

defined in section 4001(a)(21) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 with respect to the affected plan. Such notice shall include a description of the extent to which the plan is funded for benefits which are guaranteed under title IV of such Act and for benefit liabilities.

(B) Consideration of relevant information

The Secretary shall consider any relevant information provided by a person to whom notice was given under paragraph (1).

(Added Pub. L. 109-280, title II, §211(a), Aug. 17, 2006, 120 Stat. 890.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, referred to in subsecs. (a)(2), (b)(7)(A)–(D), and (d)(3)(A), is Pub. L. 93-406, Sept. 2, 1974, 88 Stat. 829, as amended. Title IV of the Act is classified principally to subchapter III (§1301 et seq.) of chapter 18 of Title 29, Labor. Part 1 of subtitle E of title IV of the Act is classified generally to part 1 (§1381 et seq.) of subtitle E of subchapter III of chapter 18 of Title 29. Sections 4001, 4222, 4223, and 4243 of the Act are classified to sections 1301, 1402, 1403, and 1423, respectively, of Title 29. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 1001 of Title 29 and Tables.

The date of the enactment of the Pension Protection Act of 2006, referred to in subsec. (b)(2)(D), (E), (3)(D), (4), (7)(E), is the date of enactment of Pub. L. 109-280, which was approved Aug. 17, 2006.

The Social Security Act, referred to in subsec. (c)(4)(A), (6)(D)(v)(II), is act Aug. 14, 1935, ch. 531, 49 Stat. 620, as amended, which is classified generally to chapter 7 (§301 et seq.) of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare. Title II of the Act is classified generally to subchapter II (§401 et seq.) of chapter 7 of Title 42. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 1305 of Title 42 and Tables.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Pub. L. 109-280, title II, §211(b), Aug. 17, 2006, 120 Stat. 898, provided that:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by this section [enacting this section] shall apply to plan years beginning after 2007.

“(2) SPECIAL RULE FOR CERTAIN AMORTIZATION EXTENSIONS.—If the Secretary of the Treasury grants an extension under section 304 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 [29 U.S.C. 1084] and section 412(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 with respect to any application filed with the Secretary of the Treasury on or before June 30, 2005, the extension (and any modification thereof) shall be applied and administered under the rules of such sections as in effect before the enactment of this Act [Aug. 17, 2006], including the use of the rate of interest determined under section 6621(b) of such Code.”

SPECIAL RULE FOR CERTAIN BENEFITS FUNDED UNDER AN AGREEMENT APPROVED BY THE PENSION BENEFIT GUARANTY CORPORATION

For applicability of this section to a multiemployer plan that is a party to an agreement that was approved by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation prior to June 30, 2005, and that increases benefits and provides for certain withdrawal liability rules, see section 206 of Pub. L. 109-280, set out as a note under section 412 of this title.

§ 432. Additional funding rules for multiemployer plans in endangered status or critical status

(a) General rule

For purposes of this part, in the case of a multiemployer plan in effect on July 16, 2006—

(1) if the plan is in endangered status—

(A) the plan sponsor shall adopt and implement a funding improvement plan in accordance with the requirements of subsection (c), and

(B) the requirements of subsection (d) shall apply during the funding plan adoption period and the funding improvement period, and

(2) if the plan is in critical status—

(A) the plan sponsor shall adopt and implement a rehabilitation plan in accordance with the requirements of subsection (e), and

(B) the requirements of subsection (f) shall apply during the rehabilitation plan adoption period and the rehabilitation period.

(b) Determination of endangered and critical status

For purposes of this section—

(1) Endangered status

A multiemployer plan is in endangered status for a plan year if, as determined by the plan actuary under paragraph (3), the plan is not in critical status for the plan year and, as of the beginning of the plan year, either—

(A) the plan's funded percentage for such plan year is less than 80 percent, or

(B) the plan has an accumulated funding deficiency for such plan year, or is projected to have such an accumulated funding deficiency for any of the 6 succeeding plan years, taking into account any extension of amortization periods under section 431(d).

For purposes of this section, a plan shall be treated as in seriously endangered status for a plan year if the plan is described in both subparagraphs (A) and (B).

(2) Critical status

A multiemployer plan is in critical status for a plan year if, as determined by the plan actuary under paragraph (3), the plan is described in 1 or more of the following subparagraphs as of the beginning of the plan year:

(A) A plan is described in this subparagraph if—

(i) the funded percentage of the plan is less than 65 percent, and

(ii) the sum of—

(I) the fair market value of plan assets, plus

(II) the present value of the reasonably anticipated employer contributions for the current plan year and each of the 6 succeeding plan years, assuming that the terms of all collective bargaining agreements pursuant to which the plan is maintained for the current plan year continue in effect for succeeding plan years,

is less than the present value of all non-forfeitable benefits projected to be payable under the plan during the current plan year and each of the 6 succeeding plan years (plus administrative expenses for such plan years).

(B) A plan is described in this subparagraph if—

(i) the plan has an accumulated funding deficiency for the current plan year, not taking into account any extension of amortization periods under section 431(d), or

(ii) the plan is projected to have an accumulated funding deficiency for any of the 3 succeeding plan years (4 succeeding plan years if the funded percentage of the plan is 65 percent or less), not taking into account any extension of amortization periods under section 431(d).

(C) A plan is described in this subparagraph if—

(i)(I) the plan's normal cost for the current plan year, plus interest (determined at the rate used for determining costs under the plan) for the current plan year on the amount of unfunded benefit liabilities under the plan as of the last date of the preceding plan year, exceeds

(II) the present value of the reasonably anticipated employer and employee contributions for the current plan year,

(ii) the present value, as of the beginning of the current plan year, of nonforfeitable benefits of inactive participants is greater than the present value of nonforfeitable benefits of active participants, and

(iii) the plan has an accumulated funding deficiency for the current plan year, or is projected to have such a deficiency for any of the 4 succeeding plan years, not taking into account any extension of amortization periods under section 431(d).

(D) A plan is described in this subparagraph if the sum of—

(i) the fair market value of plan assets, plus

(ii) the present value of the reasonably anticipated employer contributions for the current plan year and each of the 4 succeeding plan years, assuming that the terms of all collective bargaining agreements pursuant to which the plan is maintained for the current plan year continue in effect for succeeding plan years,

is less than the present value of all benefits projected to be payable under the plan during the current plan year and each of the 4 succeeding plan years (plus administrative expenses for such plan years).

(3) Annual certification by plan actuary

(A) In general

Not later than the 90th day of each plan year of a multiemployer plan, the plan actuary shall certify to the Secretary and to the plan sponsor—

(i) whether or not the plan is in endangered status for such plan year and whether or not the plan is or will be in critical status for such plan year, and

(ii) in the case of a plan which is in a funding improvement or rehabilitation period, whether or not the plan is making the scheduled progress in meeting the requirements of its funding improvement or rehabilitation plan.

(B) Actuarial projections of assets and liabilities

(i) In general

In making the determinations and projections under this subsection, the plan actuary shall make projections required for the current and succeeding plan years of the current value of the assets of the plan and the present value of all liabilities to participants and beneficiaries under the plan for the current plan year as of the beginning of such year. The actuary's projections shall be based on reasonable actuarial estimates, assumptions, and methods that, except as provided in clause (iii), offer the actuary's best estimate of anticipated experience under the plan. The projected present value of liabilities as of the beginning of such year shall be determined based on the most recent of either—

(I) the actuarial statement required under section 103(d) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 with respect to the most recently filed annual report, or

(II) the actuarial valuation for the preceding plan year.

(ii) Determinations of future contributions

Any actuarial projection of plan assets shall assume—

(I) reasonably anticipated employer contributions for the current and succeeding plan years, assuming that the terms of the one or more collective bargaining agreements pursuant to which the plan is maintained for the current plan year continue in effect for succeeding plan years, or

(II) that employer contributions for the most recent plan year will continue indefinitely, but only if the plan actuary determines there have been no significant demographic changes that would make such assumption unreasonable.

(iii) Projected industry activity

Any projection of activity in the industry or industries covered by the plan, including future covered employment and contribution levels, shall be based on information provided by the plan sponsor, which shall act reasonably and in good faith.

(C) Penalty for failure to secure timely actuarial certification

Any failure of the plan's actuary to certify the plan's status under this subsection by the date specified in subparagraph (A) shall be treated for purposes of section 502(c)(2) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 as a failure or refusal by the plan administrator to file the annual report required to be filed with the Secretary under section 101(b)(1) of such Act.

(D) Notice

(i) In general

In any case in which it is certified under subparagraph (A) that a multiemployer

plan is or will be in endangered or critical status for a plan year, the plan sponsor shall, not later than 30 days after the date of the certification, provide notification of the endangered or critical status to the participants and beneficiaries, the bargaining parties, the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, and the Secretary of Labor.

(ii) Plans in critical status

If it is certified under subparagraph (A) that a multiemployer plan is or will be in critical status, the plan sponsor shall include in the notice under clause (i) an explanation of the possibility that—

(I) adjustable benefits (as defined in subsection (e)(8)) may be reduced, and

(II) such reductions may apply to participants and beneficiaries whose benefit commencement date is on or after the date such notice is provided for the first plan year in which the plan is in critical status.

(iii) Model notice

The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor¹ shall prescribe a model notice that a multiemployer plan may use to satisfy the requirements under clause (ii).

(c) Funding improvement plan must be adopted for multiemployer plans in endangered status

(1) In general

In any case in which a multiemployer plan is in endangered status for a plan year, the plan sponsor, in accordance with this subsection—

(A) shall adopt a funding improvement plan not later than 240 days following the required date for the actuarial certification of endangered status under subsection (b)(3)(A), and

(B) within 30 days after the adoption of the funding improvement plan—

(i) shall provide to the bargaining parties 1 or more schedules showing revised benefit structures, revised contribution structures, or both, which, if adopted, may reasonably be expected to enable the multiemployer plan to meet the applicable benchmarks in accordance with the funding improvement plan, including—

(I) one proposal for reductions in the amount of future benefit accruals necessary to achieve the applicable benchmarks, assuming no amendments increasing contributions under the plan (other than amendments increasing contributions necessary to achieve the applicable benchmarks after amendments have reduced future benefit accruals to the maximum extent permitted by law), and

(II) one proposal for increases in contributions under the plan necessary to achieve the applicable benchmarks, assuming no amendments reducing future benefit accruals under the plan, and

(ii) may, if the plan sponsor deems appropriate, prepare and provide the bargaining parties with additional information relating to contribution rates or benefit reductions, alternative schedules, or other information relevant to achieving the applicable benchmarks in accordance with the funding improvement plan.

For purposes of this section, the term “applicable benchmarks” means the requirements applicable to the multiemployer plan under paragraph (3) (as modified by paragraph (5)).

(2) Exception for years after process begins

Paragraph (1) shall not apply to a plan year if such year is in a funding plan adoption period or funding improvement period by reason of the plan being in endangered status for a preceding plan year. For purposes of this section, such preceding plan year shall be the initial determination year with respect to the funding improvement plan to which it relates.

(3) Funding improvement plan

For purposes of this section—

(A) In general

A funding improvement plan is a plan which consists of the actions, including options or a range of options to be proposed to the bargaining parties, formulated to provide, based on reasonably anticipated experience and reasonable actuarial assumptions, for the attainment by the plan during the funding improvement period of the following requirements:

(i) Increase in plan’s funding percentage

The plan’s funded percentage as of the close of the funding improvement period equals or exceeds a percentage equal to the sum of—

(I) such percentage as of the beginning of such period, plus

(II) 33 percent of the difference between 100 percent and the percentage under subclause (I).

(ii) Avoidance of accumulated funding deficiencies

No accumulated funding deficiency for any plan year during the funding improvement period (taking into account any extension of amortization periods under section 431(d)).

(B) Seriously endangered plans

In the case of a plan in seriously endangered status, except as provided in paragraph (5), subparagraph (A)(i)(II) shall be applied by substituting “20 percent” for “33 percent”.

(4) Funding improvement period

For purposes of this section—

(A) In general

The funding improvement period for any funding improvement plan adopted pursuant to this subsection is the 10-year period beginning on the first day of the first plan year of the multiemployer plan beginning after the earlier of—

¹ So in original. Probably should be followed by a comma.

(i) the second anniversary of the date of the adoption of the funding improvement plan, or

(ii) the expiration of the collective bargaining agreements in effect on the due date for the actuarial certification of endangered status for the initial determination year under subsection (b)(3)(A) and covering, as of such due date, at least 75 percent of the active participants in such multiemployer plan.

(B) Seriously endangered plans

In the case of a plan in seriously endangered status, except as provided in paragraph (5), subparagraph (A) shall be applied by substituting “15-year period” for “10-year period”.

(C) Coordination with changes in status

(i) Plans no longer in endangered status

If the plan’s actuary certifies under subsection (b)(3)(A) for a plan year in any funding plan adoption period or funding improvement period that the plan is no longer in endangered status and is not in critical status, the funding plan adoption period or funding improvement period, whichever is applicable, shall end as of the close of the preceding plan year.

(ii) Plans in critical status

If the plan’s actuary certifies under subsection (b)(3)(A) for a plan year in any funding plan adoption period or funding improvement period that the plan is in critical status, the funding plan adoption period or funding improvement period, whichever is applicable, shall end as of the close of the plan year preceding the first plan year in the rehabilitation period with respect to such status.

(D) Plans in endangered status at end of period

If the plan’s actuary certifies under subsection (b)(3)(A) for the first plan year following the close of the period described in subparagraph (A) that the plan is in endangered status, the provisions of this subsection and subsection (d) shall be applied as if such first plan year were an initial determination year, except that the plan may not be amended in a manner inconsistent with the funding improvement plan in effect for the preceding plan year until a new funding improvement plan is adopted.

(5) Special rules for seriously endangered plans more than 70 percent funded

(A) In general

If the funded percentage of a plan in seriously endangered status was more than 70 percent as of the beginning of the initial determination year—

(i) paragraphs (3)(B) and (4)(B) shall apply only if the plan’s actuary certifies, within 30 days after the certification under subsection (b)(3)(A) for the initial determination year, that, based on the terms of the plan and the collective bargaining agreements in effect at the time of such

certification, the plan is not projected to meet the requirements of paragraph (3)(A) (without regard to paragraphs (3)(B) and (4)(B)), and

(ii) if there is a certification under clause (i), the plan may, in formulating its funding improvement plan, only take into account the rules of paragraph (3)(B) and (4)(B) for plan years in the funding improvement period beginning on or before the date on which the last of the collective bargaining agreements described in paragraph (4)(A)(ii) expires.

(B) Special rule after expiration of agreements

Notwithstanding subparagraph (A)(ii), if, for any plan year ending after the date described in subparagraph (A)(ii), the plan actuary certifies (at the time of the annual certification under subsection (b)(3)(A) for such plan year) that, based on the terms of the plan and collective bargaining agreements in effect at the time of that annual certification, the plan is not projected to be able to meet the requirements of paragraph (3)(A) (without regard to paragraphs (3)(B) and (4)(B)), paragraphs (3)(B) and (4)(B) shall continue to apply for such year.

(6) Updates to funding improvement plans and schedules

(A) Funding improvement plan

The plan sponsor shall annually update the funding improvement plan and shall file the update with the plan’s annual report under section 104 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974.

(B) Schedules

The plan sponsor shall annually update any schedule of contribution rates provided under this subsection to reflect the experience of the plan.

(C) Duration of schedule

A schedule of contribution rates provided by the plan sponsor and relied upon by bargaining parties in negotiating a collective bargaining agreement shall remain in effect for the duration of that collective bargaining agreement.

(7) Imposition of default schedule where failure to adopt funding improvement plan

(A) In general

If—

(i) a collective bargaining agreement providing for contributions under a multiemployer plan that was in effect at the time the plan entered endangered status expires, and

(ii) after receiving one or more schedules from the plan sponsor under paragraph (1)(B), the bargaining parties with respect to such agreement fail to adopt a contribution schedule with terms consistent with the funding improvement plan and a schedule from the plan sponsor,

the plan sponsor shall implement the schedule described in paragraph (1)(B)(i)(I) beginning on the date specified in subparagraph (B).

(B) Date of implementation

The date specified in this subparagraph is the date which is 180 days after the date on which the collective bargaining agreement described in subparagraph (A) expires.

(8) Funding plan adoption period

For purposes of this section, the term “funding plan adoption period” means the period beginning on the date of the certification under subsection (b)(3)(A) for the initial determination year and ending on the day before the first day of the funding improvement period.

(d) Rules for operation of plan during adoption and improvement periods**(1) Special rules for plan adoption period**

During the funding plan adoption period—

(A) the plan sponsor may not accept a collective bargaining agreement or participation agreement with respect to the multiemployer plan that provides for—

- (i) a reduction in the level of contributions for any participants,
- (ii) a suspension of contributions with respect to any period of service, or
- (iii) any new direct or indirect exclusion of younger or newly hired employees from plan participation,

(B) no amendment of the plan which increases the liabilities of the plan by reason of any increase in benefits, any change in the accrual of benefits, or any change in the rate at which benefits become nonforfeitable under the plan may be adopted unless the amendment is required as a condition of qualification under part I of subchapter D of chapter 1 or to comply with other applicable law, and

(C) in the case of a plan in seriously endangered status, the plan sponsor shall take all reasonable actions which are consistent with the terms of the plan and applicable law and which are expected, based on reasonable assumptions, to achieve—

- (i) an increase in the plan’s funded percentage, and
- (ii) postponement of an accumulated funding deficiency for at least 1 additional plan year.

Actions under subparagraph (C) include applications for extensions of amortization periods under section 431(d), use of the shortfall funding method in making funding standard account computations, amendments to the plan’s benefit structure, reductions in future benefit accruals, and other reasonable actions consistent with the terms of the plan and applicable law.

(2) Compliance with funding improvement plan**(A) In general**

A plan may not be amended after the date of the adoption of a funding improvement plan so as to be inconsistent with the funding improvement plan.

(B) No reduction in contributions

A plan sponsor may not during any funding improvement period accept a collective

bargaining agreement or participation agreement with respect to the multiemployer plan that provides for—

- (i) a reduction in the level of contributions for any participants,
- (ii) a suspension of contributions with respect to any period of service, or
- (iii) any new direct or indirect exclusion of younger or newly hired employees from plan participation.

(C) Special rules for benefit increases

A plan may not be amended after the date of the adoption of a funding improvement plan so as to increase benefits, including future benefit accruals, unless the plan actuary certifies that the benefit increase is consistent with the funding improvement plan and is paid for out of contributions not required by the funding improvement plan to meet the applicable benchmark in accordance with the schedule contemplated in the funding improvement plan.

(e) Rehabilitation plan must be adopted for multiemployer plans in critical status**(1) In general**

In any case in which a multiemployer plan is in critical status for a plan year, the plan sponsor, in accordance with this subsection—

(A) shall adopt a rehabilitation plan not later than 240 days following the required date for the actuarial certification of critical status under subsection (b)(3)(A), and

(B) within 30 days after the adoption of the rehabilitation plan—

(i) shall provide to the bargaining parties 1 or more schedules showing revised benefit structures, revised contribution structures, or both, which, if adopted, may reasonably be expected to enable the multiemployer plan to emerge from critical status in accordance with the rehabilitation plan, and

(ii) may, if the plan sponsor deems appropriate, prepare and provide the bargaining parties with additional information relating to contribution rates or benefit reductions, alternative schedules, or other information relevant to emerging from critical status in accordance with the rehabilitation plan.

The schedule or schedules described in subparagraph (B)(i) shall reflect reductions in future benefit accruals and adjustable benefits, and increases in contributions, that the plan sponsor determines are reasonably necessary to emerge from critical status. One schedule shall be designated as the default schedule and such schedule shall assume that there are no increases in contributions under the plan other than the increases necessary to emerge from critical status after future benefit accruals and other benefits (other than benefits the reduction or elimination of which are not permitted under section 411(d)(6)) have been reduced to the maximum extent permitted by law.

(2) Exception for years after process begins

Paragraph (1) shall not apply to a plan year if such year is in a rehabilitation plan adop-

tion period or rehabilitation period by reason of the plan being in critical status for a preceding plan year. For purposes of this section, such preceding plan year shall be the initial critical year with respect to the rehabilitation plan to which it relates.

(3) Rehabilitation plan

For purposes of this section—

(A) In general

A rehabilitation plan is a plan which consists of—

(i) actions, including options or a range of options to be proposed to the bargaining parties, formulated, based on reasonably anticipated experience and reasonable actuarial assumptions, to enable the plan to cease to be in critical status by the end of the rehabilitation period and may include reductions in plan expenditures (including plan mergers and consolidations), reductions in future benefit accruals or increases in contributions, if agreed to by the bargaining parties, or any combination of such actions, or

(ii) if the plan sponsor determines that, based on reasonable actuarial assumptions and upon exhaustion of all reasonable measures, the plan can not reasonably be expected to emerge from critical status by the end of the rehabilitation period, reasonable measures to emerge from critical status at a later time or to forestall possible insolvency (within the meaning of section 4245 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974).

A rehabilitation plan must provide annual standards for meeting the requirements of such rehabilitation plan. Such plan shall also include the schedules required to be provided under paragraph (1)(B)(i) and if clause (ii) applies, shall set forth the alternatives considered, explain why the plan is not reasonably expected to emerge from critical status by the end of the rehabilitation period, and specify when, if ever, the plan is expected to emerge from critical status in accordance with the rehabilitation plan.

(B) Updates to rehabilitation plan and schedules

(i) Rehabilitation plan

The plan sponsor shall annually update the rehabilitation plan and shall file the update with the plan's annual report under section 104 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974.

(ii) Schedules

The plan sponsor shall annually update any schedule of contribution rates provided under this subsection to reflect the experience of the plan.

(iii) Duration of schedule

A schedule of contribution rates provided by the plan sponsor and relied upon by bargaining parties in negotiating a collective bargaining agreement shall remain in effect for the duration of that collective bargaining agreement.

(C) Imposition of default schedule where failure to adopt rehabilitation plan

(i) In general

If—

(I) a collective bargaining agreement providing for contributions under a multiemployer plan that was in effect at the time the plan entered critical status expires, and

(II) after receiving one or more schedules from the plan sponsor under paragraph (1)(B), the bargaining parties with respect to such agreement fail to adopt a to adopt a² contribution schedule with terms consistent with the rehabilitation plan and a schedule from the plan sponsor under paragraph (1)(B)(i),

the plan sponsor shall implement the default schedule described in the last sentence of paragraph (1) beginning on the date specified in clause (ii).

(ii) Date of implementation

The date specified in this clause is the date which is 180 days after the date on which the collective bargaining agreement described in clause (i) expires.

(4) Rehabilitation period

For purposes of this section—

(A) In general

The rehabilitation period for a plan in critical status is the 10-year period beginning on the first day of the first plan year of the multiemployer plan following the earlier of—

(i) the second anniversary of the date of the adoption of the rehabilitation plan, or

(ii) the expiration of the collective bargaining agreements in effect on the due date for the actuarial certification of critical status for the initial critical year under subsection (a)(1) and covering, as of such date at least 75 percent of the active participants in such multiemployer plan.

If a plan emerges from critical status as provided under subparagraph (B) before the end of such 10-year period, the rehabilitation period shall end with the plan year preceding the plan year for which the determination under subparagraph (B) is made.

(B) Emergence

A plan in critical status shall remain in such status until a plan year for which the plan actuary certifies, in accordance with subsection (b)(3)(A), that the plan is not projected to have an accumulated funding deficiency for the plan year or any of the 9 succeeding plan years, without regard to the use of the shortfall method but taking into account any extension of amortization periods under section 431(d).

(5) Rehabilitation plan adoption period

For purposes of this section, the term "rehabilitation plan adoption period" means the period beginning on the date of the certification

² So in original.

under subsection (b)(3)(A) for the initial critical year and ending on the day before the first day of the rehabilitation period.

(6) Limitation on reduction in rates of future accruals

Any reduction in the rate of future accruals under the default schedule described in the last sentence of paragraph (1) shall not reduce the rate of future accruals below—

(A) a monthly benefit (payable as a single life annuity commencing at the participant's normal retirement age) equal to 1 percent of the contributions required to be made with respect to a participant, or the equivalent standard accrual rate for a participant or group of participants under the collective bargaining agreements in effect as of the first day of the initial critical year, or

(B) if lower, the accrual rate under the plan on such first day.

The equivalent standard accrual rate shall be determined by the plan sponsor based on the standard or average contribution base units which the plan sponsor determines to be representative for active participants and such other factors as the plan sponsor determines to be relevant. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed as limiting the ability of the plan sponsor to prepare and provide the bargaining parties with alternative schedules to the default schedule that establish lower or higher accrual and contribution rates than the rates otherwise described in this paragraph.

(7) Automatic employer surcharge

(A) Imposition of surcharge

Each employer otherwise obligated to make a contribution for the initial critical year shall be obligated to pay to the plan for such year a surcharge equal to 5 percent of the contribution otherwise required under the applicable collective bargaining agreement (or other agreement pursuant to which the employer contributes). For each succeeding plan year in which the plan is in critical status for a consecutive period of years beginning with the initial critical year, the surcharge shall be 10 percent of the contribution otherwise so required.

(B) Enforcement of surcharge

The surcharges under subparagraph (A) shall be due and payable on the same schedule as the contributions on which the surcharges are based. Any failure to make a surcharge payment shall be treated as a delinquent contribution under section 515 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and shall be enforceable as such.

(C) Surcharge to terminate upon collective bargaining agreement renegotiation

The surcharge under this paragraph shall cease to be effective with respect to employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement (or other agreement pursuant to which the employer contributes), beginning on the effective date of a collective bargaining agreement (or other such agreement) that includes terms consistent with a schedule presented by the plan sponsor under para-

graph (1)(B)(i), as modified under subparagraph (B) of paragraph (3).

(D) Surcharge not to apply until employer receives notice

The surcharge under this paragraph shall not apply to an employer until 30 days after the employer has been notified by the plan sponsor that the plan is in critical status and that the surcharge is in effect.

(E) Surcharge not to generate increased benefit accruals

Notwithstanding any provision of a plan to the contrary, the amount of any surcharge under this paragraph shall not be the basis for any benefit accrual under the plan.

(8) Benefit adjustments

(A) Adjustable benefits

(i) In general

Notwithstanding section 411(d)(6), the plan sponsor shall, subject to the notice requirement under subparagraph (C), make any reductions to adjustable benefits which the plan sponsor deems appropriate, based upon the outcome of collective bargaining over the schedule or schedules provided under paragraph (1)(B)(i).

(ii) Exception for retirees

Except in the case of adjustable benefits described in clause (iv)(III), the plan sponsor of a plan in critical status shall not reduce adjustable benefits of any participant or beneficiary whose benefit commencement date is before the date on which the plan provides notice to the participant or beneficiary under subsection (b)(3)(D) for the initial critical year.

(iii) Plan sponsor flexibility

The plan sponsor shall include in the schedules provided to the bargaining parties an allowance for funding the benefits of participants with respect to whom contributions are not currently required to be made, and shall reduce their benefits to the extent permitted under this title and considered appropriate by the plan sponsor based on the plan's then current overall funding status.

(iv) Adjustable benefit defined

For purposes of this paragraph, the term "adjustable benefit" means—

(I) benefits, rights, and features under the plan, including post-retirement death benefits, 60-month guarantees, disability benefits not yet in pay status, and similar benefits,

(II) any early retirement benefit or retirement-type subsidy (within the meaning of section 411(d)(6)(B)(i)) and any benefit payment option (other than the qualified joint and survivor annuity), and

(III) benefit increases that would not be eligible for a guarantee under section 4022A of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 on the first day of initial critical year because the

increases were adopted (or, if later, took effect) less than 60 months before such first day.

(B) Normal retirement benefits protected

Except as provided in subparagraph (A)(iv)(III), nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to permit a plan to reduce the level of a participant's accrued benefit payable at normal retirement age.

(C) Notice requirements

(i) In general

No reduction may be made to adjustable benefits under subparagraph (A) unless notice of such reduction has been given at least 30 days before the general effective date of such reduction for all participants and beneficiaries to—

(I) plan participants and beneficiaries,

(II) each employer who has an obligation to contribute (within the meaning of section 4212(a) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974) under the plan, and

(III) each employee organization which, for purposes of collective bargaining, represents plan participants employed by such an employer.

(ii) Content of notice

The notice under clause (i) shall contain—

(I) sufficient information to enable participants and beneficiaries to understand the effect of any reduction on their benefits, including an estimate (on an annual or monthly basis) of any affected adjustable benefit that a participant or beneficiary would otherwise have been eligible for as of the general effective date described in clause (i), and

(II) information as to the rights and remedies of plan participants and beneficiaries as well as how to contact the Department of Labor for further information and assistance where appropriate.

(iii) Form and manner

Any notice under clause (i)—

(I) shall be provided in a form and manner prescribed in regulations of the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor,

(II) shall be written in a manner so as to be understood by the average plan participant, and

(III) may be provided in written, electronic, or other appropriate form to the extent such form is reasonably accessible to persons to whom the notice is required to be provided.

the³ Secretary shall in the regulations prescribed under subclause (I) establish a model notice that a plan sponsor may use to meet the requirements of this subparagraph.

³So in original. Probably should be capitalized.

(9) Adjustments disregarded in withdrawal liability determination

(A) Benefit reductions

Any benefit reductions under this subsection shall be disregarded in determining a plan's unfunded vested benefits for purposes of determining an employer's withdrawal liability under section 4201 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974.

(B) Surcharges

Any surcharges under paragraph (7) shall be disregarded in determining the allocation of unfunded vested benefits to an employer under section 4211 of such Act, except for purposes of determining the unfunded vested benefits attributable to an employer under section 4211(c)(4) of such Act or a comparable method approved under section 4211(c)(5) of such Act.

(C) Simplified calculations

The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation shall prescribe simplified methods for the application of this paragraph in determining withdrawal liability.

(f) Rules for operation of plan during adoption and rehabilitation period

(1) Compliance with rehabilitation plan

(A) In general

A plan may not be amended after the date of the adoption of a rehabilitation plan under subsection (e) so as to be inconsistent with the rehabilitation plan.

(B) Special rules for benefit increases

A plan may not be amended after the date of the adoption of a rehabilitation plan under subsection (e) so as to increase benefits, including future benefit accruals, unless the plan actuary certifies that such increase is paid for out of additional contributions not contemplated by the rehabilitation plan, and, after taking into account the benefit increase, the multiemployer plan still is reasonably expected to emerge from critical status by the end of the rehabilitation period on the schedule contemplated in the rehabilitation plan.

(2) Restriction on lump sums and similar benefits

(A) In general

Effective on the date the notice of certification of the plan's critical status for the initial critical year under subsection (b)(3)(D) is sent, and notwithstanding section 411(d)(6), the plan shall not pay—

(i) any payment, in excess of the monthly amount paid under a single life annuity (plus any social security supplements described in the last sentence of section 411(a)(9)), to a participant or beneficiary whose annuity starting date (as defined in section 417(f)(2)) occurs after the date such notice is sent,

(ii) any payment for the purchase of an irrevocable commitment from an insurer to pay benefits, and

(iii) any other payment specified by the Secretary by regulations.

(B) Exception

Subparagraph (A) shall not apply to a benefit which under section 411(a)(11) may be immediately distributed without the consent of the participant or to any makeup payment in the case of a retroactive annuity starting date or any similar payment of benefits owed with respect to a prior period.

(3) Adjustments disregarded in withdrawal liability determination

Any benefit reductions under this subsection shall be disregarded in determining a plan's unfunded vested benefits for purposes of determining an employer's withdrawal liability under section 4201 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974.

(4) Special rules for plan adoption period

During the rehabilitation plan adoption period—

(A) the plan sponsor may not accept a collective bargaining agreement or participation agreement with respect to the multiemployer plan that provides for—

- (i) a reduction in the level of contributions for any participants,
- (ii) a suspension of contributions with respect to any period of service, or
- (iii) any new direct or indirect exclusion of younger or newly hired employees from plan participation, and

(B) no amendment of the plan which increases the liabilities of the plan by reason of any increase in benefits, any change in the accrual of benefits, or any change in the rate at which benefits become nonforfeitable under the plan may be adopted unless the amendment is required as a condition of qualification under part I of subchapter D of chapter 1 or to comply with other applicable law.

(g) Expedited resolution of plan sponsor decisions

If, within 60 days of the due date for adoption of a funding improvement plan under subsection (c) or a rehabilitation plan under subsection (e), the plan sponsor of a plan in endangered status or a plan in critical status has not agreed on a funding improvement plan or rehabilitation plan, then any member of the board or group that constitutes the plan sponsor may require that the plan sponsor enter into an expedited dispute resolution procedure for the development and adoption of a funding improvement plan or rehabilitation plan.

(h) Nonbargained participation**(1) Both bargained and nonbargained employee-participants**

In the case of an employer that contributes to a multiemployer plan with respect to both employees who are covered by one or more collective bargaining agreements and employees who are not so covered, if the plan is in endangered status or in critical status, benefits of and contributions for the nonbargained employees, including surcharges on those contributions, shall be determined as if those nonbargained employees were covered under the

first to expire of the employer's collective bargaining agreements in effect when the plan entered endangered or critical status.

(2) Nonbargained employees only

In the case of an employer that contributes to a multiemployer plan only with respect to employees who are not covered by a collective bargaining agreement, this section shall be applied as if the employer were the bargaining party, and its participation agreement with the plan were a collective bargaining agreement with a term ending on the first day of the plan year beginning after the employer is provided the schedule or schedules described in subsections (c) and (e).

(i) Definitions; actuarial method

For purposes of this section—

(1) Bargaining party

The term "bargaining party" means—

(A)(i) except as provided in clause (ii), an employer who has an obligation to contribute under the plan; or

(ii) in the case of a plan described under section 404(c), or a continuation of such a plan, the association of employers that is the employer settlor of the plan; and

(B) an employee organization which, for purposes of collective bargaining, represents plan participants employed by an employer who has an obligation to contribute under the plan.

(2) Funded percentage

The term "funded percentage" means the percentage equal to a fraction—

(A) the numerator of which is the value of the plan's assets, as determined under section 431(c)(2), and

(B) the denominator of which is the accrued liability of the plan, determined using actuarial assumptions described in section 431(c)(3).

(3) Accumulated funding deficiency

The term "accumulated funding deficiency" has the meaning given such term in section 431(a).

(4) Active participant

The term "active participant" means, in connection with a multiemployer plan, a participant who is in covered service under the plan.

(5) Inactive participant

The term "inactive participant" means, in connection with a multiemployer plan, a participant, or the beneficiary or alternate payee of a participant, who—

(A) is not in covered service under the plan, and

(B) is in pay status under the plan or has a nonforfeitable right to benefits under the plan.

(6) Pay status

A person is in pay status under a multiemployer plan if—

(A) at any time during the current plan year, such person is a participant or beneficiary under the plan and is paid an early,

late, normal, or disability retirement benefit under the plan (or a death benefit under the plan related to a retirement benefit), or

(B) to the extent provided in regulations of the Secretary, such person is entitled to such a benefit under the plan.

(7) Obligation to contribute

The term “obligation to contribute” has the meaning given such term under section 4212(a) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974.

(8) Actuarial method

Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the actuary’s determinations with respect to a plan’s normal cost, actuarial accrued liability, and improvements in a plan’s funded percentage under this section shall be based upon the unit credit funding method (whether or not that method is used for the plan’s actuarial valuation).

(9) Plan sponsor

For purposes of this section, section 431, and section 4971(g):

(A) In general

The term “plan sponsor” means, with respect to any multiemployer plan, the association, committee, joint board of trustees, or other similar group of representatives of the parties who establish or maintain the plan.

(B) Special rule for section 404(c) plans

In the case of a plan described in section 404(c) (or a continuation of such plan), such term means the bargaining parties described in paragraph (1).

(10) Benefit commencement date

The term “benefit commencement date” means the annuity starting date (or in the case of a retroactive annuity starting date, the date on which benefit payments begin).

(Added Pub. L. 109-280, title II, §212(a), Aug. 17, 2006, 120 Stat. 899; amended Pub. L. 110-458, title I, §102(b)(2)(A)–(G), Dec. 23, 2008, 122 Stat. 5101, 5102.)

TERMINATION OF SECTION

For termination of section by section 221(c) of Pub. L. 109-280, see Effective and Termination Dates note below.

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, referred to in text, is Pub. L. 93-406, Sept. 2, 1974, 88 Stat. 829, as amended. Sections 101, 103, 104, 502, 515, 4022A, 4201, 4211, 4212, and 4245 of the Act are classified to sections 1021, 1023, 1024, 1132, 1145, 1322a, 1381, 1391, 1392, and 1426, respectively, of Title 29, Labor. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 1001 of Title 29 and Tables.

AMENDMENTS

2008—Subsec. (b)(3)(C). Pub. L. 110-458, §102(b)(2)(A), substituted “section 101(b)(1)” for “section 101(b)(4)”.

Subsec. (b)(3)(D)(iii). Pub. L. 110-458, §102(b)(2)(B), substituted “The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor” for “The Secretary of Labor”.

Subsec. (c)(3)(A)(i). Pub. L. 110-458, §102(b)(2)(C)(i), substituted “section 431(d)” for “section 304(d)”.

Subsec. (c)(7)(A)(ii). Pub. L. 110-458, §102(b)(2)(C)(ii)(I), substituted “to adopt a contribution schedule with terms consistent with the funding improvement plan and a schedule from the plan sponsor,” for “to agree on changes to contribution or benefit schedules necessary to meet the applicable benchmarks in accordance with the funding improvement plan.”.

Subsec. (c)(7)(B). Pub. L. 110-458, §102(b)(2)(C)(ii)(II), added subpar. (B), and struck out former subpar. (B). Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “The date specified in this subparagraph is the earlier of the date—

“(i) on which the Secretary of Labor certifies that the parties are at an impasse, or

“(ii) which is 180 days after the date on which the collective bargaining agreement described in subparagraph (A) expires.”.

Subsec. (e)(3)(C)(i)(II). Pub. L. 110-458, §102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I), substituted “to adopt a contribution schedule with terms consistent with the rehabilitation plan and a schedule from the plan sponsor under paragraph (1)(B)(i),” for “contribution or benefit schedules with terms consistent with the rehabilitation plan and the schedule from the plan sponsor under paragraph (1)(B)(i),”.

Subsec. (e)(3)(C)(ii). Pub. L. 110-458, §102(b)(2)(D)(i)(II), added cl. (ii) and struck out former cl. (ii). Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “The date specified in this clause is the earlier of the date—

“(I) on which the Secretary of Labor certifies that the parties are at an impasse, or

“(II) which is 180 days after the date on which the collective bargaining agreement described in clause (i) expires.”.

Subsec. (e)(4)(A)(ii). Pub. L. 110-458, §102(b)(2)(D)(ii)(I), struck out “the date of” after “in effect on”.

Subsec. (e)(4)(B). Pub. L. 110-458, §102(b)(2)(D)(ii)(II), substituted “but taking” for “and taking”.

Subsec. (e)(6). Pub. L. 110-458, §102(b)(2)(D)(iii), substituted “the last sentence of paragraph (1)” for “paragraph (1)(B)(i)” in introductory provisions and “establish” for “established” in concluding provisions.

Subsec. (e)(8)(A)(i). Pub. L. 110-458, §102(b)(2)(D)(iv)(I), substituted “section 411(d)(6)” for “section 204(g)”.

Subsec. (e)(8)(C)(i)(II). Pub. L. 110-458, §102(b)(2)(D)(iv)(II), inserted “of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974” after “section 4212(a)”.

Subsec. (e)(8)(C)(iii). Pub. L. 110-458, §102(b)(2)(D)(iv)(IV), which directed substitution of “the Secretary” for “the Secretary of Labor” in last sentence, was executed by making the substitution for “The Secretary of Labor”, to reflect the probable intent of Congress.

Subsec. (e)(8)(C)(iii)(I). Pub. L. 110-458, §102(b)(2)(D)(iv)(III), substituted “the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor” for “the Secretary of Labor”.

Subsec. (e)(9)(B). Pub. L. 110-458, §102(b)(2)(D)(v), substituted “the allocation of unfunded vested benefits to an employer” for “an employer’s withdrawal liability”.

Subsec. (f)(2)(A)(i). Pub. L. 110-458, §102(b)(2)(E), substituted “section 411(a)(9)” for “411(b)(1)(A)” and inserted at end “to a participant or beneficiary whose annuity starting date (as defined in section 417(f)(2)) occurs after the date such notice is sent,”.

Subsec. (g). Pub. L. 110-458, §102(b)(2)(F), inserted “under subsection (c)” after “for adoption of a funding improvement plan”.

Subsec. (i)(3). Pub. L. 110-458, §102(b)(2)(G)(i), substituted “section 431(a)” for “section 412(a)”.

Subsec. (i)(9). Pub. L. 110-458, §102(b)(2)(G)(ii), added par. (9) and struck out former par. (9). Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “In the case of a plan described under section 404(c), or a continuation of such a plan, the term ‘plan sponsor’ means the bargaining parties described under paragraph (1).”

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2008 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 110-458 effective as if included in the provisions of Pub. L. 109-280 to which the amend-

ment relates, except as otherwise provided, see section 112 of Pub. L. 110-458, set out as a note under section 72 of this title.

EFFECTIVE AND TERMINATION DATES

Section applicable with respect to plan years beginning after 2007, with special rules for certain notices and certain restored benefits, see section 212(e) of Pub. L. 109-280, set out as an Effective and Termination Dates of 2006 Amendment note under section 412 of this title.

Section inapplicable to plan years beginning after Dec. 31, 2014, with exception for certain funding improvement and rehabilitation plans, see section 221(c) of Pub. L. 109-280, set out as an Effective and Termination Dates of 2006 Amendment note under section 412 of this title.

TEMPORARY DELAY OF DESIGNATION OF MULTIEMPLOYER PLANS AS IN ENDANGERED OR CRITICAL STATUS

Pub. L. 110-458, title II, §204, Dec. 23, 2008, 122 Stat. 5118, provided that:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding the actuarial certification under section 305(b)(3) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 [29 U.S.C. 1085(b)(3)] and section 432(b)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, if a plan sponsor of a multiemployer plan elects the application of this section, then, for purposes of section 305 of such Act and section 432 of such Code—

“(1) the status of the plan for its first plan year beginning during the period beginning on October 1, 2008, and ending on September 30, 2009, shall be the same as the status of such plan under such sections for the plan year preceding such plan year, and

“(2) in the case of a plan which was in endangered or critical status for the preceding plan year described in paragraph (1), the plan shall not be required to update its plan or schedules under section 305(c)(6) of such Act and section 432(c)(6) of such Code, or section 305(e)(3)(B) of such Act and section 432(e)(3)(B) of such Code, whichever is applicable, until the plan year following the first plan year described in paragraph (1).

If section 305 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and section 432 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 did not apply to the preceding plan year described in paragraph (1), the plan actuary shall make a certification of the status of the plan under section 305(b)(3) of such Act and section 432(b)(3) of such Code for the preceding plan year in the same manner as if such sections had applied to such preceding plan year.

“(b) EXCEPTION FOR PLANS BECOMING CRITICAL DURING ELECTION.—If—

“(1) an election was made under subsection (a) with respect to a multiemployer plan, and

“(2) such plan has, without regard to such election, been certified by the plan actuary under section 305(b)(3) of such Act [29 U.S.C. 1085(b)(3)] and section 432(b)(3) of such Code to be in critical status for the first plan year described in subsection (a)(1),

then such plan shall be treated as a plan in critical status for such plan year for purposes of applying section 4971(g)(1)(A) of such Code, section 302(b)(3) of such Act [29 U.S.C. 1082(b)(3)] (without regard to the second sentence thereof), and section 412(b)(3) of such Code (without regard to the second sentence thereof).

“(c) ELECTION AND NOTICE.—

“(1) ELECTION.—An election under subsection (a) shall—

“(A) be made at such time and in such manner as the Secretary of the Treasury or the Secretary’s delegate may prescribe and, once made, may be revoked only with the consent of the Secretary, and

“(B) if the election is made—

“(i) before the date the annual certification is submitted to the Secretary or the Secretary’s delegate under section 305(b)(3) of such Act [29

U.S.C. 1085(b)(3)] and section 432(b)(3) of such Code, be included with such annual certification, and

“(ii) after such date, be submitted to the Secretary or the Secretary’s delegate not later than 30 days after the date of the election.

“(2) NOTICE TO PARTICIPANTS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 305(b)(3)(D) of such Act and section 431(b)(3)(D) of such Code, if the plan is neither in endangered nor critical status by reason of an election made under subsection (a)—

“(i) the plan sponsor of a multiemployer plan shall not be required to provide notice under such sections, and

“(ii) the plan sponsor shall provide to the participants and beneficiaries, the bargaining parties, the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, and the Secretary of Labor a notice of the election and such other information as the Secretary of the Treasury (in consultation with the Secretary of Labor) may require—

“(I) if the election is made before the date the annual certification is submitted to the Secretary or the Secretary’s delegate under section 305(b)(3) of such Act and section 432(b)(3) of such Code, not later than 30 days after the date of the certification, and

“(II) if the election is made after such date, not later than 30 days after the date of the election.

“(B) NOTICE OF ENDANGERED STATUS.—Notwithstanding section 305(b)(3)(D) of such Act and section 431(b)(3)(D) of such Code, if the plan is certified to be in critical status for any plan year but is in endangered status by reason of an election made under subsection (a), the notice provided under such sections shall be the notice which would have been provided if the plan had been certified to be in endangered status.”

TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF THE FUNDING IMPROVEMENT AND REHABILITATION PERIODS FOR MULTIEMPLOYER PENSION PLANS IN CRITICAL AND ENDANGERED STATUS FOR 2008 OR 2009

Pub. L. 110-458, title II, §205, Dec. 23, 2008, 122 Stat. 5120, provided that:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—If the plan sponsor of a multiemployer plan which is in endangered or critical status for a plan year beginning in 2008 or 2009 (determined after application of section 204 [of Pub. L. 110-458, set out above]) elects the application of this section, then, for purposes of section 305 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 [29 U.S.C. 1085] and section 432 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986—

“(1) except as provided in paragraph (2), the plan’s funding improvement period or rehabilitation period, whichever is applicable, shall be 13 years rather than 10 years, and

“(2) in the case of a plan in seriously endangered status, the plan’s funding improvement period shall be 18 years rather than 15 years.

“(b) DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL RULES.—For purposes of this section—

“(1) ELECTION.—An election under this section shall be made at such time, and in such manner and form, as (in consultation with the Secretary of Labor) the Secretary of the Treasury or the Secretary’s delegate may prescribe.

“(2) DEFINITIONS.—Any term which is used in this section which is also used in section 305 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 [29 U.S.C. 1085] and section 432 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall have the same meaning as when used in such sections.

“(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall apply to plan years beginning after December 31, 2007.”

SPECIAL RULE FOR CERTAIN BENEFITS FUNDED UNDER AN AGREEMENT APPROVED BY THE PENSION BENEFIT GUARANTY CORPORATION

For applicability of this section to a multiemployer plan that is a party to an agreement that was approved by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation prior to June 30, 2005, and that increases benefits and provides for certain withdrawal liability rules, see section 206 of Pub. L. 109-280, set out as a note under section 412 of this title.

SUBPART B—BENEFIT LIMITATIONS UNDER SINGLE-EMPLOYER PLANS

Sec.
436. Funding-based limitation on shutdown benefits and other unpredictable contingent event benefits under single-employer plans.¹

§ 436. Funding-based limits on benefits and benefit accruals under single-employer plans

(a) General rule

For purposes of section 401(a)(29), a defined benefit plan which is a single-employer plan shall be treated as meeting the requirements of this section if the plan meets the requirements of subsections (b), (c), (d), and (e).

(b) Funding-based limitation on shutdown benefits and other unpredictable contingent event benefits under single-employer plans

(1) In general

If a participant of a defined benefit plan which is a single-employer plan is entitled to an unpredictable contingent event benefit payable with respect to any event occurring during any plan year, the plan shall provide that such benefit may not be provided if the adjusted funding target attainment percentage for such plan year—

- (A) is less than 60 percent, or
- (B) would be less than 60 percent taking into account such occurrence.

(2) Exemption

Paragraph (1) shall cease to apply with respect to any plan year, effective as of the first day of the plan year, upon payment by the plan sponsor of a contribution (in addition to any minimum required contribution under section 430) equal to—

- (A) in the case of paragraph (1)(A), the amount of the increase in the funding target of the plan (under section 430) for the plan year attributable to the occurrence referred to in paragraph (1), and
- (B) in the case of paragraph (1)(B), the amount sufficient to result in an adjusted funding target attainment percentage of 60 percent.

(3) Unpredictable contingent event benefit

For purposes of this subsection, the term “unpredictable contingent event benefit” means any benefit payable solely by reason of—

- (A) a plant shutdown (or similar event, as determined by the Secretary), or

(B) an event other than the attainment of any age, performance of any service, receipt or derivation of any compensation, or occurrence of death or disability.

(c) Limitations on plan amendments increasing liability for benefits

(1) In general

No amendment to a defined benefit plan which is a single-employer plan which has the effect of increasing liabilities of the plan by reason of increases in benefits, establishment of new benefits, changing the rate of benefit accrual, or changing the rate at which benefits become nonforfeitable may take effect during any plan year if the adjusted funding target attainment percentage for such plan year is—

- (A) less than 80 percent, or
- (B) would be less than 80 percent taking into account such amendment.

(2) Exemption

Paragraph (1) shall cease to apply with respect to any plan year, effective as of the first day of the plan year (or if later, the effective date of the amendment), upon payment by the plan sponsor of a contribution (in addition to any minimum required contribution under section 430) equal to—

- (A) in the case of paragraph (1)(A), the amount of the increase in the funding target of the plan (under section 430) for the plan year attributable to the amendment, and
- (B) in the case of paragraph (1)(B), the amount sufficient to result in an adjusted funding target attainment percentage of 80 percent.

(3) Exception for certain benefit increases

Paragraph (1) shall not apply to any amendment which provides for an increase in benefits under a formula which is not based on a participant's compensation, but only if the rate of such increase is not in excess of the contemporaneous rate of increase in average wages of participants covered by the amendment.

(d) Limitations on accelerated benefit distributions

(1) Funding percentage less than 60 percent

A defined benefit plan which is a single-employer plan shall provide that, in any case in which the plan's adjusted funding target attainment percentage for a plan year is less than 60 percent, the plan may not pay any prohibited payment after the valuation date for the plan year.

(2) Bankruptcy

A defined benefit plan which is a single-employer plan shall provide that, during any period in which the plan sponsor is a debtor in a case under title 11, United States Code, or similar Federal or State law, the plan may not pay any prohibited payment. The preceding sentence shall not apply on or after the date on which the enrolled actuary of the plan certifies that the adjusted funding target attainment percentage of such plan is not less than 100 percent.

¹ So in original. Does not conform to section catchline.