

Reg. Section 1.48-1(c)

Definition of section 38 property.

(a) In general. Property which qualifies for the credit allowed by section 38 is known as "section 38 property". Except as otherwise provided in this section, the term "section 38 property" means property (1) with respect to which depreciation (or amortization in lieu of depreciation) is allowable to the taxpayer, (2) which has an estimated useful life of 3 years or more (determined as of the time such property is placed in service), and (3) which is (i) tangible personal property, (ii) other tangible property (not including a building and its structural components) but only if such other property is used as an integral part of manufacturing, production, or extraction, or an an integral part of furnishing transportation, communications, electrical energy, gas, water, or sewage disposal services by a person engaged in a trade or business of furnishing any such service, or is a research or storage facility used in connection with any of the foregoing activities, (iii) an elevator or escalator which satisfies the conditions of section 48(a)(1)(C), or (iv) in the case of a qualified rehabilitated building, that portion of the basis which is attributable to qualified rehabilitation expenditures. The determination of whether property qualifies as section 38 property in the hands of the taxpayer for purposes of the credit allowed by section 38 must be made with respect to the first taxable year in which such property is placed in service by the taxpayer. See paragraph (d) of § 1.46-3. For the meaning of "estimated useful life", see paragraph (e) of § 1.46-3. In the case of property which is not described in section 50, this paragraph shall be applied by substituting "4 years" for "3 years".

(b) Depreciation allowable. (1) Property (with the exception of property described in section 48(a)(1)(F) and paragraph (p) of this section) is not section 38 property unless a deduction for depreciation (or amortization in lieu of depreciation) with respect to such property is allowable to the taxpayer for the taxable year. A deduction for depreciation is allowable if the property is of a character subject to the allowance for depreciation under section 167 and the basis (or cost) of the property is recovered through a method of depreciation, including, for example, the unit of production method and the retirement method as well as methods of depreciation which measure the life of the property in terms of years. If property is placed in service (within the meaning of paragraph (d) of § 1.46-3) in a trade or business (or in the production of income), but under the taxpayer's depreciation practice the period for depreciation with respect to such property begins in a taxable year subsequent to the taxable year in which such property is placed in service, then a deduction for depreciation shall be treated as allowable with respect to such property in the earlier taxable year (or years). Thus, for example, if a machine is placed in service in a trade or business in 1963, but the period for depreciation with respect to such machine begins in 1964, because the taxpayer uses an averaging convention (see § 1.167(a)-10) in computing depreciation, then, for purposes of determining whether the machine qualifies as section 38 property, a deduction for depreciation shall be treated as allowable in 1963.

(2) If, for the taxable year in which property is placed in service, a deduction for depreciation is allowable to the taxpayer only with respect to a part of such property, then only the proportionate part of the property with respect to which such deduction is allowable qualifies

as section 38 property for the purpose of determining the amount of credit allowable under section 38. Thus, for example, if property is used 80 percent of the time in a trade or business and is used 20 percent of the time for personal purposes, only 80 percent of the basis (or cost) of such property qualifies as section 38 property. Further, property does not qualify to the extent that a deduction for depreciation thereon is disallowed under section 274 (relating to disallowance of certain entertainment, etc., expenses).

(3) If the cost of property is not recovered through a method of depreciation but through a deduction of the full cost in one taxable year, for purposes of subparagraph (1) of this paragraph a deduction for depreciation with respect to such property is not allowable to the taxpayer. However, if an adjustment with respect to the income tax return for such taxable year requires the cost of such property to be recovered through a method of depreciation, a deduction for depreciation will be considered as allowable to the taxpayer.

(4) If depreciation sustained on property is not an allowable deduction for the taxable year but is added to the basis of property being constructed, reconstructed, or erected by the taxpayer, for purposes of subparagraph (1) of this paragraph a deduction for depreciation shall be treated as allowable for the taxable year with respect to the property on which depreciation is sustained. Thus, if \$ 1,000 of depreciation sustained with respect to property No. 1, which is placed in service in 1964 by taxpayer A, is not allowable to A as a deduction for 1964 but is added to the basis of property being constructed by A (property no. 2), for purposes of subparagraph (1) of this paragraph a deduction for depreciation shall be treated as allowable to A for 1964 with respect to property no. 1. However, the \$ 1,000 amount is not included in the basis of property no. 2 for purposes of determining A's qualified investment with respect to property no. 2. See paragraph (c)(1) of § 1.46-3.



(c) Definition of tangible personal property. If property is tangible personal property it may qualify as section 38 property irrespective of whether it is used as an integral part of an activity (or constitutes a research or storage facility used in connection with such activity) specified in paragraph (a) of this section. Local law shall not be controlling for purposes of determining whether property is or is not "tangible" or "personal". Thus, the fact that under local law property is held to be personal property or tangible property shall not be controlling. Conversely, property may be personal property for purposes of the investment credit even though under local law the property is considered to be a fixture and therefore real property. For purposes of this section, the term "tangible personal property" means any tangible property except land and improvements thereto, such as buildings or other inherently permanent structures (including items which are structural components of such buildings or structures). Thus, buildings, swimming pools, paved parking areas, wharves and docks, bridges, and fences are not tangible personal property. Tangible personal property includes all property (other than structural components) which is contained in or attached to a building. Thus, such property as production machinery, printing presses, transportation and office equipment, refrigerators, grocery counters, testing equipment, display racks and shelves, and neon and other signs, which is contained in or attached to a building constitutes tangible personal property for purposes of the credit allowed by section 38. Further, all property which is in the nature of machinery (other than structural components of a building or other inherently permanent structure) shall be considered tangible personal property even though located outside a building. Thus, for example, a gasoline pump, hydraulic car lift, or automatic vending machine, although annexed to the ground, shall be considered tangible personal property.

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