

from salvage as ordinary taxable income such practice may be continued so long as, in the opinion of the Commissioner, it clearly reflects income.

(f) *Cross reference.* For special rules in connection with the retirement of the last assets of a given year's acquisitions under the declining balance method, see example (2) in paragraph (b) of § 1.167 (b)-2.

**§ 1.167(a)-9 Obsolescence.**

The depreciation allowance includes an allowance for normal obsolescence which should be taken into account to the extent that the expected useful life of property will be shortened by reason thereof. Obsolescence may render an asset economically useless to the taxpayer regardless of its physical condition. Obsolescence is attributable to many causes, including technological improvements and reasonably foreseeable economic changes. Among these causes are normal progress of the arts and sciences, supersession or inadequacy brought about by developments in the industry, products, methods, markets, sources of supply, and other like changes, and legislative or regulatory action. In any case in which the taxpayer shows that the estimated useful life previously used should be shortened by reason of obsolescence greater than had been assumed in computing such estimated useful life, a change to a new and shorter estimated useful life computed in accordance with such showing will be permitted. No such change will be permitted merely because in the unsupported opinion of the taxpayer the property may become obsolete. For rules governing the allowance of a loss when the usefulness of depreciable property is suddenly terminated, see § 1.167(a)-8. If the estimated useful life and the depreciation rates have been the subject of a previous agreement, see section 167(d) and § 1.167(d)-1.

**§ 1.167(a)-10 When depreciation deduction is allowable.**

(a) A taxpayer should deduct the proper depreciation allowance each year and may not increase his depreciation allowances in later years by reason of his failure to deduct any depreciation allowance or of his action in

deducting an allowance plainly inadequate under the known facts in prior years. The inadequacy of the depreciation allowance for property in prior years shall be determined on the basis of the allowable method of depreciation used by the taxpayer for such property or under the straight line method if no allowance has ever been claimed for such property. The preceding sentence shall not be construed as precluding application of any method provided in section 167(b) if taxpayer's failure to claim any allowance for depreciation was due solely to erroneously treating as a deductible expense an item properly chargeable to capital account. For rules relating to adjustments to basis, see section 1016 and the regulations thereunder.

(b) The period for depreciation of an asset shall begin when the asset is placed in service and shall end when the asset is retired from service. A proportionate part of one year's depreciation is allowable for that part of the first and last year during which the asset was in service. However, in the case of a multiple asset account, the amount of depreciation may be determined by using what is commonly described as an "averaging convention", that is, by using an assumed timing of additions and retirements. For example, it might be assumed that all additions and retirements to the asset account occur uniformly throughout the taxable year, in which case depreciation is computed on the average of the beginning and ending balances of the asset account for the taxable year. See example (3) under paragraph (b) of § 1.167(b)-1. Among still other averaging conventions which may be used is the one under which it is assumed that all additions and retirements during the first half of a given year were made on the first day of that year and that all additions and retirements during the second half of the year were made on the first day of the following year. Thus, a full year's depreciation would be taken on additions in the first half of the year and no depreciation would be taken on additions in the second half. Moreover, under this convention, no depreciation would be taken on retirements in the first half of the year and a full year's depreciation would be

taken on the retirements in the second half. An averaging convention, if used, must be consistently followed as to the account or accounts for which it is adopted, and must be applied to both additions and retirements. In any year in which an averaging convention substantially distorts the depreciation allowance for the taxable year, it may not be used.

**§ 1.167(a)-11 Depreciation based on class lives and asset depreciation ranges for property placed in service after December 31, 1970.**

(a) *In general*—(1) *Summary*. This section provides an asset depreciation range and class life system for determining the reasonable allowance for depreciation of designated classes of assets placed in service after December 31, 1970. The system is designed to minimize disputes between taxpayers and the Internal Revenue Service as to the useful life of property, and as to salvage value, repairs, and other matters. The system is optional with the taxpayer. The taxpayer has an annual election. Generally, an election for a taxable year must apply to all additions of eligible property during the taxable year of election, but does not apply to additions of eligible property in any other taxable year. The taxpayer's election, made with the return for the taxable year, may not be revoked or modified for any property included in the election. Generally, the taxpayer must establish vintage accounts for all eligible property included in the election, must determine the allowance for depreciation of such property in the taxable year of election, and in subsequent taxable years, on the basis of the asset depreciation period selected and must apply the first-year convention specified in the election to determine the allowance for depreciation of such property. This section also contains special provisions for the treatment of salvage value, retirements, and the costs of the repair, maintenance, rehabilitation or improvement of property. In general, a taxpayer may not apply any provision of this section unless he makes an election and thereby consents to, and agrees to apply, all the provisions of this section. A taxpayer who elects to

apply this section does, however, have certain options as to the application of specified provisions of this section. A taxpayer may elect to apply this section for a taxable year only if for such taxable year he complies with the requirements of paragraph (f)(4) of this section.

(2) *Definitions*. For the meaning of certain terms used in this section, see paragraphs (b)(2) ("eligible property"), (b)(3) ("vintage account" and "vintage"), (b)(4) ("asset depreciation range", "asset guideline class", "asset guideline period", and "asset depreciation period"), (b)(5)(iii)(c) ("used property"), (b)(6)(i) ("public utility property"), (c)(1)(iv) ("original use"), (c)(1)(v) ("unadjusted basis" and "adjusted basis"), (c)(2)(ii) ("modified half-year convention"), (c)(2)(iii) ("half-year convention"), (d)(1)(i) ("gross salvage value"), (d)(1)(ii) ("salvage value"), (d)(2)(iii) ("repair allowance", "repair allowance percentage", and "repair allowance property"), (d)(2)(vi) ("excluded addition"), (d)(2)(vii) ("property improvement"), (d)(3)(ii) ("ordinary retirement" and "extraordinary retirement"), (d)(3)(vi) ("special basis vintage account"), and (e)(1) ("first placed in service") of this section.

(b) *Reasonable allowance using asset depreciation ranges*—(1) *In general*. The allowance for depreciation of eligible property (as defined in subparagraph (2) of this paragraph) to which the taxpayer elects to apply this section shall be determined as provided in paragraph (c) of this section and shall constitute the reasonable allowance for depreciation of such property under section 167(a).

(2) *Definition of eligible property*. For purposes of this section, the term "eligible property" means tangible property which is subject to the allowance for depreciation provided by section 167(a) but only if—

(i) An asset guideline class and asset guideline period are in effect for such property for the taxable year of election (see subparagraph (4) of this paragraph);

(ii) The property is first placed in service (as described in paragraph (e)(1) of this section) by the taxpayer