

Reg. Section 1.408-8, Q-2

Distribution requirements for individual retirement plans.


The following questions and answers relate to the distribution rules for IRAs provided in sections 408(a)(6) and 408(b)(3).

Q-1. Is an IRA subject to the distribution rules provided in section 401(a)(9) for qualified plans?

A-1. (a) Yes, an IRA is subject to the required minimum distribution rules provided in section 401(a)(9). In order to satisfy section 401(a)(9) for purposes of determining required minimum distributions for calendar years beginning on or after January 1, 2003, the rules of §§ 1.401(a)(9)-1 through 1.401(a)(9)-9 and 1.401(a)(9)-6 for defined contribution plans must be applied, except as otherwise provided in this section. For example, whether the 5-year rule or the life expectancy rule applies to distributions after death occurring before the IRA owner's required beginning date is determined in accordance with § 1.401(a)(9)-3 and the rules of § 1.401(a)(9)-4 apply for purposes of determining an IRA owner's designated beneficiary. Similarly, the amount of the minimum distribution required for each calendar year from an individual account is determined in accordance with § 1.401(a)(9)-5. For purposes of this section, the term IRA means an individual retirement account or annuity described in section 408(a) or (b). The IRA owner is the individual for whom an IRA is originally established by contributions for the benefit of that individual and that individual's beneficiaries.

(b) For purposes of applying the required minimum distribution rules in §§ 1.401(a)(9)-1 through 1.401(a)(9)-9 and 1.401(a)(9)-6 for qualified plans, the IRA trustee, custodian, or issuer is treated as the plan administrator, and the IRA owner is substituted for the employee.

(c) See A-14 and A-15 of § 1.408A-6 for rules under section 401(a)(9) that apply to a Roth IRA.



Q-2. Are IRAs that receive employer contributions under a simplified employee pension (defined in section 408(k)) or a SIMPLE IRA (defined in section 408(p)) treated as IRAs for purposes of section 401(a)(9)?

A-2. Yes, IRAs that receive employer contributions under a simplified employee pension (defined in section 408(k)) or a SIMPLE plan (defined in section 408(p)) are treated as IRAs, rather than employer plans, for purposes of section 401(a)(9) and are, therefore, subject to the distribution rules in this section.

Q-3. In the case of distributions from an IRA, what does the term required beginning date mean?

A-3. In the case of distributions from an IRA, the term required beginning date means April 1 of the calendar year following the calendar year in which the individual attains age 70 1/2.

Q-4. What portion of a distribution from an IRA is not eligible for rollover because the amount is a required minimum distribution?

A-4. The portion of a distribution that is a required minimum distribution from an IRA and thus not eligible for rollover is determined in the same manner as provided in A-7 of § 1.402(c)-2 for distributions from qualified plans. For example, if a minimum distribution is required under section 401(a)(9) for a calendar year, an amount distributed during a calendar year from an IRA is treated as a required minimum distribution under section 401(a)(9) to the extent that the total required minimum distribution for the year under section 401(a)(9) for that IRA has not been satisfied. This requirement may be satisfied by a distribution from the IRA or, as permitted under A-9 of this section, from another IRA.

Q-5. May an individual's surviving spouse elect to treat such spouse's entire interest as a beneficiary in an individual's IRA upon the death of the individual (or the remaining part of such interest if distribution to the spouse has commenced) as the spouse's own account?

A-5. (a) The surviving spouse of an individual may elect, in the manner described in paragraph (b) of this A-5, to treat the spouse's entire interest as a beneficiary in an individual's IRA (or the remaining part of such interest if distribution thereof has commenced to the spouse) as the spouse's own IRA. This election is permitted to be made at any time after the individual's date of death. In order to make this election, the spouse must be the sole beneficiary of the IRA and have an unlimited right to withdraw amounts from the IRA. If a trust is named as beneficiary of the IRA, this requirement is not satisfied even if the spouse is the sole beneficiary of the trust. If the surviving spouse makes the election, the required minimum distribution for the calendar year of the election and each subsequent calendar year is determined under section 401(a)(9)(A) with the spouse as IRA owner and not section 401(a)(9)(B) with the surviving spouse as the deceased IRA owner's beneficiary. However, if the election is made in the calendar year containing the IRA owner's death, the spouse is not required to take a required minimum distribution as the IRA owner for that calendar year. Instead, the spouse is required to take a required minimum distribution for that year, determined with respect to the deceased IRA owner under the rules of A-4(a) of § 1.401(a)(9)-5, to the extent such a distribution was not made to the IRA owner before death.

(b) The election described in paragraph (a) of this A-5 is made by the surviving spouse redesignating the account as an account in the name of the surviving spouse as IRA owner rather than as beneficiary. Alternatively, a surviving spouse eligible to make the election is deemed to have made the election if, at any time, either of the following occurs --

(1) Any amount in the IRA that would be required to be distributed to the surviving spouse as beneficiary under section 401(a)(9)(B) is not distributed within the time period required under section 401(a)(9)(B); or

(2) Any additional amount is contributed to the IRA which is subject, or deemed to be subject, to the lifetime distribution requirements of section 401(a)(9)(A).

(c) The result of an election described in paragraph (b) of this A-5 is that the surviving spouse shall then be considered the IRA owner for whose benefit the trust is maintained for all purposes under the Internal Revenue Code (e.g., section 72(t)).

Q-6. How is the benefit determined for purposes of calculating the required minimum distribution from an IRA?

A-6. For purposes of determining the minimum distribution required to be made from an IRA in any calendar year, the account balance of the IRA as of December 31 of the calendar year immediately preceding the calendar year for which distributions are required to be made is substituted in A-3 of § 1.401(a)(9)-5 for the account balance of the employee. Except as

provided in A-7 and A-8 of this section, no adjustments are made for contributions or distributions after that date.

Q-7. What rules apply in the case of a rollover to an IRA of an amount distributed by a qualified plan or another IRA?

A-7. If the surviving spouse of an employee rolls over a distribution from a qualified plan, such surviving spouse may elect to treat the IRA as the spouse's own IRA in accordance with the provisions in A-5 of this section. In the event of any other rollover to an IRA of an amount distributed by a qualified plan or another IRA, the rules in § 1.401(a)(9)-7 will apply for purposes of determining the account balance for the receiving IRA and the required minimum distribution from the receiving IRA. However, because the value of the account balance is determined as of December 31 of the year preceding the year for which the required minimum distribution is being determined and not as of a valuation date in the preceding year, the account balance of the receiving IRA is only adjusted if the amount is not received in the calendar year in which the amount rolled over is distributed. In that case, for purposes of determining the required minimum distribution for the calendar year in which such amount is actually received, the account balance of the receiving IRA as of December 31 of the preceding year must be adjusted by the amount received in accordance with A-2 of § 1.401(a)(9)-7.

Q-8. What rules apply in the case of a transfer (including a recharacterization) from one IRA to another?

A-8. (a) General rule. In the case of a trustee-to-trustee transfer from one IRA to another IRA that is not a distribution and rollover, the transfer is not treated as a distribution by the transferor IRA for purposes of section 401(a)(9). Accordingly, the minimum distribution requirement with respect to the transferor IRA must still be satisfied. Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this A-8 for recharacterizations, after the transfer the employee's account balance and the required minimum distribution under the transferee IRA are determined in the same manner as an account balance and required minimum distribution are determined under an IRA receiving a rollover contribution under A-7 of this section.

(b) Recharacterizations. If an amount is contributed to a Roth IRA that is a conversion contribution or failed conversion contribution and that amount (plus net income allocable to that amount) is transferred to another IRA (transferee IRA) in a subsequent year as a recharacterized contribution, the recharacterized contribution (plus allocable net income) must be added to the December 31 account balance of the transferee IRA for the year in which the conversion or failed conversion occurred.

Q-9. Is the required minimum distribution from one IRA of an owner permitted to be distributed from another IRA in order to satisfy section 401(a)(9)?

A-9. Yes, the required minimum distribution must be calculated separately for each IRA. The separately calculated amounts may then be totaled and the total distribution taken from any one or more of the individual's IRAs under the rules set forth in this A-9. Generally, only amounts in IRAs that an individual holds as the IRA owner may be aggregated. However, amounts in IRAs that an individual holds as a beneficiary of the same decedent and which are being distributed under the life expectancy rule in section 401(a)(9)(B)(iii) or (iv) may be aggregated, but such amounts may not be aggregated with amounts held in IRAs that the individual holds as the IRA owner or as the beneficiary of another decedent. Distributions from section 403(b) contracts or accounts will not satisfy the distribution requirements from IRAs, nor will distributions from IRAs satisfy the distribution requirements from section 403(b) contracts or accounts. Distributions from Roth IRAs (defined in section 408A) will not satisfy the

distribution requirements applicable to IRAs or section 403(b) accounts or contracts and distributions from IRAs or section 403(b) contracts or accounts will not satisfy the distribution requirements from Roth IRAs.

Q-10. Is any reporting required by the trustee, custodian, or issuer of an IRA with respect to the minimum amount that is required to be distributed from that IRA?

A-10. Yes, the trustee, custodian, or issuer of an IRA is required to report information with respect to the minimum amount required to be distributed from the IRA for each calendar year to individuals or entities, at the time, and in the manner, prescribed by the Commissioner in revenue rulings, notices, and other guidance published in the Internal Revenue Bulletin (see § 601.601(d)(2)(ii)(b) of this chapter) as well as the applicable Federal tax forms and accompanying instructions.

Q-11. Which amounts distributed from an IRA are taken into account in determining whether section 401(a)(9) is satisfied?

A-11. (a) General rule. Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this A-11, all amounts distributed from an IRA are taken into account in determining whether section 401(a)(9) is satisfied, regardless of whether the amount is includible in income.

(b) Amounts not taken into account. The following amounts are not taken into account in determining whether the required minimum amount with respect to an IRA for a calendar year has been distributed --

(1) Contributions returned pursuant to section 408(d)(4), together with the income allocable to these contributions;

(2) Contributions returned pursuant to section 408(d)(5);

(3) Corrective distributions of excess simplified employee pension contributions under section 408(k)(6)(C), together with the income allocable to these distributions; and

(4) Similar items designated by the Commissioner in revenue rulings, notices, and other guidance published in the Internal Revenue Bulletin. See § 601.601(d)(2)(ii)(b) of this chapter.