

Reg. Section 1.61-21(g)

Taxation of fringe benefits

(g) Non-commercial flight valuation rule—

- (1) In general. Under the non-commercial flight valuation rule of this paragraph (g), except as provided in paragraph (g)(12) of this section, if an employee is provided with a flight on an employer-provided aircraft, the value of the flight is calculated using the aircraft valuation formula of paragraph (g)(5) of this section. For purposes of this paragraph (g), the value of a flight on an employer-provided aircraft by an individual who is less than two years old is deemed to be zero. See paragraph (b)(1) of this section for rules relating to the amount includible in income when an employee reimburses the employer for all or part of the fair market value of the benefit provided.
- (2) Eligible flights and eligible aircraft. The valuation rule of this paragraph (g) may be used to value flights on all employer-provided aircraft, including helicopters. The valuation rule of this paragraph (g) may be used to value international as well as domestic flights. The valuation rule of this paragraph (g) may not be used to value a flight on any commercial aircraft on which air transportation is sold to the public on a per-seat basis. For a special valuation rule relating to certain flights on commercial aircraft, see paragraph (h) of this section.
- (3) Definition of a flight—
 - (i) General rule. Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (g)(3)(iii) of this section (relating to intermediate stops), for purposes of this paragraph (g), a flight is the distance (in statute miles, i.e., 5,280 feet per statute mile) between the place at which the individual boards the aircraft and the place at which the individual deplanes.
 - (ii) Valuation of each flight. Under the valuation rule of this paragraph (g), value is determined separately for each flight. Thus, a round-trip is comprised of at least two flights. For example, an employee who takes a personal trip on an employer-provided aircraft from New York City to Denver, then Denver to Los Angeles, and finally Los Angeles to New York City has taken three flights and must apply the aircraft valuation formula separately to each flight. The value of a flight must be determined on a passenger-by-passenger basis. For example, if an individual accompanies an employee and the flight taken by the individual would be taxed to the employee, the employee would be taxed on the special rule value of the flight by the employee and the flight by the individual.

- (iii) Intermediate stop. If a landing is necessitated by weather conditions, by an emergency, for purposes of refueling or obtaining other services relating to the aircraft or for any other purpose unrelated to the personal purposes of the employee whose flight is being valued, that landing is an intermediate stop. Additional mileage attributable to an intermediate stop is not considered when determining the distance of an employee's flight.
- (iv) Examples. The rules of paragraph (g)(3)(iii) of this section may be illustrated by the following examples:

Example (1). Assume that an employee's trip originates in St. Louis, Missouri, with Seattle, Washington as its destination, but, because of weather conditions, the aircraft lands in Denver, Colorado, and the employee stays in Denver overnight. Assume further that the next day the aircraft flies to Seattle where the employee deplanes. The employee's flight is the distance between the airport in St. Louis and the airport in Seattle.

Example (2). Assume that a trip originates in New York, New York, with five passengers and that the aircraft makes a stop in Chicago, Illinois, so that one of the passengers can deplane for a purpose unrelated to the personal purposes of the other passengers whose flights are being valued. The aircraft then goes on to Los Angeles, California, where the other four passengers will deplane. The flight of the passenger who deplaned in Chicago is the distance between the airport in New York and the airport in Chicago. The stop in Chicago is disregarded as an intermediate stop, however, when measuring the flights taken by each of the other four passengers. Their flights would be the distance between the airport in New York and the airport in Los Angeles.

(4) Personal and non-personal flights—

- (i) In general. The valuation rule of this paragraph (g) applies to personal flights on employer-provided aircraft. A personal flight is one the value of which is not excludable under another section of subtitle A of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, such as under section 132(d) (relating to a working condition fringe). However, solely for purposes of paragraphs (g)(4)(ii) and (g)(4)(iii) of this section, references to personal flights do not include flights a portion of which would not be excludable from income by reason of section 274(c).
- (ii) Trip primarily for employer's business. If an employee combines, in one trip, personal and business flights on an employer-provided aircraft and the employee's trip is primarily for the employer's business (see § 1.162-2(b)(2)), the employee must include in income the excess of the value of all the flights that comprise the trip over the value of the flights that would have been taken had there been no personal flights but only business flights. For example, assume that an employee flies on an employer-

provided aircraft from Chicago, Illinois, to Miami, Florida, for the employer's business and that from Miami the employee flies on the employer-provided aircraft to Orlando, Florida, for personal purposes and then flies back to Chicago. Assume further that the primary purpose of the trip is for the employer's business. The amount includible in income is the excess of the value of the three flights (Chicago to Miami, Miami to Orlando, and Orlando to Chicago), over the value of the flights that would have been taken had there been no personal flights but only business flights (Chicago to Miami and Miami to Chicago).

- (iii) Primarily personal trip. If an employee combines, in one trip, personal and business flights on an employer-provided aircraft and the employee's trip is primarily personal (see § 1.162-2(b)(2)), the amount includible in the employee's income is the value of the personal flights that would have been taken had there been no business flights but only personal flights. For example, assume that an employee flies on an employer-provided aircraft from San Francisco, California, to Los Angeles, California, for the employer's business and that from Los Angeles the employee flies on an employer-provided aircraft to Palm Springs, California, primarily for personal reasons and then flies back to San Francisco. Assume further that the primary purpose of the trip is personal. The amount includible in the employee's income is the value of personal flights that would have been taken had there been no business flights but only personal flights (San Francisco to Palm Springs and Palm Springs to San Francisco).
- (iv) Application of section 274(c). The value of employer-provided travel outside the United States away from home may not be excluded from the employee's gross income as a working condition fringe, by either the employer or the employee, to the extent not deductible by reason of section 274(c). The valuation rule of this paragraph (g) applies to that portion of the value any flight not excludable by reason of section 274(c). Such value is includible in income in addition to the amounts determined under paragraphs (g)(4)(ii) and (g)(4)(iii) of this section.
- (v) Flights by individuals who are not personal guests. If an individual who is not an employee of the employer providing the aircraft is on a flight, and the individual is not the personal guest of any employee of the employer, the flight by the individual is not taxable to any employee of the employer providing the aircraft. The rule in the preceding sentence applies where the individual is provided the flight by the employer for noncompensatory business reasons of the employer. For example, assume that G, an employee of company Y, accompanies A, an employee of company X, on company X's aircraft for the purpose of inspecting land under consideration for purchase by company X from company Y. The flight by G is not taxable to A. No inference may be drawn from this paragraph (g)(4)(v) concerning the taxation of a flight provided to an individual who is neither an employee of the employer nor a personal guest of any employee of the employer.

(5) Aircraft valuation formula. Under the valuation rule of this paragraph (g), the value of a flight is determined under the base aircraft valuation formula (also known as the Standard Industry Fare Level formula or SIFL) by multiplying the SIFL cents-per-mile rates applicable for the period during which the flight was taken by the appropriate aircraft multiple (as provided in paragraph (g)(7) of this section) and then adding the applicable terminal charge. The SIFL cents-per-mile rates in the formula and the terminal charge are calculated by the Department of Transportation and are revised semi-annually. The base aircraft valuation formula in effect from January 1, 1989 through June 30, 1989, is as follows: a terminal charge of \$26.48 plus (\$.1449 per mile for the first 500 miles, \$.1105 per mile for miles between 501 and 1500, and \$.1062 per mile for miles over 1500). For example, if a flight taken on January 15, 1989, by a non-control employee on an employer-provided aircraft with a maximum certified takeoff weight of 26,000 lbs. is 2,000 miles long, the value of the flight determined under this paragraph (g)(5) is: \$100.36 $((.313 \times ((\$0.1449 \times 500) + (\$0.1105 \times 1,000) + (\$0.1062 \times 500))) + \$26.48)$. The aircraft valuation formula applies separately to each flight being valued under this paragraph (g). Therefore, the number of miles an employee has flown on employer-provided aircraft flights prior to the flight being valued does not affect the determination of the value of the flight.

(6) Discretion to provide new formula. The Commissioner may prescribe a different base aircraft valuation formula by regulation, Revenue Ruling or Revenue Procedure in the event that the calculation of the Standard Industry Fare Level is discontinued.

(7) Aircraft multiples—

(i) In general. The aircraft multiples are based on the maximum certified takeoff weight of the aircraft. When applying the aircraft valuation formula to a flight, the appropriate aircraft multiple is multiplied by the product of the applicable SIFL cents-per-mile rates multiplied by the number of miles in the flight and then the terminal charge is added to the product. For purposes of applying the aircraft valuation formula described in paragraph (g)(5) of this section, the aircraft multiples are as follows:

Maximum certified take off weight of the aircraft	Aircraft multiple for a control employee (percent)	Aircraft multiple for a non control employee (percent)
6,000 lbs. or less	62.5	15.6
6,001-10,000 lbs.	125	23.4
10,001-25,000 lbs.	300	31.3
25,001 lbs. or more	400	31.3

- (ii) Flights treated as provided to a control employee. Except as provided in paragraph (g)(12) of this section, any flight provided to an individual whose flight would be taxable to a control employee (as defined in paragraphs (g) (8) and (9) of this section) as the recipient shall be valued as if such flight had been provided to that control employee. For example, assume that the chief executive officer of an employer, his spouse, and his two children fly on an employer-provided aircraft for personal purposes. Assume further that the maximum certified takeoff weight of the aircraft is 12,000 lbs. The amount includible in the employee's income is 4 X ((300 percent X the applicable SIFL cents-per-mile rates provided in paragraph (g)(5) of this section multiplied by the number of miles in the flight) plus the applicable terminal charge).

(8) Control employee defined—Non-government employer—

- (i) Definition. For purposes of this paragraph (g), a control employee of a non-government employer is any employee—

- (A) Who is a Board- or shareholder-appointed, confirmed, or elected officer of the employer, limited to the lesser of—

- (1) One percent of all employees (increased to the next highest integer, if not an integer) or

- (2) Ten employees;

- (B) Who is among the top one percent most highly-paid employees of the employer (increased to the next highest integer, if not an integer) limited to a maximum of 50;

- (C) Who owns a five-percent or greater equity, capital, or profits interest in the employer; or

- (D) Who is a director of the employer.

- (ii) Special rules for control employee definition—

- (A) In general. For purposes of this paragraph (g), any employee who is a family member (within the meaning of section 267(c)(4)) of a control employee is also a control employee. For purposes of paragraph (g)(8)(i)(B) of this section, the term "employee" does not include any individual unless such individual is a common-law employee, partner, or one-percent or greater shareholder of the employer. Pursuant to this paragraph (g)(8), an employee may be a control employee under more than one of the requirements listed in paragraphs (g)(8)(i) (A) through (D) of this section. For example, an employee may be both an officer under paragraph (g)(8)(i)(A) of this section and a highly-paid employee under paragraph (g)(8)(i)(B) of this section. In this case, for purposes of the officer limitation rule of

paragraph (g)(8)(i)(A) of this section and the highly-paid employee limitation rule of paragraph (g)(8)(i)(B) of this section, the employee would be counted in applying both limitations. For purposes of determining the one-percent limitation under paragraphs (g)(8)(i) (A) and (B) of this section, an employer shall exclude from consideration employees described in § 1.132-8(b)(3). Instead of applying the control employee definition of this paragraph (g)(8), an employer may treat all (and only) employees who are "highly compensated" employees (as defined in § 1.132-8(f)) as control employees for purposes of this paragraph (g).

- (B) Special rules for officers, owners, and highly-paid control employees. In no event shall an employee whose compensation is less than \$50,000 be a control employee under paragraph (g)(8)(i) (A) or (B) of this section. For purposes of determining who is a five-percent (or one-percent) owner under this paragraph (g)(8), any individual who owns (or is considered as owning under section 318(a) or principles similar to section 318(a) for entities other than corporations) five percent (or one-percent) or more of the fair market value of an entity (the "owned entity") is considered a five-percent (or one-percent) owner of all entities which would be aggregated with the owned entity under the rules of section 414(b), (c), (m), or (o). For purposes of determining who is an officer or director with respect to an employer under this paragraph (g)(8), notwithstanding anything in this section to the contrary, if the employer would be aggregated with other employers under the rules of section 414 (b), (c), (m), or (o), the officer definition and the limitations and the director definition are applied to each such separate employer rather than to the aggregated employer. An employee who is an officer or director of one employer (the "first employer") shall not be counted as an officer or a director of any other employer aggregated with the first employer under the rules of section 414 (b), (c), or (m). If applicable, the officer limitations rule of paragraph (g)(8)(i)(A) of this section is applied to employees in descending order of their compensation. Thus, if an employer has 11 board-appointed officers and the limit imposed under paragraph (g)(8)(i)(A) of this section is 10 officers, the employee with the least compensation of those officers would not be a control employee under paragraph (g)(8)(i)(A) of this section.

(9) Control employee defined--Government employer. For purposes of this paragraph (g), a control employee of a government employer is any—

- (i) Elected official, or
- (ii) Employee whose compensation equals or exceeds the compensation paid to a Federal Government employee holding a position at Executive Level V, determined under Chapter 11 of title 2, United States Code, as adjusted by section 5318 of title 5 United States Code.

For purposes of paragraph (f), the term "government" includes any Federal, state or local governmental unit, and any agency or instrumentality thereof. Instead of applying the control employee definition of paragraph (f)(6), an employer may treat all and only employees who are "highly compensated" employees (as defined in § 1.132-8(f)) as control employees for purposes of this paragraph (f).

(10) "Compensation" defined. For purposes of this paragraph (g), the term "compensation" has the same meaning as in section 414(q)(7). Compensation includes all amounts received from all entities treated as a single employer under section 414 (b), (c), (m), or (o). Levels of compensation shall be adjusted at the same time and in the same manner as provided in section 415(d). The first such adjustment was for calendar year 1988.

(11) Treatment of former employees. For purposes of this paragraph (g), an employee who was a control employee of the employer (as defined in this paragraph (g)) at any time after reaching age 55, or within three years of separation from the service of the employer, is a control employee with respect to flights taken after separation from the service of the employer. An individual who is treated as a control employee under this paragraph (g)(11) is not counted when determining the limitation of paragraph (g)(8)(i) (A) and (B) of this section. Thus, the total number of individuals treated as control employees under such paragraphs may exceed the limitations of such paragraphs to the extent that this paragraph (g)(11) applies.

(12) Seating capacity rule—

(i) In general—

(A) General rule. Where 50 percent or more of the regular passenger seating capacity of an aircraft (as used by the employer) is occupied by individuals whose flights are primarily for the employer's business (and whose flights are excludable from income under section 132(d)), the value of a flight on that aircraft by any employee who is not flying primarily for the employer's business (or who is flying primarily for the employer's business but the value of whose flight is not excludable under section 132(d) by reason of section 274(c)) is deemed to be zero. See § 1.132-5 which limits the working condition fringe exclusion under section 132(d) to situations where the employee receives the flight in connection with the performance of services for the employer providing the aircraft.

(B) Special rules—

(1) Definition of "employee." For purposes of this paragraph (g)(12), the term "employee" includes only employees of the employer, including a partner of a partnership, providing the aircraft and does not include independent

contractors and directors of the employer. A flight taken by an individual other than an "employee" as defined in the preceding sentence is considered a flight taken by an employee for purposes of this paragraph (g)(12) only if that individual is treated as an employee pursuant to section 132(f)(1) or that individual's flight is treated as a flight taken by an employee pursuant to section 132(f)(2). If—

- i. A flight by an individual is not considered a flight taken by an employee (as defined in this paragraph (g)(12)(i)),
- ii. The value of that individual's flight is not excludable under section 132(d), and
- iii. The seating capacity rule of this paragraph (g) (12) otherwise applies, then the value of the flight provided to such an individual is the value of a flight provided to a non-control employee pursuant to paragraph (g)(5) of this section (even if the individual who would be taxed on the value of the flight is a control employee).

(2) Example. The special rules of paragraph (g)(12)(i)(B)(1) of this section are illustrated by the following example:

Example. Assume that 60 percent of the regular passenger seating capacity of an employer's aircraft is occupied by individuals whose flights are primarily for the employer's business and are excludable from income under section 132(d). If a control employee, his spouse, and his dependent child fly on the employer's aircraft for primarily personal reasons, the value of the three flights is deemed to be zero. If, however, the control employee's cousin were provided a flight on the employer's aircraft, the value of the flight taken by the cousin is determined by applying the aircraft valuation formula of paragraph (g)(5) of this section (including the terminal charge) and the non-control employee aircraft multiples of paragraph (g)(7) of this section.

- (ii) Application of 50-percent test to multiple flights. The seating capacity rule of this paragraph (g)(12) must be met both at the time the individual whose flight is being valued boards the aircraft and at the time the individual deplanes. For example, assume that employee A boards an employer-provided aircraft for personal purposes in New York, New York, and that at that time 80 percent of the regular passenger seating capacity of the aircraft is occupied by individuals whose flights are primarily for the employer's business (and whose flights are excludable

from income under section 132(d)) ("the business passengers"). If the aircraft flies directly to Hartford, Connecticut where all of the passengers, including A, deplane, the requirements of the seating capacity rule of this paragraph (g)(12) have been satisfied. If instead, some of the passengers, including A, remain on the aircraft in Hartford and the aircraft continues on to Boston, Massachusetts, where they all deplane, the requirements of the seating capacity rule of this paragraph (g)(12) will not be satisfied with respect to A's flight from New York to Boston unless at least 50 percent of the seats comprising the aircraft's regular passenger seating capacity were occupied by the business passengers at the time A deplanes in Boston.

(iii) Regular passenger seating capacity.

(A) General rule. Except as otherwise provided, the regular passenger seating capacity of an aircraft is the maximum number of seats that have at any time on or prior to the date of the flight been on the aircraft (while owned or leased by the employer). Except to the extent excluded pursuant to paragraph (g)(12)(v) of this section, regular seating capacity includes all seats which may be occupied by members of the flight crew. It is irrelevant that, on a particular flight, less than the maximum number of seats are available for use because, for example, some of the seats are removed.

(B) Special rules. When determining the maximum number of seats that have at any time on or prior to the date of the flight been on the aircraft (while owned or leased by the employer), seats that could not at any time be legally used during takeoff and have not at any time been used during takeoff are not counted. As of the date an employer permanently reduces the seating capacity of an aircraft, the regular passenger seating capacity is the reduced number of seats on the aircraft. The previous sentence shall not apply if at any time within 24 months after such reduction any seats are added in the aircraft. Unless the conditions of this paragraph (g)(12)(iii)(B) are satisfied, jumpseats and removable seats used solely for purposes of flight crew training are counted for purposes of the seating capacity rule of this paragraph (g)(12).

(iv) Examples. The rules of paragraph (g)(12)(iii) of this section are illustrated by the following examples:

Example (1). Employer A and employer B order the same aircraft, except that A orders it with 10 seats and B orders it with eight seats. A always uses its aircraft as a 10-seat aircraft; B always uses its aircraft as an eight-seat aircraft. The regular passenger seating capacity of A's aircraft is 10 and of B's aircraft is eight.

Example (2). Assume the same facts as in example (1), except that whenever A's chief executive officer and spouse use the aircraft eight seats are removed. Even if substantially all of the use of the aircraft is by the

chief executive officer and spouse, the regular passenger seating capacity of the aircraft is 10.

Example (3). Assume the same facts as in example (1), except that whenever more than eight people want to fly in B's aircraft, two extra seats are added. Even if substantially all of the use of the aircraft occurs with eight seats, the regular passenger seating capacity of the aircraft is 10.

Example (4). Employer C purchases an aircraft with 12 seats. Three months later C remodels the interior of the aircraft and permanently removes four of the seats. Upon completion of the remodeling, the regular passenger seating capacity of the aircraft is eight. If, however, any seats are added within 24 months after the remodeling, the regular seating capacity of the aircraft is treated as 12 throughout the entire period.

- (v) Seats occupied by flight crew. When determining the regular passenger seating capacity of an aircraft, any seat occupied by a member of the flight crew (whether or not such individual is an employee of the employer providing the aircraft) shall not be counted, unless the purpose of the flight by such individual is not primarily to serve as a member of the flight crew. If the seat occupied by a member of the flight crew is not counted as a passenger seat pursuant to the previous sentence, such member of the flight crew is disregarded in applying the 50-percent test described in the first sentence of paragraph (g)(12)(i) of this section. For example, assume that prior to application of this paragraph (g)(12)(v) the regular passenger seating capacity of an aircraft is one. Assume further that an employee pilots the aircraft and that the employee's flight is not primarily for the employer's business. If the employee's spouse occupies the other seat for personal purposes, the seating capacity rule is not met and the value of both flights must be included in the employee's income. If, however, the employee's flight were primarily for the employer's business (unrelated to serving as a member of the flight crew), then the seating capacity rule is met and the value of the flight for the employee's spouse is deemed to be zero. If the employee's flight were primarily to serve as a member of the flight crew, then the seating capacity rule is not met and the value of a flight by any passenger for primarily personal reasons is not deemed to be zero.
- (13) Erroneous use of the non-commercial flight valuation rule--(i) Certain errors in the case of a flight by a control employee. If—
- (A) The non-commercial flight valuation rule of this paragraph (g) is applied by an employer or a control employee, as the case may be, on a return as originally filed or on an amended return on the grounds that either—
 - (1) The control employee is not in fact a control employee, or
 - (2) The aircraft is within a specific weight classification, and

- (B) Either position is subsequently determined to be erroneous, the valuation rule of this paragraph (g) is not available to value the flight taken by that control employee by the person or persons taking the erroneous position. With respect to the weight classifications, the previous sentence does not apply if the position taken is that the weight of the aircraft is greater than it is subsequently determined to be. If, with respect to a flight by a control employee, the seating capacity rule of paragraph (g)(12) of this section is used by an employer or the control employee, as the case may be, on a return as originally filed or on an amended return, the valuation rule of this paragraph (g) is not available to value the flight taken by that control employee by the person or persons taking the erroneous position.
 - (ii) Value of flight excluded as a working condition fringe. If either an employer or an employee, on a return as originally filed or on an amended return, excludes from the employee's income or wages all or any part of the value of a flight on the grounds that the flight was excludable as a working condition fringe under section 132, and that position is subsequently determined to be erroneous, the valuation rule of this paragraph (g) is not available to value the flight taken by that employee by the person or persons taking the erroneous position. Instead, the general valuation rules of paragraphs (b) (5) and (6) of this section apply.
- (14) Consistency rules—
- (i) Use by the employer. Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (g)(13) of this section or § 1.132-5 (m)(4), if the non-commercial flight valuation rule of this paragraph (g) is used by an employer to value any flight provided to an employee in a calendar year, the rule must be used to value all flights provided to all employees in the calendar year.
 - (ii) Use by the employee. Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (g)(13) of this section or § 1.132-5 (m)(4), if the non-commercial flight valuation rule of this paragraph (g) is used by an employee to value a flight provided by an employer in a calendar year, the rule must be used to value all flights provided to the employee by that employer in the calendar year.