

Reg. Section 1.274-5A(c)(1) Substantiation requirements

(c) Rules for substantiation—



(1) In general. A taxpayer must substantiate each element of an expenditure (described in paragraph (b) of this section) by adequate records or by sufficient evidence corroborating his own statement except as otherwise provided in this section. Section 274(d) contemplates that a taxpayer will maintain and produce such substantiation as will constitute clear proof of an expenditure for travel, entertainment, or gifts referred to in section 274. A record of the elements of an expenditure made at or near the time of the expenditure, supported by sufficient documentary evidence, has a high degree of credibility not present with respect to a statement prepared subsequent thereto when generally there is a lack of accurate recall. Thus, the corroborative evidence required to support a statement not made at or near the time of the expenditure must have a high degree of probative value to elevate such statement and evidence to the level of credibility reflected by a record made at or near the time of the expenditure supported by sufficient documentary evidence. The substantiation requirements of section 274(d) are designed to encourage taxpayers to maintain the records, together with documentary evidence, as provided in subparagraph (2) of this paragraph. To obtain a deduction for an expenditure for travel, entertainment, or gifts, a taxpayer must substantiate, in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph, each element of such an expenditure.

(2) Substantiation by adequate records—

- (i) In general. To meet the "adequate records" requirements of section 274(d), a taxpayer shall maintain an account book, diary, statement of expense or similar record (as provided in subdivision (ii) of this subparagraph) and documentary evidence (as provided in subdivision (iii) of this subparagraph) which, in combination, are sufficient to establish each element of an expenditure specified in paragraph (b) of this section. It is not necessary to record information in an account book, diary, statement of expense or similar record which duplicates information reflected on a receipt so long as such account book and receipt complement each other in an orderly manner.
- (ii) Account book, diary, etc. An account book, diary, statement of expense or similar record must be prepared or maintained in such manner that each recording of an element of an expenditure is made at or near the time of the expenditure.

- (a) Made at or near the time of the expenditure. For purposes of this section, the phrase "made at or near the time of the expenditure" means the elements of an expenditure are recorded at a time when, in relation to the making of an expenditure, the taxpayer has full present knowledge of each element of the expenditure, such as the amount, time, place and business purpose of the expenditure and business relationship to the taxpayer of any person entertained. An expense account statement which is a transcription of an account book, diary, or similar record prepared or maintained in accordance with the provisions of this subdivision shall be considered a record prepared or maintained in the manner prescribed in the preceding sentence if such expense account statement is submitted by an employee to his employer or by an independent contractor to his client or customer in the regular course of good business practice.
 - (b) Substantiation of business purpose. In order to constitute an adequate record of business purpose within the meaning of section 274(d) and this subparagraph, a written statement of business purpose generally is required. However, the degree of substantiation necessary to establish business purpose will vary depending upon the facts and circumstances of each case. Where the business purpose of an expenditure is evident from the surrounding facts and circumstances, a written explanation of such business purpose will not be required. For example, in the case of a salesman calling on customers on an established sales route, a written explanation of the business purpose of such travel ordinarily will not be required. Similarly, in the case of a business meal described in section 274(e)(1), if the business purpose of such meal is evident from the business relationship to the taxpayer of the persons entertained and other surrounding circumstances, a written explanation of such business purpose will not be required.
 - (c) Confidential information. If any information relating to the elements of an expenditure, such as place, business purpose or business relationship, is of a confidential nature, such information need not be set forth in the account book, diary, statement of expense or similar record, provided such information is recorded at or near the time of the expenditure and is elsewhere available to the district director to substantiate such element of the expenditure.
- (iii) Documentary evidence. Documentary evidence, such as receipts, paid bills, or similar evidence sufficient to support an expenditure shall be required for:
- (a) Any expenditure for lodging while traveling away from home, and

- (b) Any other expenditure of \$25 or more, except, for transportation charges, documentary evidence will not be required if not readily available.

Provided, however, that the Commissioner, in his discretion, may prescribe rules waiving such requirements in circumstances where he determines it is impracticable for such documentary evidence to be required. Ordinarily, documentary evidence will be considered adequate to support an expenditure if it includes sufficient information to establish the amount, date, place, and the essential character of the expenditure. For example, a hotel receipt is sufficient to support expenditures for business travel if it contains the following: name, location, date, and separate amounts for charges such as for lodging, meals, and telephone. Similarly, a restaurant receipt is sufficient to support an expenditure for a business meal if it contains the following: name and location of the restaurant, the date and amount of the expenditure, and, if a charge is made for an item other than meals and beverages, an indication that such is the case. A document may be indicative of only one (or part of one) element of an expenditure. Thus, a cancelled check, together with a bill from the payee, ordinarily would establish the element of cost. In contrast, a cancelled check drawn payable to a named payee would not by itself support a business expenditure without other evidence showing that the check was used for a certain business purpose.

- (iv) Retention of documentary evidence. The Commissioner may, in his discretion, prescribe rules under which an employer may dispose of documentary evidence submitted to him by employees who are required to, and do, make an adequate accounting to the employer (within the meaning of paragraph (e)(4) of this section) if the employer maintains adequate accounting procedures with respect to such employees (within the meaning of paragraph (e)(5) of this section).
 - (v) Substantial compliance. If a taxpayer has not fully substantiated a particular element of an expenditure, but the taxpayer establishes to the satisfaction of the district director that he has substantially complied with the "adequate records" requirements of this subparagraph with respect to the expenditure, the taxpayer may be permitted to establish such element by evidence which the district director shall deem adequate.
- (3) Substantiation by other sufficient evidence. If a taxpayer fails to establish to the satisfaction of the district director that he has substantially complied with the "adequate records" requirements of subparagraph (2) of this paragraph with respect to an element of an expenditure, then, except as otherwise provided in this paragraph, the taxpayer must establish such element:
- (i) By his own statement, whether written or oral, containing specific information in detail as to such element; and

- (ii) By other corroborative evidence sufficient to establish such element.

If such element is the description of a gift, or the cost, time, place, or date of an expenditure, the corroborative evidence shall be direct evidence, such as a statement in writing or the oral testimony of persons entertained or other witness setting forth detailed information about such element, or the documentary evidence described in subparagraph (2) of this paragraph. If such element is either the business relationship to the taxpayer of persons entertained or the business purpose of an expenditure, the corroborative evidence may be circumstantial evidence.

- (4) Substantiation in exceptional circumstances. If a taxpayer establishes that, by reason of the inherent nature of the situation in which an expenditure was made:
 - (i) He was unable to obtain evidence with respect to an element of the expenditure which conforms fully to the "adequate records" requirements of subparagraph (2) of this paragraph,
 - (ii) He is unable to obtain evidence with respect to such element which conforms fully to the "other sufficient evidence" requirements of subparagraph (3) of this paragraph, and
 - (iii) He has presented other evidence, with respect to such element, which possesses the highest degree of probative value possible under the circumstances, such other evidence shall be considered to satisfy the substantiation requirements of section 274(d) and this paragraph.
- (5) Loss of records due to circumstances beyond control of taxpayer. Where the taxpayer establishes that the failure to produce adequate records is due to the loss of such records through circumstances beyond the taxpayer's control, such as destruction by fire, flood, earthquake, or other casualty, the taxpayer shall have a right to substantiate a deduction by reasonable reconstruction of his expenditures.
- (6) Special rules—
 - (i) Separate expenditure.

- (a) In general. For the purposes of this section, each separate payment by the taxpayer shall ordinarily be considered to constitute a separate expenditure. However, concurrent or repetitious expenses of a similar nature occurring during the course of a single event shall be considered a single expenditure. To illustrate the above rules, where a taxpayer entertains a business guest at dinner and thereafter at the theater, the payment for dinner shall be considered to constitute one expenditure and the payment for the tickets for the theater shall be considered to constitute a separate expenditure. Similarly, if during a day of business travel a taxpayer makes separate payments for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, he shall be

considered to have made three separate expenditures. However, if during entertainment at a cocktail lounge the taxpayer pays separately for each serving of refreshments, the total amount expended for the refreshments will be treated as a single expenditure. A tip may be treated as a separate expenditure.

- (b) Aggregation. Except as otherwise provided in this section, the account book, diary, statement of expense, or similar record required by subparagraph (2)(ii) of this paragraph shall be maintained with respect to each separate expenditure and not with respect to aggregate amounts for two or more expenditures. Thus, each expenditure for such items as lodging and air or rail travel shall be recorded as a separate item and not aggregated. However, at the option of the taxpayer, amounts expended for breakfast, lunch, or dinner, may be aggregated. A tip or gratuity which is related to an underlying expense may be aggregated with such expense. For other provisions permitting recording of aggregate amounts in an account book, diary, statement of expense or similar record see paragraph (b)(2)(i) and (b)(3) of this section (relating to incidental costs of travel and entertainment).
- (ii) Allocation of expenditure. For purposes of this section, if a taxpayer has established the amount of an expenditure, but is unable to establish the portion of such amount which is attributable to each person participating in the event giving rise to the expenditure, such amount shall ordinarily be allocated to each participant on a pro rata basis, if such determination is material. Accordingly, the total number of persons for whom a travel or entertainment expenditure is incurred must be established in order to compute the portion of the expenditure allocable to each such person.
- (iii) Primary use of a facility. Section 274(a) (1)(B) and (2)(C) denies a deduction for any expenditure paid or incurred before January 1, 1979, with respect to a facility, or paid or incurred at any time with respect to a club, used in connection with an entertainment activity unless the taxpayer establishes that the facility (including a club) was used primarily for the furtherance of his trade or business. A determination whether a facility before January 1, 1979, or a club at any time was used primarily for the furtherance of the taxpayer's trade or business will depend upon the facts and circumstances of each case. In order to establish that a facility was used primarily for the furtherance of his trade or business, the taxpayer shall maintain records of the use of the facility, the cost of using the facility, mileage or its equivalent (if appropriate), and such other information as shall tend to establish such primary use. Such records of use shall contain:
 - (a) For each use of the facility claimed to be in furtherance of the taxpayer's trade or business, the elements of an expenditure specified in paragraph (b) of this section, and

- (b) For each use of the facility not in furtherance of the taxpayer's trade or business, an appropriate description of such use, including cost, date, number of persons entertained, nature of entertainment and, if applicable, information such as mileage or its equivalent. A notation such as "personal use" or "family use" would, in the case of such use, be sufficient to describe the nature of entertainment.

If a taxpayer fails to maintain adequate records concerning a facility which is likely to serve the personal purposes of the taxpayer, it shall be presumed that the use of such facility was primarily personal.

- (iv) Additional information. In a case where it is necessary to obtain additional information, either:

- (a) To clarify information contained in records, statements, testimony, or documentary evidence submitted by a taxpayer under the provisions of paragraph (c)(2) or (c)(3) of this section, or
- (b) To establish the reliability or accuracy of such records, statements, testimony, or documentary evidence, the district director may, notwithstanding any other provision of this section, obtain such additional information as he determines necessary to properly implement the provisions of section 274 and the regulations thereunder by personal interview or otherwise.

- (7) Specific exceptions. Except as otherwise prescribed by the Commissioner, substantiation otherwise required by this paragraph is not required for:

- (i) Expenses described in section 274 (e)(2) relating to food and beverages for employees, section 274(e)(3) relating to expenses treated as compensation, section 274(e)(8) relating to items available to the public, and section 274(e)(9) relating to entertainment sold to customers, and
- (ii) Expenses described in section 274(e)(5) relating to recreational, etc., expenses for employees, except that a taxpayer shall keep such records or other evidence as shall establish that such expenses were for activities (or facilities used in connection therewith) primarily for the benefit of employees other than employees who are officers, shareholders or other owners (as defined in section 274(e)(5)), or highly compensated employees.