or amortization under section 167 (other than under section 168, section 1400I, section 1400L(c), former section 168, or an additional first year depreciation deduction provision of the Internal Revenue Code (for example, section 168(k), 1400L(b), or 1400N(d))) is permitted only with respect to all assets in a particular account (as defined in §1.167(a)-

7) or vintage account.

(5) Special rules. For purposes of a change in depreciation or amortization to which this paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d) applies--

(i) Declining balance method to the straight line method for MACRS property.

For tangible, depreciable property subject to section 168 (MACRS property) that is depreciated using the 200-percent or 150-percent declining balance method of depreciation under section 168(b)(1) or (2), a taxpayer may change without the consent of the Commissioner from the declining balance method of depreciation to the straight line method of depreciation in the first taxable year in which the use of the straight line method with respect to the adjusted depreciable basis of the MACRS property as of the beginning of that year will yield a depreciation allowance that is greater than the depreciation allowance yielded by the use of the declining balance method. When the change is made, the adjusted depreciable basis of the MACRS property as of the beginning of the taxable year is recovered through annual depreciation allowances over the remaining recovery period (for further guidance, see section 6.06 of Rev. Proc. 87-57 (1987-2 C.B. 687) and §601.601(d)(2)(ii)(b) of this chapter).

(ii) Depreciation method changes for section 167 property. For a depreciable or amortizable asset for which depreciation is determined under section 167 (other than under section 168, section 1400I, section 1400L(c), former section 168, or an additional first year depreciation deduction provision of the Internal Revenue Code (for example, section 168(k), 1400L(b), or 1400N(d))), see §1.167(e)-1(b), (c), and (d) for the changes in depreciation method that are permitted to be made without the consent of the Commissioner. For CLADR property, see §1.167(a)-11(c)(1)(iii) for the changes in

depreciation method for CLADR property that are permitted to be made without the consent of the Commissioner. Further, see §1.167(a)-11(b)(4)(iii)(c) for how to correct an incorrect classification or characterization of CLADR property.

(iii) Section 481 adjustment. Except as otherwise expressly provided by the Internal Revenue Code, the regulations under the Internal Revenue Code, or other guidance published in the Internal Revenue Bulletin, no section 481 adjustment is required or permitted for a change from one permissible method of computing depreciation or amortization to another permissible method of computing depreciation or amortization for an asset because this change is implemented by either a cut-off method (for further guidance, for example, see section 2.06 of Rev. Proc. 97-27 (1997-1 C.B. 680), section 2.06 of Rev. Proc. 2002-9 (2002-1 C.B. 327), and §601.601(d)(2)(ii)(b) of this chapter) or a modified cut-off method (under which the adjusted depreciable basis of the asset as of the beginning of the year of change is recovered using the new permissible method of accounting), as appropriate. However, a change from an impermissible method of computing depreciation or amortization to a permissible method of computing depreciation or amortization for an asset results in a section 481 adjustment. Similarly, a change in the treatment of an asset from nondepreciable or nonamortizable to depreciable or amortizable (or vice versa) or a change in the treatment of an asset from expensing to depreciating (or vice versa) results in a section 481 adjustment.

(iv) Change in useful life. This paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(5)(iv) applies to an adjustment in the useful life of a depreciable or amortizable asset for which depreciation is determined under section 167 (other than under section 168, section 1400l, section

1400L(c), former section 168, or an additional first year depreciation deduction provision of the Internal Revenue Code (for example, section 168(k), 1400L(b), or 1400N(d))) and that is not a change in method of accounting under paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d) of this section. For this adjustment in useful life, no section 481 adjustment is required or permitted. The adjustment in useful life, whether initiated by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or a taxpayer, is corrected by adjustments in the taxable year in which the conditions known to exist at the end of that taxable year changed thereby resulting in a redetermination of the useful life under §1.167(a)-1(b) (or if the period of limitation for assessment under section 6501(a) has expired for that taxable year, in the first succeeding taxable year open under the period of limitation for assessment), and in subsequent taxable years. In other situations (for example, the useful life is incorrectly determined in the placed-in-service year), the adjustment in the useful life, whether initiated by the IRS or a taxpayer, may be corrected by adjustments in the earliest taxable year open under the period of limitation for assessment under section 6501(a) or the earliest taxable year under examination by the IRS but in no event earlier than the placed-in-service year of the asset, and in subsequent taxable years. However, if a taxpayer initiates the correction in useful life, in lieu of filing amended Federal tax returns (for example, because the conditions known to exist at the end of a prior taxable year changed thereby resulting in a redetermination of the useful life under §1.167(a)-1(b)), the taxpayer may correct the adjustment in useful life by adjustments in the current and subsequent taxable years.

(v) Change in placed-in-service date. This paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(5)(v) applies to a change in the placed-in-service date of a depreciable or amortizable asset that is not

a change in method of accounting under paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d) of this section. For this change in placed-in-service date, no section 481 adjustment is required or permitted. The change in placed-in-service date, whether initiated by the IRS or a taxpayer, may be corrected by adjustments in the earliest taxable year open under the period of limitation for assessment under section 6501(a) or the earliest taxable year under examination by the IRS but in no event earlier than the placed-in-service year of the asset, and in subsequent taxable years. However, if a taxpayer initiates the change in placed-in-service date, in lieu of filing amended Federal tax returns, the taxpayer may correct the placed-in-service date by adjustments in the current and subsequent taxable years.

(iii) Examples. The rules of this paragraph (e) are illustrated by the following examples:

Example 1. Although the sale of merchandise is an income producing factor, and therefore inventories are required, a taxpayer in the retail jewelry business reports his income on the cash receipts and disbursements method of accounting. A change from the cash receipts and disbursements method of accounting to the accrual method of accounting is a change in the overall plan of accounting and thus is a change in method of accounting.

Example 2. A taxpayer in the wholesale dry goods business computes its income and expenses on the accrual method of accounting and files its Federal income tax returns on such basis except for real estate taxes which have been reported on the cash receipts and disbursements method of accounting. A change in the treatment of real estate taxes from the cash receipts and disbursements method to the accrual method is a change in method of accounting because such change is a change in the treatment of a material item within his overall accounting practice.

Example 3. A taxpayer in the wholesale dry goods business computes its income and expenses on the accrual method of accounting and files its Federal income tax returns on such basis. Vacation pay has been deducted in the year in which paid because the taxpayer did not have a completely vested vacation pay plan, and, therefore, the liability for payment did not accrue until that year. Subsequently, the taxpayer adopts a completely vested vacation pay plan that changes its year for accruing the deduction from the year in which payment is made to the year in which the



liability to make the payment now arises. The change for the year of deduction of the vacation pay plan is not a change in method of accounting but results, instead, because the underlying facts (that is, the type of vacation pay plan) have changed.

Example 4. From 1968 through 1970, a taxpayer has fairly allocated indirect overhead costs to the value of inventories on a fixed percentage of direct costs. If the ratio of indirect overhead costs to direct costs increases in 1971, a change in the underlying facts has occurred. Accordingly, an increase in the percentage in 1971 to fairly reflect the increase in the relative level of indirect overhead costs is not a change in method of accounting but is a change in treatment resulting from a change in the underlying facts.

Example 5. A taxpayer values inventories at cost. A change in the basis for valuation of inventories from cost to the lower of cost or market is a change in an overall practice of valuing items in inventory. The change, therefore, is a change in method of accounting for inventories.

Example 6. A taxpayer in the manufacturing business has for many taxable years valued its inventories at cost. However, cost has been improperly computed since no overhead costs have been included in valuing the inventories at cost. The failure to allocate an appropriate portion of overhead to the value of inventories is contrary to the requirement of the Internal Revenue Code and the regulations under the Internal Revenue Code. A change requiring appropriate allocation of overhead is a change in method of accounting because it involves a change in the treatment of a material item used in the overall practice of identifying or valuing items in inventory.

Example 7. A taxpayer has for many taxable years valued certain inventories by a method which provides for deducting 20 percent of the cost of the inventory items in determining the final inventory valuation. The 20 percent adjustment is taken as a "reserve for price changes." Although this method is not a proper method of valuing inventories under the Internal Revenue Code or the regulations under the Internal Revenue Code, it involves the treatment of a material item used in the overall practice of valuing inventory. A change in such practice or procedure is a change of method of accounting for inventories.

Example 8. A taxpayer has always used a base stock system of accounting for inventories. Under this system a constant price is applied to an assumed constant normal quantity of goods in stock. The base stock system is an overall plan of accounting for inventories which is not recognized as a proper method of accounting for inventories under the regulations. A change in this practice is, nevertheless, a change of method of accounting for inventories.

Example 9. In 2003, A1, a calendar year taxpayer engaged in the trade or business of manufacturing knitted goods, purchased and placed in service a building and its components at a total cost of \$10,000,000 for use in its manufacturing operations. A1 classified the \$10,000,000 as nonresidential real property under section

168(e). A1 elected not to deduct the additional first year depreciation provided by section 168(k) on its 2003 Federal tax return. As a result, on its 2003, 2004, and 2005 Federal tax returns, A1 depreciated the \$10,000,000 under the general depreciation system of section 168(a), using the straight line method of depreciation, a 39-year recovery period, and the mid-month convention. In 2006, A1 completes a cost segregation study on the building and its components and identifies items that cost a total of \$1,500,000 as section 1245 property. As a result, the \$1,500,000 should have been classified in 2003 as 5-year property under section 168(e) and depreciated on A1's 2003, 2004, and 2005 Federal tax returns under the general depreciation system, using the 200-percent declining balance method of depreciation, a 5-year recovery period, and the half-year convention. Pursuant to paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(2)(i) of this section, A1's change to this depreciation method, recovery period, and convention is a change in method of accounting. This method change results in a section 481 adjustment. The useful life exception under paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(3)(i) of this section does not apply because the assets are depreciated under section 168.

Example 10. In 2003, B, a calendar year taxpayer, purchased and placed in service new equipment at a total cost of \$1,000,000 for use in its plant located outside the United States. The equipment is 15-year property under section 168(e) with a class life of 20 years. The equipment is required to be depreciated under the alternative depreciation system of section 168(g). However, B incorrectly depreciated the equipment under the general depreciation system of section 168(a), using the 150-percent declining balance method, a 15-year recovery period, and the half-year convention. In 2010, the IRS examines B's 2007 Federal income tax return and changes the depreciation of the equipment to the alternative depreciation system, using the straight line method of depreciation, a 20-year recovery period, and the half-year convention. Pursuant to paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(2)(i) of this section, this change in depreciation method and recovery period made by the IRS is a change in method of accounting. This method change results in a section 481 adjustment. The useful life exception under paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(3)(i) of this section does not apply because the assets are depreciated under section 168.

Example 11. In May 2003, C, a calendar year taxpayer, purchased and placed in service equipment for use in its trade or business. C never held this equipment for sale. However, C incorrectly treated the equipment as inventory on its 2003 and 2004 Federal tax returns. In 2005, C realizes that the equipment should have been treated as a depreciable asset. Pursuant to paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(2) of this section, C's change in the treatment of the equipment from inventory to a depreciable asset is a change in method of accounting. This method change results in a section 481 adjustment.

Example 12. Since 2003, D, a calendar year taxpayer, has used the distribution fee period method to amortize distributor commissions and, under that method, established pools to account for the distributor commissions (for further guidance, see Rev. Proc. 2000-38 (2000-2 C.B. 310) and §601.601(d)(2)(ii)(b) of this chapter). A change in the accounting of distributor commissions under the distribution fee period

method from pooling to single asset accounting is a change in method of accounting pursuant to paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(2)(vi) of this section. This method change results in no section 481 adjustment because the change is from one permissible method to another permissible method.

Example 13. Since 2003, E, a calendar year taxpayer, has accounted for items of MACRS property that are mass assets in pools. Each pool includes only the mass assets that are placed in service by E in the same taxable year. E is able to identify the cost basis of each asset in each pool. None of the pools are general asset accounts under section 168(i)(4) and the regulations under section 168(i)(4). E identified any dispositions of these mass assets by specific identification. Because of changes in E's recordkeeping in 2006, it is impracticable for E to continue to identify disposed mass assets using specific identification. As a result, E wants to change to a first-in, first-out method under which the mass assets disposed of in a taxable year are deemed to be from the pool with the earliest placed-in-service year in existence as of the beginning of the taxable year of each disposition. Pursuant to paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(2)(vii) of this section, this change is a change in method of accounting. This method change results in no section 481 adjustment because the change is from one permissible method to another permissible method.

Example 14. In August 2003, F, a calendar year taxpayer, purchased and placed in service a copier for use in its trade or business. F incorrectly classified the copier as 7-year property under section 168(e). F elected not to deduct the additional first year depreciation provided by section 168(k) on its 2003 Federal tax return. As a result, on its 2003 and 2004 Federal tax returns, F depreciated the copier under the general depreciation system of section 168(a), using the 200-percent declining balance method of depreciation, a 7-year recovery period, and the half-year convention. In 2005, F realizes that the copier is 5-year property and should have been depreciated on its 2003 and 2004 Federal tax returns under the general depreciation system using a 5-year recovery period rather than a 7-year recovery period. Pursuant to paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(2)(i) of this section, F's change in recovery period from 7 to 5 years is a change in method of accounting. This method change results in a section 481 adjustment. The useful life exception under paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(3)(i) of this section does not apply because the copier is depreciated under section 168.

Example 15. In 2004, G, a calendar year taxpayer, purchased and placed in service an intangible asset that is not an amortizable section 197 intangible and that is not described in section 167(f). G amortized the cost of the intangible asset under section 167(a) using the straight line method of depreciation and a determinable useful life of 13 years. The safe harbor useful life of 15 or 25 years under §1.167(a)-3(b) does not apply to the intangible asset. In 2008, because of changing conditions, G changes the remaining useful life of the intangible asset to 2 years. Pursuant to paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(3)(i) of this section, G's change in useful life is not a change in method of accounting because the intangible asset is depreciated under section 167 and G is not changing to or from a useful life that is specifically assigned by the Internal Revenue Code, the regulations under the Internal Revenue Code, or other guidance published in

the Internal Revenue Bulletin.

Example 16. In July 2003, H, a calendar year taxpayer, purchased and placed in service “off-the-shelf” computer software and a new computer. The cost of the new computer and computer software are separately stated. H incorrectly included the cost of this software as part of the cost of the computer, which is 5-year property under section 168(e). On its 2003 Federal tax return, H elected to depreciate its 5-year property placed in service in 2003 under the alternative depreciation system of section 168(g) and H elected not to deduct the additional first year depreciation provided by section 168(k). The class life for a computer is 5 years. As a result, because H included the cost of the computer software as part of the cost of the computer hardware, H depreciated the cost of the software under the alternative depreciation system, using the straight line method of depreciation, a 5-year recovery period, and the half-year convention. In 2005, H realizes that the cost of the software should have been amortized under section 167(f)(1), using the straight line method of depreciation, a 36-month useful life, and a monthly convention. H’s change from 5-years to 36-months is a change in method of accounting because H is changing to a useful life that is specifically assigned by section 167(f)(1). The change in convention from the half-year to the monthly convention also is a change in method of accounting. Both changes result in a section 481 adjustment.

Example 17. On May 1, 2003, I2, a calendar year taxpayer, purchased and placed in service new equipment at a total cost of \$500,000 for use in its business. The equipment is 5-year property under section 168(e) with a class life of 9 years and is qualified property under section 168(k)(2). I2 did not place in service any other depreciable property in 2003. Section 168(g)(1)(A) through (D) do not apply to the equipment. I2 intended to elect the alternative depreciation system under section 168(g) for 5-year property placed in service in 2003. However, I2 did not make the election. Instead, I2 deducted on its 2003 Federal tax return the 30-percent additional first year depreciation attributable to the equipment and, on its 2003 and 2004 Federal tax returns, depreciated the remaining adjusted depreciable basis of the equipment under the general depreciation system under 168(a), using the 200-percent declining balance method, a 5-year recovery period, and the half-year convention. In 2005, I2 realizes its failure to make the alternative depreciation system election in 2003 and files a Form 3115, “Application for Change in Accounting Method,” to change its method of depreciating the remaining adjusted depreciable basis of the 2003 equipment to the alternative depreciation system. Because this equipment is not required to be depreciated under the alternative depreciation system, I2 is attempting to make an election under section 168(g)(7). However, this election must be made in the taxable year in which the equipment is placed in service (2003) and, consequently, I2 is attempting to make a late election under section 168(g)(7). Accordingly, I2’s change to the alternative depreciation system is not a change in accounting method pursuant to paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(3)(iii) of this section. Instead, I2 must submit a request for a private letter ruling under §301.9100-3 of this chapter, requesting an extension of time to make the alternative depreciation system election on its 2003 Federal tax return.

Example 18. On December 1, 2004, J, a calendar year taxpayer, purchased and placed in service 20 previously-owned adding machines. For the 2004 taxable year, J incorrectly classified the adding machines as items in its “suspense” account for financial and tax accounting purposes. Assets in this suspense account are not depreciated until reclassified to a depreciable fixed asset account. In January 2006, J realizes that the cost of the adding machines is still in the suspense account and reclassifies such cost to the appropriate depreciable fixed asset account. As a result, on its 2004 and 2005 Federal tax returns, J did not depreciate the cost of the adding machines. Pursuant to paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(2) of this section, J’s change in the treatment of the adding machines from nondepreciable assets to depreciable assets is a change in method of accounting. The placed-in-service date exception under paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(3)(v) of this section does not apply because the adding machines were incorrectly classified in a nondepreciable suspense account. This method change results in a section 481 adjustment.

Example 19. In December 2003, K, a calendar year taxpayer, purchased and placed in service equipment for use in its trade or business. However, K did not receive the invoice for this equipment until January 2004. As a result, K classified the equipment on its fixed asset records as being placed in service in January 2004. On its 2004 and 2005 Federal tax returns, K depreciated the cost of the equipment. In 2006, K realizes that the equipment was actually placed in service during the 2003 taxable year and, therefore, depreciation should have begun in the 2003 taxable year instead of the 2004 taxable year. Pursuant to paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d)(3)(v) of this section, K’s change in the placed-in-service date of the equipment is not a change in method of accounting.

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(4) Effective date--(i) In general. Except as provided in paragraphs (e)(3)(iii) and (e)(4)(ii) of this section, paragraph (e) of this section applies on or after December 30, 2003. For the applicability of regulations before December 30, 2003, see §1.446-1(e) in effect prior to December 30, 2003 (§1.446-1(e) as contained in 26 CFR part 1 edition revised as of April 1, 2003).

(ii) Changes involving depreciable or amortizable assets. With respect to paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d) of this section, paragraph (e)(2)(iii) Examples 9 through 19 of this section, and the language “certain changes in computing depreciation or amortization (see paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d) of this section)” in the last sentence of paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(a) of this section--

(A) For any change in depreciation or amortization that is a change in method of accounting, this section applies to such a change in method of accounting made by a taxpayer for a depreciable or amortizable asset placed in service by the taxpayer in a taxable year ending on or after December 30, 2003; and

(B) For any change in depreciation or amortization that is not a change in method of accounting, this section applies to such a change made by a taxpayer for a depreciable or amortizable asset placed in service by the taxpayer in a taxable year ending on or after December 30, 2003.

**§1.446-1T [Removed]**

Par. 7. Section 1.446-1T is removed.

Par. 8. Section 1.1016-3 is amended by revising paragraphs (h) and (j) to read as follows:

§1.1016-3 Exhaustion, wear and tear, obsolescence, amortization, and depletion for periods since February 28, 1913.

\* \* \* \* \*

(h) Application to a change in method of accounting. For purposes of determining whether a change in depreciation or amortization for property subject to section 167, 168, 197, 1400I, 1400L(c), to section 168 prior to its amendment by the Tax Reform Act of 1986 (100 Stat. 2121) (former section 168), or to an additional first year depreciation deduction provision of the Internal Revenue Code (for example, section 168(k), 1400L(b), or 1400N(d)) is a change in method of accounting under section 446(e) and the regulations under section 446(e), section 1016(a)(2) does not permanently affect a taxpayer's lifetime income.

\* \* \* \* \*

(j) Effective date--(1) In general. Except as provided in paragraph (j)(2) of this section, this section applies on or after December 30, 2003. For the applicability of regulations before December 30, 2003, see §1.1016-3 in effect prior to December 30, 2003 (§1.1016-3 as contained in 26 CFR part 1 edition revised as of April 1, 2003).

(2) Depreciation or amortization changes. Paragraph (h) of this section applies to a change in depreciation or amortization for property subject to section 167, 168, 197, 1400I, 1400L(c), to former section 168, or to an additional first year depreciation deduction provision of the Internal Revenue Code (for example, section 168(k), 1400L(b), or 1400N(d)) for taxable years ending on or after December 30, 2003.

**§1.1016-3T [Removed]**

Par. 9. Section 1.1016-3T is removed.

Kevin M. Brown,  
Deputy Commissioner for Services and Enforcement.

Approved: December 21, 2006.

Eric Solomon,  
Assistant Secretary of the Treasury (Tax Policy).