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Reg. Section 1.446-1(d)

General rule for methods of accounting

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(c) Permissible methods.

(1) In general. Subject to the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section, a taxpayer may compute his taxable income under any of the following methods of accounting:

(i) Cash receipts and disbursements method. Generally, under the cash receipts and disbursements method in the computation of taxable income, all items which constitute gross income (whether in the form of cash, property, or services) are to be included for the taxable year in which actually or constructively received. Expenditures are to be deducted for the taxable year in which actually made. For rules relating to constructive receipt, see §1.451-2. For treatment of an expenditure attributable to more than one taxable year, see section 461(a) and paragraph (a)(1) of § 1.461-1.

(ii) Accrual method.

(A) Generally, under an accrual method, income is to be included for the taxable year when all the events have occurred that fix the right to receive the income and the amount of the income can be determined with reasonable accuracy. Under such a method, a liability is incurred, and generally is taken into account for Federal income tax purposes, in the taxable year in which all the events have occurred that establish the fact of the liability, the amount of the liability can be determined with reasonable accuracy, and economic performance has occurred with respect to the liability. (See paragraph (a)(2)(iii)(A) of §1.461-1 for examples of liabilities that may not be taken into account until after the taxable year incurred, and see §§1.461-4 through 1.461-6 for rules relating to economic performance.) Applicable provisions of the Code, the Income Tax Regulations, and other guidance published by the Secretary prescribe the manner in which a liability that has been incurred is taken into account. For example, section 162 provides that a deductible liability generally is taken into account in the taxable year incurred through a deduction from gross income. As a further example, under section 263 or 263A, a liability that relates to the creation of an asset having a useful life extending substantially beyond the close of the taxable year is taken into account in the taxable year incurred through capitalization (within the meaning of §1.263A-1(c)(3)), and may later affect the computation of taxable income through depreciation or otherwise over a period including subsequent taxable years, in accordance with applicable Internal Revenue Code sections and related guidance.

(B) The term "liability" includes any item allowable as a deduction, cost, or expense for Federal income tax purposes. In addition to allowable deductions, the term includes any amount otherwise allowable as a capitalized cost, as a cost taken into account in computing cost of goods sold, as a cost allocable to a long-term contract, or as any other cost or expense. Thus, for example, an amount that a taxpayer expends or will expend for capital improvements to property must be incurred before the taxpayer may take the amount into account in computing its basis in the property. The term "liability" is not limited to items for which a legal obligation to pay exists at the time of payment. Thus, for example, amounts prepaid for goods or services and amounts paid without a legal obligation to do so may not be taken into account by an accrual basis taxpayer any earlier than the taxable year in which those amounts are incurred.

(C) No method of accounting is acceptable unless, in the opinion of the Commissioner, it clearly reflects income. The method used by the taxpayer in determining when income is to be accounted for will generally be acceptable if it accords with generally accepted accounting principles, is consistently used by the taxpayer from year to year, and is consistent with the Income Tax Regulations. For example, a taxpayer engaged in a manufacturing business may account for sales of the taxpayer's product when the goods are shipped, when the product is delivered or accepted, or when title to the goods passes to the customers, whether or not billed, depending on the method regularly employed in keeping the taxpayer's books.

(iii) Other permissible methods. Special methods of accounting are described elsewhere in chapter 1 of the Code and the regulations thereunder. For example, see the following sections and the regulations thereunder: Sections 61 and 162, relating to the crop method of accounting; section 453, relating to the installment method; section 460, relating to the long-term contract methods. In addition, special methods of accounting for particular items of income and expense are provided under other sections of chapter 1. For example, see section 174, relating to research and experimental expenditures, and section 175, relating to soil and water conservation expenditures.

(iv) Combinations of the foregoing methods.

(a) In accordance with the following rules, any combination of the foregoing methods of accounting will be permitted in connection with a trade or business if such combination clearly reflects income and is consistently used. Where a combination of methods of accounting includes any special methods, such as those referred to in subdivision (iii) of this subparagraph, the taxpayer must comply with the requirements relating to such special methods. A taxpayer using an accrual method of accounting

with respect to purchases and sales may use the cash method in computing all other items of income and expense. However, a taxpayer who uses the cash method of accounting in computing gross income from his trade or business shall use the cash method in computing expenses of such trade or business. Similarly, a taxpayer who uses an accrual method of accounting in computing business expenses shall use an accrual method in computing items affecting gross income from his trade or business.

(b) A taxpayer using one method of accounting in computing items of income and deductions of his trade or business may compute other items of income and deductions not connected with his trade or business under a different method of accounting.

(2) Special rules.

(i) In any case in which it is necessary to use an inventory the accrual method of accounting must be used with regard to purchases and sales unless otherwise authorized under subdivision (ii) of this subparagraph.

(ii) No method of accounting will be regarded as clearly reflecting income unless all items of gross profit and deductions are treated with consistency from year to year. The Commissioner may authorize a taxpayer to adopt or change to a method of accounting permitted by this chapter although the method is not specifically described in the regulations in this part if, in the opinion of the Commissioner, income is clearly reflected by the use of such method. Further, the Commissioner may authorize a taxpayer to continue the use of a method of accounting consistently used by the taxpayer, even though not specifically authorized by the regulations in this part, if, in the opinion of the Commissioner, income is clearly reflected by the use of such method. See section 446(a) and paragraph (a) of this section, which require that taxable income shall be computed under the method of accounting on the basis of which the taxpayer regularly computes his income in keeping his books, and section 446(e) and paragraph (e) of this section, which require the prior approval of the Commissioner in the case of changes in accounting method.

(iii) The timing rules of §1.1502-13 are a method of accounting for intercompany transactions (as defined in §1.1502-13(b)(1)(i)), to be applied by each member of a consolidated group in addition to the member's other methods of accounting. See §1.1502-13(a)(3)(i). This paragraph (c)(2)(iii) is applicable to consolidated return years beginning on or after November 7, 2001.

 (d) Taxpayer engaged in more than one business.

(1) Where a taxpayer has two or more separate and distinct trades or businesses, a different method of accounting may be used for each trade or business, provided the method used for each trade or business clearly reflects the income of that particular trade

or business. For example, a taxpayer may account for the operations of a personal service business on the cash receipts and disbursements method and of a manufacturing business on an accrual method, provided such businesses are separate and distinct and the methods used for each clearly reflect income. The method first used in accounting for business income and deductions in connection with each trade or business, as evidenced in the taxpayer's income tax return in which such income or deductions are first reported, must be consistently followed thereafter.

(2) No trade or business will be considered separate and distinct for purposes of this paragraph unless a complete and separable set of books and records is kept for such trade or business.

(3) If, by reason of maintaining different methods of accounting, there is a creation or shifting of profits or losses between the trades or businesses of the taxpayer (for example, through inventory adjustments, sales, purchases, or expenses) so that income of the taxpayer is not clearly reflected, the trades or businesses of the taxpayer will not be considered to be separate and distinct.

(e) Requirement respecting the adoption or change of accounting method.

(1) A taxpayer filing his first return may adopt any permissible method of accounting in computing taxable income for the taxable year covered by such return. See section 446(c) and paragraph (c) of this section for permissible methods. Moreover, a taxpayer may adopt any permissible method of accounting in connection with each separate and distinct trade or business, the income from which is reported for the first time. See section 446(d) and paragraph (d) of this section. See also section 446(a) and paragraph (a) of this section.

(2)

(i) Except as otherwise expressly provided in chapter 1 of the Code and the regulations thereunder, a taxpayer who changes the method of accounting employed in keeping his books shall, before computing his income upon such new method for purposes of taxation, secure the consent of the Commissioner. Consent must be secured whether or not such method is proper or is permitted under the Internal Revenue Code or the regulations thereunder.

(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).

(c) A change in an overall plan or system of identifying or valuing items in inventory is a change in method of accounting. Also a change in the treatment of any material item used in the overall plan for identifying or valuing items in inventory is a change in method of accounting.

(d) Changes involving depreciable or amortizable assets.

(1) Scope. This paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(d) applies to property subject to section 167, 168, 197, 14001, 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 14001, 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 14001, 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 14001, 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 14001, 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.

(3)

(i) Except as otherwise provided under the authority of paragraph (e)(3)(ii) of this section, to secure the Commissioner's consent to a taxpayer's change in method of accounting the taxpayer must file an application on Form 3115 with the Commissioner during the taxable year in which the taxpayer desires to make the change in method of accounting. To the extent applicable, the taxpayer must furnish all information requested on the Form 3115. This information includes all classes of items that will be treated differently under the new method of accounting, any amounts that will be duplicated or omitted as a result of the proposed change, and the taxpayer's computation of any adjustments necessary to prevent such duplications or omissions. The Commissioner may require such other information as may be necessary to determine whether the proposed change will be permitted. Permission to change a taxpayer's method of accounting will not be granted unless the taxpayer agrees to the Commissioner's prescribed terms and conditions for effecting the change, including the taxable year or years in which any adjustment necessary to prevent amounts from being duplicated or omitted is to be taken into account. See section 481 and the regulations thereunder, relating to certain adjustments resulting from accounting method changes, and section 472 and the regulations thereunder, relating to adjustments for changes to and from the last-in, first-out inventory method. For any Form 3115 filed on or after May 15, 1997, see §1.446-1T(e)(3)(i)(B).

(ii) Except as otherwise provided under the authority of paragraph (e)(3)(ii) of this section, to secure the Commissioner's consent to a taxpayer's change in method of accounting the taxpayer generally must file an application on Form 3115, "Application for Change in Accounting Method," with the Commissioner during the taxable year in which the taxpayer desires to make the change in method of accounting. See §§1.381(c)(4)-1(d)(2) and 1.381(c)(5)-1(d)(2) for rules allowing additional time, in some circumstances, for the filing of an application on Form 3115 with respect to a transaction to which section 381(a) applies. The administrative procedures shall prescribe those terms and conditions necessary to obtain the Commissioner's consent to effect the change and to prevent amounts from being duplicated or omitted. The terms and conditions that may be prescribed by the Commissioner may include terms and conditions that require the change in method of accounting to be effected on a cut-off basis or by an adjustment under section 481(a) to be taken into account in the taxable year or years prescribed by the Commissioner.

(iii) This paragraph (e)(3) applies to Forms 3115 filed on or after December 31, 1997. For other Forms 3115, see §1.446-1(e)(3) in effect prior to December 31, 1997 (§1.446-1(e)(3) as contained in the 26 CFR part 1 edition revised as of April 1, 1997).

(4)Effective date.

(i) In general. Except as provided in paragraphs (e)(3)(iii), (e)(4)(ii), and (e)(4)(iii) of this section, paragraph (e) of this Section applies on or after December 30, 2003. or 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.

(iii) Effective/applicability date for paragraph (e)(3)(i). The rules of paragraph (e)(3)(i) of this section apply to corporate reorganizations and tax-free liquidations described in section 381(a) that occur on or after August 31, 2011.