

Reg. Section 1.461-4(d)(3)

Economic performance.

(a) Introduction –

(1) In general. For purposes of determining whether an accrual basis taxpayer can treat the amount of any liability (as defined in § 1.446-1(c)(1)(ii)(B)) as incurred, the all events test is not treated as met any earlier than the taxable year in which economic performance occurs with respect to the liability.

(2) Overview. Paragraph (b) of this section lists exceptions to the economic performance requirement. Paragraph (c) of this section provides cross-references to the definitions of certain terms for purposes of section 461 (h) and the regulations thereunder. Paragraphs (d) through (m) of this section and § 1.461-6 provide rules for determining when economic performance occurs. Section 1.461-5 provides rules relating to an exception under which certain recurring items may be incurred for the taxable year before the year during which economic performance occurs.

(b) Exceptions to the economic performance requirement. Paragraph (a)(2)(iii)(B) of § 1.461-1 provides examples of liabilities that are taken into account under rules that operate without regard to the all events test (including economic performance).

(c) Definitions. The following cross-references identify certain terms defined for purposes of section 461(h) and the regulations thereunder:

(1) Liability. See paragraph (c)(1)(ii)(B)d of § 1.446-1 for the definition of "liability."

(2) Payment. See paragraph (g)(1)(ii) of this section for the definition of "payment."

(d) Liabilities arising out of the provision of services, property, or the use of property –

(1) In general. The principles of this paragraph (d) determine when economic performance occurs with respect to liabilities arising out of the performance of services, the transfer of property, or the use of property. This paragraph (d) does not apply to liabilities described in paragraph (e) (relating to interest expense) or paragraph (g) (relating to breach of contract, workers compensation, tort, etc.) of this section. In addition, except as otherwise provided in Internal Revenue regulations, revenue procedures, or revenue rulings this paragraph (d) does not apply to amounts paid pursuant to a notional principal contract. The Commissioner may provide additional rules in regulations, revenue procedures, or revenue rulings concerning the time at which economic performance occurs for items described in this paragraph (d).

(2) Services or property provided to the Taxpayer –

(i) In general. Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (d)(5) of this section, if the liability of a taxpayer arises out of the providing of services or property to the taxpayer by another person, economic performance occurs as the services or property is provided.

(ii) Long-term contracts. In the case of any liability of a taxpayer described in paragraph (d)(2)(i) of this section that is an expense attributable to a long-term contract with respect to which the taxpayer uses the percentage of completion method, economic performance occurs –

(A) As the services or property is provided; or, if earlier,

(B) As the taxpayer makes payment (as defined in paragraph (g)(1)(ii) of this section) in satisfaction of the liability to the person providing the services or property. See paragraph (k)(2) of this section for the effective date of this paragraph (d)(2)(ii).

(iii) Employee benefits –

(A) In general. Except as otherwise provided in any Internal Revenue regulation, revenue procedure, or revenue ruling, the economic performance requirement is satisfied to the extent that any amount is otherwise deductible under section 404 (employer contributions to a plan of deferred compensation), section 404A (certain foreign deferred compensation plans), and section 419 (welfare benefit funds). See § 1.461-1(a)(2)(iii)(D).

(B) Property transferred in connection with performance of services. [Reserved]

(iv) Cross-references. See Examples 4 through 6 of paragraph (d)(7) of this section. See paragraph (d)(6) of this section for rules relating to when a taxpayer may treat services or property as provided to the taxpayer.



(3) Use of property provided to the taxpayer –

(i) In general. Except as otherwise provided in this paragraph (d)(3)d and paragraph (d)(5) of this section, if the liability of a taxpayer arises out of the use of property by the taxpayer, economic performance occurs ratably over the period of time the taxpayer is entitled to the use of the property (taking into account any reasonably expected renewal periods when necessary to carry out the purposes of section 461(h)). See Examples 6 through 9 of paragraph (d)(7) of this section.

(ii) Exceptions –

(A) Volume, frequency of use, or income. If the liability of a taxpayer arises out of the use of property by the taxpayer and all or a portion of the liability is determined by reference to the frequency or volume of use of the property or the income from the property, economic performance occurs for the portion of the liability determined by reference to the frequency or volume of use of the property or the

income from the property as the taxpayer uses the property or includes income from the property. See Examples 8 and 9 of paragraph (d)(7) of this section. This paragraph (d)(3)(ii) shall not apply if the District Director determines, that based on the substance of the transaction, the liability of the taxpayer for use of the property is more appropriately measured ratably over the period of time the taxpayer is entitled to the use of the property.

(B) Section 467 rental agreements. In the case of a liability arising out of the use of property pursuant to a section 467 rental agreement, economic performance occurs as provided in § 1.461-1(a)(2)(iii)(E).

(4) Services or property provided by the taxpayer –

(i) In general. Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (d)(5) of this section, if the liability of a taxpayer requires the taxpayer to provide services or property to another person, economic performance occurs as the taxpayer incurs costs (within the meaning of § 1.446-1(c)(1)(ii)) in connection with the satisfaction of the liability. See Examples 1 through 3 of paragraph (d)(7) of this section.

(ii) Barter transactions. If the liability of a taxpayer requires the taxpayer to provide services, property, or the use of property, and arises out of the use of property by the taxpayer, or out of the provision of services or property to the taxpayer by another person, economic performance occurs to the extent of the lesser of --

(A) The cumulative extent to which the taxpayer incurs costs (within the meaning of § 1.446-1(c)(1)(ii)) in connection with its liability to provide the services of property; or

(B) The cumulative extent to which the services or property is provided to the taxpayer.

(5) Liabilities that are assumed in connection with the sale of a trade or business –

(i) In general. If, in connection with the sale or exchange of a trade or business by a taxpayer, the purchaser expressly assumes a liability arising out of the trade or business that the taxpayer but for the economic performance requirement would have been entitled to incur as of the date of the sale, economic performance with respect to that liability occurs as the amount of the liability is properly included in the amount realized on the transaction by the taxpayer. See § 1.1001-2 for rules relating to the inclusion in amount realized from a discharge of liabilities resulting from a sale or exchange.

(ii) Trade or business. For purposes of this paragraph (d)(5), a trade or business is a specific group of activities carried on by the taxpayer for the purpose of earning income or profit if every operation that is necessary to the process of earning income or profit is included in the group. Thus, for example, the group of activities generally must include the collection of income and the payment of expenses.

- (iii) Tax avoidance. This paragraph (d)(5) does not apply if the District Director determines that tax avoidance is one of the taxpayer's principal purposes for the sale or exchange.
- (6) Rules relating to the provision of services or property to a taxpayer. The following rules apply for purposes of this paragraph (d):
- (i) Services or property provided to a taxpayer include services or property provided to another person at the direction of the taxpayer.
 - (ii) A taxpayer is permitted to treat services or property as provided to the taxpayer as the taxpayer makes payment to the person providing the services or property (as defined in paragraph (g)(1)(ii) of this section), if the taxpayer can reasonably expect the person to provide the services or property within 3 1/2 months after the date of payment.
 - (iii) A taxpayer is permitted to treat property as provided to the taxpayer when the property is delivered or accepted, or when title to the property passes. The method used by the taxpayer to determine when property is provided is a method of accounting that must comply with the rules of § 1.446-1(e). Thus, the method of determining when property is provided must be used consistently from year to year, and cannot be changed without the consent of the Commissioner.
 - (iv) If different services or items of property are required to be provided to a taxpayer under a single contract or agreement, economic performance generally occurs over the time each service is provided and as each item of property is provided. However, if a service or item of property to be provided to the taxpayer is incidental to other services or property to be provided under a contract or agreement, the taxpayer is not required to allocate any portion of the total contract price to the incidental service or property. For purposes of this paragraph (d)(6)(iv), services or property is treated as incidental only if --
 - (A) The cost of the services or property is treated on the taxpayer's books and records as part of the cost of the other services or property provided under the contract; and
 - (B) The aggregate cost of the services or property does not exceed 10 percent of the total contract price.
- (7) Examples. The following examples illustrate the principles of this paragraph (d). For purposes of these examples, it is assumed that the requirements of the all events test other than economic performance have been met, and that the recurring item exception is not used. Assume further that the examples do not involve section 467 rental agreements and, therefore, section 467 is not applicable. The examples are as follows:

Example 1. Services or property provided by the taxpayer.

- (i) X corporation, a calendar year, accrual method taxpayer, is an oil company. During March 1990, X enters into an oil and gas lease with Y. In November 1990, X installs a

platform and commences drilling. The lease obligates X to remove its offshore platform and well fixtures upon abandonment of the well or termination of the lease. During 1998, X removes the platform and well fixtures at a cost of \$200,000.

- (ii) Under paragraph (d)(4)(i) of this section, economic performance with respect to X's liability to remove the offshore platform and well fixtures occurs as X incurs costs in connection with that liability. X incurs these costs in 1998 as, for example, X's employees provide X with removal services (see paragraph (d)(2) of this section). Consequently, X incurs \$200,000 for the 1998 taxable year. Alternatively, assume that during 1990 X pays Z \$130,000 to remove the platform and fixtures, and that Z performs these removal services in 1998. Under paragraph (d)(2) of this section, X does not incur this cost until Z performs the services. Thus, economic performance with respect to the \$130,000 X pays Z occurs in 1998.

Example 2. Services or property provided by the taxpayer.

- (i) W corporation, a calendar year, accrual method taxpayer, sells tractors under a three-year warranty that obligates W to make any reasonable repairs to each tractor it sells. During 1990, W sells ten tractors. In 1992 W repairs, at a cost of \$5,000, two tractors sold during 1990.
- (ii) Under paragraph (d)(4)(i) of this section, economic performance with respect to W's liability to perform services under the warranty occurs as W incurs costs in connection with that liability. W incurs these costs in 1992 as, for example, replacement parts are provided to W (see paragraph (d)(2) of this section). Consequently, \$5,000 is incurred by W for the 1992 taxable year.

Example 3. Services or property provided by the taxpayer; Long-term contracts.

- (i) W corporation, a calendar year, accrual method taxpayer, manufactures machine tool equipment. In November 1992, W contracts to provide X corporation with certain equipment. The contract is not a long-term contract under section 460 or § 1.451-3. In 1992, W pays Z corporation \$50,000 to lease from Z, for the one-year period beginning on January 1, 1993, testing equipment to perform quality control tests required by the agreement with X. In 1992, pursuant to the terms of a contract, W pays Y corporation \$100,000 for certain parts necessary to manufacture the equipment. The parts are provided to W in 1993. W's employees provide W with services necessary to manufacture the equipment during 1993, for which W pays \$150,000 in 1993.
- (ii) Under paragraph (d)(4) of this section, economic performance with respect to W's liability to provide the equipment to X occurs as W incurs costs in connection with that liability. W incurs these costs during 1993, as services, property, and the use of property necessary to manufacture the equipment are provided to W (see paragraphs (d)(2) and (d)(3) of this section). Thus, \$300,000 is incurred by W for the 1993 taxable year. See section 263A and the regulations thereunder for rules relating to the capitalization and inclusion in inventory of these incurred costs.
- (iii) Alternatively, assume that the agreement with X is a long-term contract as defined in section 460(f), and that W takes into account all items with respect to such contracts

under the percentage of completion method as described in section 460(b)(1). Under paragraph (d)(2)(ii) of this section, the \$100,000 W pays in 1992 for parts is incurred for the 1992 taxable year, for purposes of determining the percentage of completion under section 460(b)(1)(A). W's other costs under the agreement are incurred for the 1993 taxable year for this purpose.

Example 4. Services or property provided to the taxpayers.

- (i) LP1, a calendar year, accrual method limited partnership, owns the working interest in a parcel of property containing oil and gas. During December 1990, LP1 enters into a turnkey contract with Z corporation pursuant to which LP1 pays Z \$200,000 and Z is required to provide a completed well by the close of 1992. In May 1992, Z commences drilling the well, and, in December 1992, the well is completed.
- (ii) Under paragraph (d)(2) of this section, economic performance with respect to LP1's liability for drilling and development services provided to LP1 by Z occurs as the services are provided. Consequently, \$200,000 is incurred by LP1 for the 1992 taxable year.

Example 5. Services or property provided to the taxpayer.

- (i) X corporation, a calendar year, accrual method taxpayer, is an automobile dealer. On January 15, 1990, X agrees to pay an additional \$10 to Y, the manufacturer of the automobiles, for each automobile purchased by X from Y. Y agrees to provide advertising and promotional activities to X.
- (ii) During 1990, X purchases from Y 1,000 new automobiles and pays to Y an additional \$10,000 as provided in the agreement. Y, in turn, uses this \$10,000 to provide advertising and promotional activities during 1992.
- (iii) Under paragraph (d)(2) of this section, economic performance with respect to X's liability for advertising and promotional services provided to X by Y occurs as the services are provided. Consequently, \$10,000 is incurred by X for the 1992 taxable year.

Example 6. Use of property provided to the taxpayer; services or property provided to the taxpayer.

- (i) V corporation, a calendar year, accrual method taxpayer, charters aircrafts. On December 20, 1990, V leases a jet aircraft from L for the four-year period that begins on January 1, 1991. The lease obligates V to pay L a base rental of \$500,000 per year. In addition, the lease requires V to pay \$25 to an escrow account for each hour that the aircraft is flown. The escrow account funds are held by V and are to be used by L to make necessary repairs to the aircraft. Any amount remaining in the escrow account upon termination of the lease is payable to V. During 1991, the aircraft is flown 1,000 hours and V pays \$25,000 to the escrow account. The aircraft is repaired by L in 1993. In 1994, \$20,000 is released from the escrow account to pay L for the repairs.
- (ii) Under paragraph (d)(3)(i) of this section, economic performance with respect to V's base rental liability occurs ratably over the period of time V is entitled to use the jet aircraft.

Consequently, the \$500,000 rent is incurred by V for the 1991 taxable year and for each of the next three taxable years. Under paragraph (d)(2) of this section, economic performance with respect to the liability to place amounts in escrow occurs as the aircraft is repaired. Consequently, V incurs \$20,000 for the 1993 taxable year.

Example 7. Use of property provided to the taxpayer.

- (i) X corporation, a calendar year, accrual method taxpayer, manufactures and sells electronic circuitry. On November 15, 1990, X enters into a contract with Y that entitles X to the exclusive use of a product owned by Y for the five-year period beginning on January 1, 1991. Pursuant to the contract, X pays Y \$100,000 on December 30, 1990.
- (ii) Under paragraph (d)(3)(i) of this section, economic performance with respect to X's liability for the use of property occurs ratably over the period of time X is entitled to use the product. Consequently, \$20,000 is incurred by X for 1991 and for each of the succeeding four taxable years.

Example 8. Use of property provided to the taxpayer.

- (i) Y corporation, a calendar year, accrual method taxpayer, enters into a five-year lease with Z for the use of a copy machine on July 1, 1991. Y also receives delivery of the copy machine on July 1, 1991. The lease obligates Y to pay Z a base rental payment of \$6,000 per year at the beginning of each lease year and an additional charge of 5 cents per copy 30 days after the end of each lease year. The machine is used to make 50,000 copies during the first lease year: 20,000 copies in 1991 and 30,000 copies from January 1, 1992, to July 1, 1992. Y pays the \$6,000 base rental payment to Z on July 1, 1991, and the \$2,500 variable use payment on July 30, 1992.
- (ii) Under paragraph (d)(3)(i) of this section, economic performance with respect to Y's base rental liability occurs ratably over the period of time Y is entitled to use the copy machine. Consequently, \$3,000 rent is incurred by Y for the 1991 taxable year. Under paragraph (d)(3)(ii) of this section, economic performance with respect to Y's variable use portion of the liability occurs as Y uses the machine. Thus, the \$1,000 of the \$2,500 variable-use liability that relates to the 20,000 copies made in 1991 is incurred by Y for the 1991 taxable year.

Example 9. Use of property provided to the taxpayer.

- (i) X corporation, a calendar year, accrual method taxpayer, enters into a five-year product distribution agreement with Y, on January 1, 1992. The agreement provides for a payment of \$100,000 on January 1, 1992, plus 10 percent of the gross profits earned by X from distribution of the product. The variable income portion of X's liability is payable on April 1 of each subsequent year. On January 1, 1992, X pays Y \$100,000. On April 1, 1993, X pays Y \$3 million representing 10 percent of X's gross profits from January 1 through December 31, 1992.
- (ii) Under paragraph (d)(3)(i) of this section, economic performance with respect to X's \$100,000 payment occurs ratably over the period of time X is entitled to use the product. Consequently, \$20,000 is incurred by X for each year of the agreement beginning with

1992. Under paragraph (d)(3)(ii) of this section, economic performance with respect to X's variable income portion of the liability occurs as the income is earned by X. Thus, the \$3 million variable-income liability is incurred by X for the 1992 taxable year.