

§ 1604.5

(ii) *Limit on contributions to qualified plans.* Section 415(c) of the I.R.C. (26 U.S.C. 415(c)) also places an annual limit on the combined amount that can be contributed to the TSP and to other Federal civilian retirement systems (as defined in §1604.2). (The limit is periodically adjusted by the IRS; it is the lesser of 100 percent of compensation or \$40,000 in 2002.) For purposes of applying this limit, compensation includes combat zone compensation. In implementation of this law, no employee contribution may be made to the TSP for any year to the extent that the sum of the employee's contributions to the TSP and to a Federal civilian retirement system, when added to the employer's contributions to the TSP for that year, would exceed the I.R.C. section 415(c) limit. (If a service member contributes to a civilian TSP account and to a service member TSP account in a single calendar year, the annual limit on contributions will be derived from the participant's combined service member and civilian compensation.) Combat zone contributions are taken into consideration when determining the application of the I.R.C. section 415(c) limit.

(b) *Matching contributions.* When matching contributions are authorized for a service member, that service member's regular contributions will be matched dollar-for-dollar on the first three percent of basic pay contributed to the TSP, and 50 cents on the dollar on the next two percent of basic pay contributed. Matching contributions only apply to regular contributions. Matching contributions are not taken into consideration when determining the application of the contribution limit found at I.R.C. section 402(g)(described in paragraph (a)(2)(i) of this section), but they are taken into consideration when determining the application of the contribution limit found at I.R.C. section 415 (described in paragraph (a)(2)(ii) of this section).

(c) *Deduction and transmittal of contributions.* A service member's employing agency will deduct regular contributions from the service member's basic pay each pay period based on his or her contribution election and will transmit the contributions to the TSP. If a service member also elects to make

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periodic contributions to the TSP, the employing agency must deduct (and transmit to the TSP) these contributions from the service member's incentive pay or special pay (including bonuses), as applicable.

§ 1604.5 Separate service member and civilian accounts.

(a) *Separate accounts.* Service member accounts are maintained separately from civilian accounts. Therefore, service members making both civilian and uniformed services TSP contributions will have two TSP accounts. For those participants, the accounts are treated separately except in the following circumstances:

(1) If a participant contributes to a service member account and a civilian account, the contributions to both accounts together cannot exceed the Internal Revenue Code contribution limits described in §1604.4(a)(2).

(2) A member of the uniformed services may obtain a loan from his or her account, as described at §1604.10, and the loan will be disbursed from the uniformed services account. If the TSP maintains a service member account and a civilian account for an individual, the TSP will calculate the Internal Revenue Code maximum loan amount using both account balances, as described in §1604.10(a)(3).

(b) *Transfers between TSP accounts.* Service member and civilian TSP account balances may be combined through a transfer (thus producing one account), and the transferred funds will be treated as employee contributions and otherwise invested as described at 5 CFR part 1600. Transfers under this section are subject to the following rules:

(1) An account balance can be transferred once the TSP is informed (by the participant's employing agency) that the participant has separated from either civilian or uniformed services employment.

(2) Combat zone contributions may not be transferred from a uniformed services TSP account to a civilian TSP account.

(3) Transferred funds will be allocated among the TSP's investment

funds according to the contribution allocation in effect for the gaining account.

(4) A service member must obtain the consent of his or her spouse before transferring a uniformed services TSP account balance into a civilian account that is subject to Civil Service Retirement System spousal rights. A request for an exception to the spousal consent requirement will be evaluated under the rules explained in 5 CFR part 1650.

(5) Before the transfer can be accomplished, any outstanding loans from the account to be transferred must be closed as described in 5 CFR part 1655.

§ 1604.6 Error correction.

(a) *General rule.* A service member's employing agency must correct the service member's account if, as the result of employing agency error, a service member does not receive the TSP contributions to which he or she is entitled. Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, those corrections must be made in accordance with 5 CFR part 1605.

(b) *Missed bonus contributions.* This paragraph (b) applies when an employing agency fails to implement a contribution election that was properly submitted by a service member requesting that a TSP contribution be deducted from bonus pay. Within 30 days of receiving the employing agency's acknowledgment of the error, a service member may establish a schedule of makeup contributions with his or her employing agency to replace the missed contribution through future payroll deductions. These makeup contributions can be made in addition to any TSP contributions that the service member is otherwise entitled to make.

(1) The schedule of makeup contributions may not exceed four times the number of months it would take for the service member to earn basic pay equal to the dollar amount of the missed contribution. For example, a service member who earns \$29,000 yearly in basic pay and who missed a \$2,500 bonus contribution to the TSP can establish a schedule of makeup contributions with a maximum duration of 8 months. This is because it takes the service member 2 months to earn \$2,500 in basic pay (at \$2,416.67 per month).

(2) At its discretion, an employing agency may set a ceiling on the length of a schedule of employee makeup contributions. The ceiling may not, however, be less than twice the number of months it would take for the service member to earn basic pay equal to the dollar amount of the missed contribution.

§ 1604.7 Withdrawals.

A service member may withdraw all or a portion of his or her account under the rules in 5 CFR part 1650, with the following exceptions:

(a) *Separate accounts.* If the TSP maintains a service member account and a civilian account for an individual, a separate withdrawal request must be made for each account.

(b) *Spousal rights.* The spouse of a service member participant has the same TSP spousal rights as the spouse of a civilian participant covered under the Federal Employees' Retirement System; those spousal rights in the context of a withdrawal (and the process by which a service member may obtain an exception to them) are explained at 5 CFR part 1650.

(c) *Combat zone contributions.* If a service member account contains combat zone contributions, the withdrawal will be distributed *pro rata* from all sources. If a participant requests the TSP to transfer all, or a portion, of a withdrawal to an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) or other eligible retirement plan, the share of the withdrawal attributable to combat zone contributions (if any) can be transferred only if the IRA or retirement plan accepts such funds.

(d) *Separation.* The definition of separation from service at §1604.2 applies when determining a service member's eligibility for a withdrawal.

§ 1604.8 Death benefits.

The account balance of a deceased service member will be paid as described at 5 CFR part 1651, with the following exceptions:

(a) *Separate accounts.* To designate a beneficiary for a TSP death benefit, a service member must file a valid beneficiary designation form. If the TSP maintains a service member account