

an obligation issued by a corporation if, on the basis of the facts and circumstances at the time the obligation was entered into, the payment constitutes a contribution to capital by a shareholder. The rule of this paragraph (c) applies to payments whenever made (see paragraph (f) of this section).

(d) *Certain payments treated as worthless debts.* A payment in discharge of part or all of taxpayer's agreement to act as guarantor, endorser, or indemnitor of an obligation is to be treated as a worthless debt only if—

(1) The agreement was entered into in the course of the taxpayer's trade or business or a transaction for profit;

(2) There was an enforceable legal duty upon the taxpayer to make the payment (except that legal action need not have been brought against the taxpayer); and

(3) The agreement was entered into before the obligation became worthless (or partially worthless in the case of an agreement entered into in the course of the taxpayer's trade or business). See §§ 1.166-2 and 1.166-3 for rules on worthless and partially worthless debts. For purposes of this paragraph (d)(3), an agreement is considered as entered into before the obligation became worthless (or partially worthless) if there was a reasonable expectation on the part of the taxpayer at the time the agreement was entered into that the taxpayer would not be called upon to pay the debt (subject to such agreement) without full reimbursement from the issuer of the obligation.

(e) *Special rules*—(1) *Reasonable consideration required.* Treatment as a worthless debt of a payment made by a taxpayer in discharge of part or all of the taxpayer's agreement to act as a guarantor, endorser, or indemnitor of an obligation is allowed only if the taxpayer demonstrates that reasonable consideration was received for entering into the agreement. For purposes of this paragraph (e)(1), reasonable consideration is not limited to direct consideration in the form of cash or property. Thus, where a taxpayer can demonstrate that the agreement was given without direct consideration in the form of cash or property but in accordance with normal business practice or for a good faith business purpose,

worthless debt treatment is allowed with respect to a payment in discharge of part or all of the agreement if the conditions of this section are met. However, consideration received from a taxpayer's spouse or any individual listed in section 152(a) must be direct consideration in the form of cash or property.

(2) *Right of subrogation.* With respect to a payment made by a taxpayer in discharge of part or all of the taxpayer's agreement to act as a guarantor, endorser, or indemnitor where the agreement provides for a right of subrogation or other similar right against the issuer, treatment as a worthless debt is not allowed until the taxable year in which the right of subrogation or other similar right becomes totally worthless (or partially worthless in the case of an agreement which arose in the course of the taxpayer's trade or business).

(3) *Other applicable provisions.* Unless inconsistent with this section, other Internal Revenue laws concerning worthless debts, such as section 111 relating to the recovery of bad debts, apply to any payment which, under the provisions of this section, is treated as giving rise to a worthless debt.

(4) *Taxpayer defined.* For purposes of this section, except as otherwise provided, the term "taxpayer" means any taxpayer and includes individuals, corporations, partnerships, trusts and estates.

(f) *Effective date.* This section applies to losses incurred on agreements made after December 31, 1975, in taxable years beginning after such date. However, paragraph (c) of this section also applies to payments, regardless of the taxable year in which made, under agreements made before January 1, 1976.

[T.D. 7657, 44 FR 68465, Nov. 29, 1979, as amended by T.D. 7920, 48 FR 50712, Nov. 3, 1983]

§ 1.166-10 Reserve for guaranteed debt obligations.

(a) *Definitions.* The following provisions apply for purposes of this section and section 166(f):

(1) *Dealer in property.* A dealer in property is a person who regularly sells

property in the ordinary course of the person's trade or business.

(2) *Guaranteed debt obligation.* A guaranteed debt obligation is a legal duty of one person as a guarantor, endorser or indemnitor of a second person to pay a third person. It does not include duties based solely on moral or good public relations considerations that are not legally binding. A guaranteed debt obligation typically arises where a seller receives in payment for property or services the debt obligation of a purchaser and sells that obligation to a third party with recourse. However, a guaranteed debt obligation also may arise out of a sale in respect of which there is no direct debtor-creditor relationship between the debtor purchaser and the seller. For example, it arises where a purchaser borrows money from a third party to make payment to the seller and the seller guarantees the payment of the purchaser's debt. Generally, debt obligations which are sold without recourse do not result in any obligation of the seller as a guarantor, endorser, or indemnitor. However, there are certain without-recourse transactions which may give rise to a seller's liability as a guarantor or indemnitor. For example, such a liability may arise where a holder of a debt obligation holds money or other property of a seller which the holder may apply, without seeking permission of the seller, against any uncollectible debt obligations transferred to the holder by the seller without recourse, or where the seller is under a legal obligation to reacquire the real or tangible personal property from the holder of the debt obligation who repossessed property in satisfaction of the debt obligations.

(3) *Real or tangible personal property.* Real or tangible personal property generally does not include other forms of property, such as securities. However, if the sale of other property is related to the sale of actual real or tangible personal property, the other property will be considered to be real or tangible personal property. In order for the sale of other property to be related, it must be—

(i) Incidental to the sale of the actual real or tangible personal property; and

(ii) Made under an agreement, entered into at the same time as the sale of actual real or tangible personal property, between the dealer in that property and the customer with respect to that property.

The other property may be charged for as a part of, or in addition to, the sales price of the actual real or tangible personal property. If the value of the other property is not greater than 20 percent of the total sales price, including the value of all related services other than financing services, the sale of the other property is related to the sale of actual real or tangible personal property.

(4) *Related services.* In the case of a sale of both property and services a determination must be made as to whether the services are related to the property. Related services include only those services which are—

(i) Incidental to the sale of the real or tangible personal property; and

(ii) To be performed under an agreement, entered into at the same time as the sale of the property, between the dealer in property and the customer with respect to the property.

Delivery, financing installation, maintenance, repair, or instructional services generally qualify as related services. The services may be charged for as a part of, or in addition to, the sales price of the property. Where the value of all services other than financing services is not greater than 20 percent of the total of the sales price of the property, including the value of all the services other than financing services, all of the services are considered to be incidental to the sale of the property. Where the value of the services is greater than 20 percent, the determination as to whether a service is a related service in a particular case is to be made on the basis of all relevant facts and circumstances.

(5) *Examples.* The following examples apply to paragraph (a)(4) of this section:

Example 1. A, a dealer in television sets, sells a television set to B, his customer. If at the time of the sale A, for a separate charge which is added to the sales price of the set and which is not greater than 20 percent of the total sales price, provides a 3-year service contract on only that television set, the

service contract is a related service agreement. However, if A does not sell the service contract to B contemporaneously with the sale of the television set, as would be the case if the service agreement were entered into after the sale of the set were completed, or if the service contract includes services for a television set in addition to the one then sold by A to B, the service contract is not an agreement for a related service.

Example 2. C, an automobile dealer, at the time of the sale by C of an automobile to D, agrees to make available to D driving instructions furnished by the M driving school, the cost of which is included in the sale price of the automobile and is not greater than 20 percent of the total sales price. C also agrees to pay M for the driving instructions furnished to D. Since C's agreement with D to make available driving instructions is incidental to the sale of the automobile, is made contemporaneously with the sale, and is charged for as part of the sales price of the automobile, it is an agreement for a related service. In contrast, however, because M's agreement with C is not an agreement between the dealer in property and the customer, M's agreement with C to provide driving instructions to C's customers is not an agreement for a related service.

(b) *Incorporation of section 166(c) rules.* A reserve for section 166(f)(1)(A) guaranteed debt obligations must be established and maintained under the rules applicable to the reserve for bad debts under section 166(c) (with the exception of the statement requirement under § 1.166-4 (c)). For example, the rules in § 1.166-4(b), relating to what constitutes a reasonable addition to a reserve for bad debts and to correction of errors in prior estimates, apply to a reserve for section 166(f)(1)(A) guaranteed debt obligations as well.

(c) *Special requirements.* Any reserve for section 166(f)(1)(A) guaranteed debt obligations must be established and maintained separately from any reserve for other debt obligations. In addition, a taxpayer who charges off direct debts when they become worthless in whole or in part rather than maintaining a reserve for such obligations may not maintain a reserve for section 166(f)(1)(A) guaranteed debt obligations in the same trade or business.

(d) *Requirement of statement.* A taxpayer who uses the reserve method of treating section 166(f)(1)(A) guaranteed debt obligations must attach to his return for each taxable year, returns for which are filed after April 17, 1986, and

for each trade or business for which the reserve is maintained a statement showing—

- (1) The total amount of these obligations at the beginning of the taxable year;
- (2) The total amount of these obligations incurred during the taxable year;
- (3) The amount of the initial balance of the suspense account, if any, established with respect to these obligations;
- (4) The balance of the suspense account, if any, at the beginning of the taxable year;
- (5) The adjustment, if any, to that account;
- (6) The adjusted balance, if any, at the close of the taxable year;
- (7) The reconciliation of the beginning and closing balances of the reserve for these obligations and the computation of the addition to the reserve; and
- (8) The taxable year for which the reserve for these obligations was established.

(e) *Computation of opening balance—(1) In general.* The opening balance of a reserve for section 166(f)(1)(A) guaranteed debt obligations established for the first taxable year for which a taxpayer maintains such a reserve shall be determined as if the taxpayer had maintained such a reserve for the taxable years preceding that taxable year. The amount of the opening balance may be determined under the following formula:

$$OB = CG \times \frac{SNL}{SG}$$

where—

- OB = the opening balance at the beginning of the first taxable year
- CG = the amount of these obligations at the close of the last preceding taxable year
- SG = the sum of the amounts of these obligations at the close of the five preceding taxable years
- SNL = the sum of the amounts of net losses arising from these obligations for the five preceding taxable years

(2) *Example.* The following example applies to paragraph (e)(1) of this section.

Example. For 1977, A, a dealer in automobiles who uses the calendar year as the taxable year, adopts in accordance with this

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section the reserve method of treating section 166(f)(1)(A) guaranteed debt obligations. A's first year in business as an automobile

dealer is 1973. For 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, and 1976, A's records disclose the following information with respect to these obligations:

Year	Obligations outstanding at close of year	Gross losses from these obligations	Recoveries from these obligations	Net losses from these obligations
1972	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
1973	780,000	9,700	1,000	8,700
1974	795,000	8,900	1,050	7,850
1975	850,000	8,850	850	8,000
1976	820,000	8,300	1,400	7,900
Total	3,245,000	36,750	4,300	32,450

The opening balance for 1977 of A's reserve for these obligations is \$8,200, determined as follows:

$$\$8,200 = \$820,000 \times \frac{\$32,450}{\$3,245,000}$$

(3) *More appropriate balance.* A taxpayer may select a balance other than the one produced under paragraph (e)(1) of this section if it is more appropriate, based upon the taxpayer's actual experience, and in the event the taxpayer's return is examined, if the balance is approved by the district director.

(4) *No losses in the five preceding taxable years.* If a taxpayer is in the taxpayer's first taxable year of a particular trade or business, or if the taxpayer has no losses arising from section 166(f)(1)(A) guaranteed debt obligations in a particular trade or business for any other reason in the five preceding taxable years, then the taxpayer's opening balance is zero for that particular trade or business.

(5) *Where reserve method was used before October 22, 1965.* If for a taxable year ending before October 22, 1965, the taxpayer maintained a reserve for bad debts under section 166(c) which included guaranteed debt obligations described in section 166(f)(1)(A), and if the taxpayer is allowed a deduction referred to in paragraph (g)(2) of this section on account of those obligations, the amount of the opening balance of

the reserve for section 166(f)(1)(A) guaranteed debt obligations for the taxpayer's first taxable year ending after October 21, 1965, shall be an amount equal to that portion of the section 166(c) reserve at the close of the last taxable year which is attributable to those debt obligations. The amount of the balance of the section 166(c) reserve for the taxable year shall be reduced by the amount of the opening balance of the reserve for those guaranteed debt obligations.

(f) *Suspense account—(1) Zero opening balance cases.* No suspense account shall be maintained if the opening balance of the reserve for section 166(f)(1)(A) guaranteed debt obligations under section 166(f)(3) is zero

(2) *Example.* The following example applies to section 166(f)(4)(B), relating to adjustments to the suspense account:

Example. In 1977, A, an individual who operates an appliance store and uses the calendar year as the taxable year, adopts the reserve method of treating section 166(f)(1)(A) guaranteed debt obligations. The initial balance of A's suspense account is \$8,200. At the close of 1977, 1978, 1979, and 1980, the balance of A's reserve for these obligations is \$8,400, \$8,250, \$8,150, and \$8,175, respectively, after making the addition to the reserve for each year. The adjustments under section 166(f)(4)(B) to the suspense account at the close of each of the years involved are as follows:

(1) Taxable year	1977	1978	1979	1980
(2) Closing reserve account balance	\$8,400	\$8,250	\$8,150	\$8,175
(3) Opening suspense account balance	8,200	8,200	8,200	8,150
(4) Line (2) less line (3)	200	50	(50)	25
(5) Adjustment to suspense account balance	0	0	(50)	25
(6) Closing suspense account balance (line 3 plus line 5)	8,200	8,200	8,150	8,175

(g) *Effective date*—(1) *In general.* This section is generally effective for taxable years ending after October 21, 1965.

(2) *Transitional rule.* Section 2(b) of the Act of November 2, 1966 (Pub. L. 89-722, 80 Stat. 1151) allows additions to section 166(c) bad debt reserves in earlier taxable years on account of section 166(f)(1)(A) guaranteed debt obligations to be deducted for those earlier taxable years. Paragraphs (c), (d), (e), and (f) of this section do not apply in determining whether a deduction is allowed under section 2(b) of the Act. See Rev. Rul. 68-313 (1968-1C.B. 75) for rules relating to that deduction.

[T.D. 8071, 51 FR 2479, Jan. 17, 1986; 51 FR 9787, Mar. 21, 1986]

§ 1.167(a)-1 Depreciation in general.

(a) *Reasonable allowance.* Section 167(a) provides that a reasonable allowance for the exhaustion, wear and tear, and obsolescence of property used in the trade or business or of property held by the taxpayer for the production of income shall be allowed as a depreciation deduction. The allowance is that amount which should be set aside for the taxable year in accordance with a reasonably consistent plan (not necessarily at a uniform rate), so that the aggregate of the amounts set aside, plus the salvage value, will, at the end of the estimated useful life of the depreciable property, equal the cost or other basis of the property as provided in section 167(g) and § 1.167(g)-1. An asset shall not be depreciated below a reasonable salvage value under any method of computing depreciation. However, see section 167(f) and § 1.167(f)-1 for rules which permit a reduction in the amount of salvage value to be taken into account for certain personal property acquired after October 16, 1962. See also paragraph (c) of this section for definition of salvage. The allowance shall not reflect amounts representing a mere reduction in market value. See section 179 and § 1.179-1 for a further description of the term “reasonable allowance.”

(b) *Useful life.* For the purpose of section 167 the estimated useful life of an asset is not necessarily the useful life inherent in the asset but is the period over which the asset may reasonably be expected to be useful to the tax-

payer in his trade or business or in the production of his income. This period shall be determined by reference to his experience with similar property taking into account present conditions and probable future developments. Some of the factors to be considered in determining this period are (1) wear and tear and decay or decline from natural causes, (2) the normal progress of the art, economic changes, inventions, and current developments within the industry and the taxpayer's trade or business, (3) the climatic and other local conditions peculiar to the taxpayer's trade or business, and (4) the taxpayer's policy as to repairs, renewals, and replacements. Salvage value is not a factor for the purpose of determining useful life. If the taxpayer's experience is inadequate, the general experience in the industry may be used until such time as the taxpayer's own experience forms an adequate basis for making the determination. The estimated remaining useful life may be subject to modification by reason of conditions known to exist at the end of the taxable year and shall be redetermined when necessary regardless of the method of computing depreciation. However, estimated remaining useful life shall be redetermined only when the change in the useful life is significant and there is a clear and convincing basis for the redetermination. For rules covering agreements with respect to useful life, see section 167(d) and § 1.167(d)-1. If a taxpayer claims an investment credit with respect to an asset for a taxable year preceding the taxable year in which the asset is considered as placed in service under § 1.167(a)-10(b) or § 1.167(a)-11(e), the useful life of the asset under this paragraph shall be the same useful life assigned to the asset under § 1.46-3(e).

(c) *Salvage.* (1) Salvage value is the amount (determined at the time of acquisition) which is estimated will be realizable upon sale or other disposition of an asset when it is no longer useful in the taxpayer's trade or business or in the production of his income and is to be retired from service by the taxpayer. Salvage value shall not be changed at any time after the determination made at the time of acquisition merely because of changes in price