

Internal Revenue Service, Treasury

§ 1.44-3

Where a taxpayer occupied a residence prior to March 13, 1975, without having acquired it (as where his occupancy was pursuant to a leasing arrangement pending settlement under a binding contract to purchase or pursuant to a leasing arrangement where a written option to purchase was contained in the original lease agreement) he will nonetheless satisfy the acquisition and occupancy tests set forth above if he acquires the residence and continues to occupy it after March 12, 1975, and before January 1, 1977.

(c) *Binding contract.* Except in the case of self-construction, the new principal residence must be acquired by the taxpayer (within the meaning of paragraph (b) of this section) under a binding contract entered into by the taxpayer before January 1, 1976. An otherwise binding contract for the purchase of a residence which is conditioned upon the purchaser's obtaining a loan for the purchase of the residence (including conditions as to the amount or interest rate of such loan) is considered binding notwithstanding that condition.

(d) *Self-constructed residence.* A self-constructed residence (as defined in paragraph (d) of §1.44-5) must be occupied by the taxpayer before January 1, 1977. Where self-construction of a principal residence was begun before March 13, 1975, only that portion of the basis of the property allocable to construction after March 12, 1975, and before January 1, 1977, shall be taken into consideration in determining the amount of the credit allowable. For this purpose, the portion of the basis attributable to the pre-March 13 period includes the total cost of land acquired (as defined in paragraph (b) of this section) prior to March 13, 1975, on which the new principal residence is constructed and the cost of expenditures with respect to construction work performed prior to March 13, 1975. The costs incurred in stockpiling materials for later stages of construction, however, are not allocated to the pre-March 13 period. Thus, for example, if prior to March 13, 1975, a taxpayer who qualifies for the credit has constructed a portion of a residence at a cost of \$10,000 (including the cost of the land purchased prior to March 13, 1975) and

the total cost of the residence is \$40,000 and the taxpayer's basis after the application of section 1034(e) (relating to the reduction of basis of new principal residence where gain is not recognized upon the sale of the old residence) is \$36,000, the amount subject to the credit will be \$27,000:

$$(\$30,000 + \$40,000) \times \$36,000.$$

[T.D. 7391, 40 FR 55852, Dec. 2, 1975; 40 FR 58138, Dec. 15, 1975]

§ 1.44-3 Certificate by seller.

(a) *Requirement of certification by seller.* Taxpayers claiming the credit should attach Form 5405, Credit for Purchase or Construction of New Principal Residence, to their tax returns on which the credit is claimed. Except in the case of self-construction (as defined in §1.44-5(d)), taxpayers must attach a certification by the seller that construction of the residence began before March 26, 1975, and that the purchase price is the lowest price at which the residence was offered for sale after February 28, 1975. For purposes of section 44(e)(4) and this section, the term "price" generally does not include costs of acquisition other than the amount of the consideration from the purchaser to the seller. However, for rules relating to adjustments in price due to changes in financing terms and closing costs see paragraph (d)(2) of this section.

(b) *Form of certification.* The following form of the certification statement is suggested:

I certify that the construction of the residence at (specify address) was begun before March 26, 1975, and that this residence has not been offered for sale after February 28, 1975 in a listing, a written private offer, or an offer by means of advertisement at a lower purchase price than (state price), the price at which I sold the residence to (state name, present address, and social security number of purchaser) by contract dated (give date).

(Date, seller's signature and taxpayer identification number.)

However, any written certification filed by the taxpayer will be accepted provided that such certification is signed by the seller and states that

construction of the residence began before March 26, 1975, and that the purchase price of the residence is the lowest price at which the residence was offered for sale after February 28, 1975. With regard to factory-made homes the seller, in the absence of his own knowledge as to the commencement of construction, may attach to his own certification a certification from the manufacturer that construction began before March 26, 1975, and may certify based on the manufacturer's certification. It is suggested that both certifications include the serial number, if any, of the residence.

(c) *Offer to sell.* (1) For purposes of section 44(e)(4) and this section, an offer to sell is limited to an offer to sell a specified residence at a specified purchase price.

(2) An "offer" includes any written offer, whether made to a particular purchaser or to the public, and any offer by means of advertising. Advertising includes an offer to sell published by billboards, flyers, brochures, price lists (unless the lists are exclusively for the internal use of the seller and are not made available to the public), mailings, newspapers, periodicals, radio, or television. The listing of a property with a real estate agency, the filing of a prospectus and the registration of construction plans and price lists with the appropriate authorities (in the case of condominiums or cooperative housing developments) are to be considered offers made to the public.

(3) An offer to sell a specified residence includes:

(i) Both an offer to sell an existing residence and an offer to build and sell a residence of substantially the same design or model as that purchased by the taxpayer on the same lot as that on which the taxpayer's new principal residence was constructed. It does not include an offer to sell the same model residence on a different lot. Where a residence of a particular design or model is offered at a specific base price, additions of property to the residence, no matter how extensive, will not result in the residence being treated as a different residence for the purpose of determining the lowest offer (as defined in paragraph (f) of § 1.44-5).

(ii) In the case of a condominium or cooperative housing development where units are offered for sale on the basis of models (e.g., all Model C two-bedroom apartments sell at a specified base price), an offer to sell a specified residence includes an offer to sell a specific type of unit (with appropriate adjustments to be made for the location of such unit and as provided in paragraph (d) of this section).

(iii) In the case of a factory-made home, an offer to sell a specified residence includes an offer to sell the same model home as that purchased by the taxpayer, provided that the offer is made after the seller has the right to sell the home purchased by the taxpayer (*i.e.*, has that specific home in his inventory). However, it does not include an offer to sell such home with land which is not included in the taxpayer's purchase nor an offer to sell such home without land which is included in the taxpayer's purchase. Appropriate adjustments to a prior offer shall be made as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, including adjustments for any delivery and installation charges as provided in paragraph (d)(3).

(iv) The rules of this subparagraph may be illustrated by the following examples:

Example 1. In March 1975 A advertised colonial-style homes on section I of subdivision C at a base price of \$40,000. At the time none of the homes had been completed but construction of all homes on section I was commenced before March 26, 1975. After one-half of the homes were sold, A offers to sell the remaining homes in May 1975 at a base price of \$45,000. Under the facts above the base price of \$45,000 is not the lowest offer since the seller had offered to sell the same model home on the same lot at a lower purchase price after February 28, 1975.

Example 2. In June 1975 A offers houses, otherwise qualifying, on section II for the first time for a base price of \$50,000. They are colonial homes and substantially the same as the homes he previously offered on section I. Under the facts stated above the base price of \$50,000 is the lowest offer since the same model home on the same lot was not previously offered for sale.

Example 3. In March 1975 B, a condominium developer, offers to sell any two-bedroom unit in a particular high rise condominium for \$45,000 with an added \$5,000 for units with a lakefront view and an additional \$2,000 for units on higher floors. With regard to all two-bedroom units in the condominium an

offer to sell a specified residence at a specified purchase price has been made. This is true even though at the time of the offer construction had not reached the floor on which the particular unit will be located.

(4) A specified purchase price means a stated definite price for a particular residence or a specific base price for a residence of a particular model or design. An offer to sell for an indefinite price (e.g., an advertisement that all houses sell in the \$40,000's) is not considered an offer to sell at a specified purchase price.

(5) An offer to sell includes an offer to sell subject to special conditions imposed by the seller. Thus, if the lowest price at which a house was advertised was "at \$40,000 for March only", the \$40,000 price would be the lowest offer. However, certain conditions may necessitate adjustments in determining the lowest offer. See paragraph (d) of this section.

(6) An offer to sell two or more residences together as for example, in a bulk sale shall be disregarded, even though each residence is assigned a specific purchase price for the purpose of such a sale. With regard to factory-made homes an offer to sell does not include an offer made by the manufacturer to a dealer in such homes.

(7)(i) Where new residences are purchased at a foreclosure sale (including a conveyance by the owner in lieu of foreclosure) and prior to the foreclosure sale such residences had been offered for sale by the foreclosure seller at specified prices, the foreclosure purchaser is bound by such prices in determining the lowest offer. He is not bound by the prices paid to the foreclosure seller since such prices do not constitute voluntary offers.

(ii) For this purpose, if the foreclosure seller and foreclosure purchaser are not related parties (as defined in subdivision (iii) of this subparagraph), and if the foreclosure purchaser does not have knowledge of the date of commencement of construction and the lowest offer made by such seller with respect to each of the foreclosed residences, the foreclosure purchaser must request and try to obtain from the foreclosure seller a certificate specifying such facts. Upon a subsequent sale of a particular residence by

the foreclosure purchaser, he must certify whether the price is the lowest offer for that particular residence based on the certification of the foreclosure seller, a copy of which must be attached to the certification of the foreclosure purchaser. If the foreclosure seller refuses to so certify, the foreclosure purchaser must make a reasonable effort to determine the date construction commenced and the lowest offer made by the foreclosure seller. For this purpose, reasonable effort includes the effort to locate and examine advertising and listings published or used by the foreclosure seller. If the foreclosure seller and foreclosure purchaser are related parties (as defined in subdivision (iii) of this subparagraph), the foreclosure purchaser will be considered as having knowledge of the date of the commencement of construction and the lowest offer made by such seller with respect to each of the foreclosed residences, and, upon a subsequent sale of a particular residence by the foreclosure purchaser, he must comply with the certification requirements prescribed by paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section.

(iii) For purposes of this subparagraph related parties shall include the relationships described in subparagraph (2) of §1.44-5(c), and the constructive ownership rules of section 318 shall apply, but family members for this purpose shall include spouses, ancestors, and lineal descendants.

(d) *Adjustments in determining lowest price.* (1)(i) In determining whether a residence was sold at the lowest offer appropriate adjustment shall be made for differences in the property offered and in the terms of the sale. Where the sale to the taxpayer includes property which was not the subject of the prior offer or excludes property which was included in the prior offer, the amount of the prior offer shall be adjusted to reflect the fair market value of such property, provided that, in the case of property included in the sale which was not a part of the residence at the time of execution of the contract of purchase, the taxpayer had the option to require inclusion or exclusion of such property. The fair market value of any excluded property is to be determined at the time of the prior offer, while all

additions are to be valued at their fair market value on the date of execution of the contract of sale. If a seller increases his present offer to include financing or other costs of the seller in connection with his ownership of the residence, the present offer does not qualify as being the lowest offer.

(ii) The rules in subdivision (i) of this subparagraph are illustrated by the following examples:

Example 1. A offered to sell a new home without a garage for \$35,000. Having found no buyers A added a garage and sold the home for \$40,000. At the time the contract of sale was executed the fair market value of the garage was \$5,000. The offer to sell for \$40,000 qualifies since it equals the seller's lowest offer plus the fair market value of the garage.

Example 2. B, unable to sell colonial-style homes presently under construction and previously offered for sale for \$40,000, makes extensive changes in decor and identifies the homes as his new Williamsburg model. The Williamsburg models are not different residences for purposes of this section. To the extent that the additions have not yet been added at the time of execution of a contract of sale, in order to qualify for the credit the taxpayer must have the option as to whether to include these additions, and if these additions are included B must charge no more than the fair market value of the additions on that date of execution of the contract of sale.

(2) Appropriate adjustment to a prior offer to sell shall be made for differences in financing terms and closing costs which increase the seller's actual net proceeds and the purchaser's actual costs. A seller may pass on to the purchaser without affecting the purchase price only those additional amounts he is required to expend in connection with such differences. The seller may not by changing the financing terms or closing costs indirectly increase the purchase price. For these purposes closing costs include all charges paid at settlement for obtaining the mortgage loan and transferring real estate title. Thus, for example, where a seller previously offered a residence for sale for \$40,000 and agreed to pay financing "points" required by the mortgagee, and now offers the same residence also for \$40,000 but requires the purchaser to pay the points, the present offer does not constitute the lowest offer. On the other hand, a prior offer to sell based

upon a large down payment by the prospective purchaser may be adjusted to reflect the additional costs to the seller of accepting a small down payment from the taxpayer. For purposes of determining the seller's net proceeds, proceeds received by all related parties within the meaning of section 318 must be taken into account. For purposes of determining the lowest offer, where an offer provided for a rebate (e.g., of cash or of a contribution toward mortgage payments) or included, without additional charge or at less than fair market value, property not normally included in the sale of a residence (e.g., an automobile), such offer must be reduced by the amount of such rebate or by the amount by which the fair market value of such property at the time of the offer exceeds the amount paid for it by the purchaser. Thus, where a residence was advertised for sale at \$40,000, but the seller agreed to pay \$200 a month on the purchaser's mortgage for 10 months, such residence is considered to have been offered for sale at \$38,000.

(3) In the case of a factory-made home, where delivery and installation costs are included in the specified base price of such home an appropriate adjustment is to be made in such specified base price for differences in the fair market value of the delivery and installation in determining the lowest offer.

(e) *Civil and criminal penalties.* If a person certifies that the price for which the residence was sold does not exceed the lowest offer and if it is found that the price for which the residence was sold exceeded the lowest offer, then such person is liable (under section 208(b) of the Tax Reduction Act of 1975) to the purchaser for damages in an amount equal to three times the excess of the certified price over the lowest offer plus reasonable attorney's fees. No income tax deduction shall be allowed for two-thirds of any amount paid or incurred pursuant to a judgment entered against any person in a suit based on such liability. However, attorney's fees, court costs, and other such amounts paid or incurred with respect to such suit which meet the requirements of section 162 are deductible under that section. In addition, an

individual who falsely certifies may be subject to criminal penalties. For example, section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code provides as follows: § 1001

Statements or entries generally.

Whoever, in any matter within the jurisdiction of any department or agency of the United States knowingly and willfully falsifies, conceals or covers up by any trick, scheme, or device a material fact, or makes any false, fictitious or fraudulent statements or representations, or makes or uses any false writing or document knowing the same to contain any false, fictitious or fraudulent statement or entry, shall be fined not more than \$10,000 or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

The treble damages and criminal sanctions provided under this paragraph apply only with regard to false certification as to the lowest offer, not to false certification as to commencement of construction. However, with regard to false certification as to commencement of construction there may exist contractual or tort remedies under State law.

(f) *Denial of credit.* In the absence of the taxpayer's participation in, or knowledge of, a false certification by the seller, the credit is not denied to a taxpayer who otherwise qualifies for the credit solely because the seller has falsely certified that the new principal residence was sold at the lowest offer. However, if certification as to the commencement of construction is false, no credit is allowed since such residence does not qualify as a new principal residence construction of which began before March 26, 1975.

[T.D. 7391, 40 FR 55852, Dec. 2, 1975]

§ 1.44-4 Recapture for certain dispositions.

(a) *In general.* (1) Under section 44(d) except as provided in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section, if the taxpayer disposes of property, with respect to the purchase of which a credit was allowed under section 44(a), at any time within 36 months after the date on which he acquired it (or, in the case of construction by the taxpayer, the date on which he first occupied it as his principal residence), then the tax imposed under chapter 1 of the Code for the taxable year in which the replacement period (as provided under sub-

paragraph (2) of this paragraph) terminates is increased by an amount equal to the amount allowed as a credit for the purchase of such property.

(2) The replacement period is the period provided for purchase of a new principal residence under section 1034 of the Code without recognition of gain on the sale of the old residence. In the case of residences sold or exchanged after December 31, 1974, it is generally 18 months in the case of acquisition by purchase and 2 years in the case of construction by the taxpayer provided, however, that such construction has commenced within the 18-month period. Thus, a calendar-year taxpayer who disposes of his old principal residence in December 1975 and does not qualify under paragraph (b) or (c) of this section will include the amount previously allowed as additional tax on his 1977 tax return.

(3) Except as provided in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section, section 44(d) applies to all dispositions of property, including sales (including foreclosure sales), exchanges (including tax-free exchanges such as those under sections 351, 721, and 1031), and gifts.

(4) In the case of a husband and wife who were allowed a credit under section 44(a) claimed on a joint return, for the purpose of section 44(d) and this section the credit shall be allocated between the spouses in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (b)(3) of § 1.44-1.

(b) *Acquisition of a new residence.* (1) Section 44(d)(1) and paragraph (a) of this section shall not apply to a disposition of property with respect to the purchase of which a credit was allowed under section 44(a) in the case of a taxpayer who purchases or constructs a new principal residence (within the meaning of § 1.44-5(a)) within the applicable replacement period provided in section 1034. In determining whether a new principal residence qualifies for purposes of this section the rules relating to construction, acquisition, and occupancy under § 1.44-2 do not apply. Where a disposition has occurred and the taxpayer's purchase (or construction) costs of a new principal residence are less than the adjusted sales price (as defined in section 1034(b)) of the old residence, the tax imposed by chapter 1