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single installment and is derived from an annuity payable under the plan.

Other lump sum benefit means a benefit in priority category 5 or 6, determined under subpart A of this part, that is payable in a single installment (or substantially so) under the terms of the plan, and that is not derived from an annuity payable under the plan. The benefit may be a severance pay benefit, a death benefit or other single installment benefit.

[61 FR 34059, July 1, 1996, as amended at 67 FR 16959, Apr. 8, 2002; 74 FR 11035, Mar. 16, 2009; 76 FR 34605, June 14, 2011]

§ 4044.3 General rule.

(a) *Asset allocation.* Upon the termination of a single-employer plan, the plan administrator shall allocate the plan assets available to pay for benefits under the plan in the manner prescribed by this subpart. Plan assets available to pay for benefits include all plan assets (valued according to § 4044.41(b)) remaining after the subtraction of all liabilities, other than liabilities for future benefit payments, paid or payable from plan assets under the provisions of the plan. Liabilities include expenses, fees and other administrative costs, and benefit payments due before the allocation date. Except as provided in § 4044.4(b), an irrevocable commitment by an insurer to pay a benefit, which commitment is in effect on the date of the asset allocation, is not considered a plan asset, and a benefit payable under such a commitment is excluded from the allocation process.

(b) *Allocation date.* For plans that close out under § 4041.28 or § 4041.50, assets shall be allocated as of the date plan assets are to be distributed. For other plans, assets shall be allocated as of the termination date.

[61 FR 34059, July 1, 1996, as amended at 76 FR 34605, June 14, 2011]

§ 4044.4 Violations.

(a) *General.* A plan administrator violates ERISA if plan assets are allocated or distributed upon plan termination in a manner other than that prescribed in section 4044 of ERISA and this subpart, except as may be required to prevent disqualification of the plan under the Code and regulations thereunder.

(b) *Distributions in anticipation of termination.* A distribution, transfer, or allocation of assets to a participant or to an insurance company for the benefit of a participant, made in anticipation of plan termination, is considered to be an allocation of plan assets upon termination, and is covered by paragraph (a) of this section. In determining whether a distribution, transfer, or allocation of assets has been made in anticipation of plan termination PBGC will consider all of the facts and circumstances including—

(1) Any change in funding or operation procedures;

(2) Past practice with regard to employee requests for forms of distribution;

(3) Whether the distribution is consistent with plan provisions; and

(4) Whether an annuity contract that provides for a cutback based on the guarantee limits in subpart B of part 4022 of this chapter could have been purchased from an insurance company.

ALLOCATION OF ASSETS TO BENEFIT CATEGORIES

§ 4044.10 Manner of allocation.

(a) *General.* The plan administrator shall allocate plan assets available to pay for benefits under the plan using the rules and procedures set forth in paragraphs (b) through (f) of this section, or any other procedure that results in each participant (or beneficiary) receiving the same benefits he or she would receive if the procedures in paragraphs (b) through (f) were followed.

(b) *Assigning benefits.* The basic-type and nonbasic-type benefits payable with respect to each participant in a terminated plan shall be assigned to one or more priority categories in accordance with §§ 4044.11 through 4044.16. Benefits derived from voluntary employee contributions, which are assigned only to priority category 1, are treated, under section 204(c)(4) of ERISA and section 411(d)(5) of the Code, as benefits under a separate plan. The amount of a benefit payable with respect to each participant shall be determined as of the termination date, but, in a PPA 2006 bankruptcy termination, subject to the limitations in

sections 4022(g) and 4044(e) of ERISA (and corresponding provisions of these regulations).

(c) *Valuing benefits.* The value of a participant's benefit or benefits assigned to each priority category shall be determined, as of the allocation date, in accordance with the provisions of subpart B of this part. The value of each participant's basic-type benefit or benefits in a priority category shall be reduced by the value of the participant's benefit of the same type that is assigned to a higher priority category. Except as provided in the next two sentences, the same procedure shall be followed for nonbasic-type benefits. The value of a participant's nonbasic-type benefits in priority categories 3, 5, and 6 shall not be reduced by the value of the participant's nonbasic-type benefit assigned to priority category 2. Benefits in priority category 1 shall neither be included in nor subtracted from lower priority categories. In no event shall a benefit assigned to a priority category be valued at less than zero.

(d) *Allocating assets to priority categories.* Plan assets available to pay for benefits under the plan shall be allocated to each priority category in succession, beginning with priority category 1. If the plan has sufficient assets to pay for all benefits in a priority category, the remaining assets shall then be allocated to the next lower priority category. This process shall be repeated until all benefits in priority categories 1 through 6 have been provided or until all available plan assets have been allocated.

(e) *Allocating assets within priority categories.* Except for priority category 5, if the plan assets available for allocation to any priority category are insufficient to pay for all benefits in that priority category, those assets shall be distributed among the participants according to the ratio that the value of each participant's benefit or benefits in that priority category bears to the total value of all benefits in that priority category. If the plan assets available for allocation to priority category 5 are insufficient to pay for all benefits in that category, the assets shall be allocated, first, to the value of each participant's nonforfeitable benefits that would be assigned to priority category

5 under § 4044.15 after reduction for the value of benefits assigned to higher priority categories, based only on the provisions of the plan in effect at the beginning of the 5-year period immediately preceding the termination date. If assets available for allocation to priority category 5 are sufficient to fully satisfy the value of those benefits, assets shall then be allocated to the value of the benefit increase under the oldest amendment during the 5-year period immediately preceding the termination date, reduced by the value of benefits assigned to higher priority categories (including higher subcategories in priority category 5). This allocation procedure shall be repeated for each succeeding plan amendment within the 5-year period until all plan assets available for allocation have been exhausted. If an amendment decreased benefits, amounts previously allocated with respect to each participant in excess of the value of the reduced benefit shall be reduced accordingly. In the subcategory in which assets are exhausted, the assets shall be distributed among the participants according to the ratio that the value of each participant's benefit or benefits in that subcategory bears to the total value of all benefits in that subcategory.

(f) *Applying assets to basic-type or nonbasic-type benefits within priority categories.* The assets allocated to a participant's benefit or benefits within each priority category shall first be applied to pay for the participant's basic-type benefit or benefits assigned to that priority category. Any assets allocated on behalf of that participant remaining after satisfying the participant's basic-type benefit or benefits in that priority category shall then be applied to pay for the participant's nonbasic-type benefit or benefits assigned to that priority category. If the assets allocable to a participant's basic-type benefit or benefits in all priority categories are insufficient to pay for all of the participant's guaranteed benefits, the assets allocated to that participant's benefit in priority category 4 shall be applied, first, to the guaranteed portion of the participant's

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benefit in priority category 4. The remaining assets allocated to that participant's benefit in priority category 4, if any, shall be applied to the non-guaranteed portion of the participant's benefit.

(g) *Allocation to established subclasses.* Notwithstanding paragraphs (e) and (f) of this section, the assets of a plan that has established subclasses within any priority category may be allocated to the plan's subclasses in accordance with the rules set forth in § 4044.17.

[61 FR 34059, July 1, 1996, as amended at 76 FR 34605, June 14, 2011]

§ 4044.11 Priority category 1 benefits.

(a) *Definition.* The benefits in priority category 1 are participants' accrued benefits derived from voluntary employee contributions.

(b) *Assigning benefits.* Absent an election described in the next sentence, the benefit assigned to priority category 1 with respect to each participant is the balance of the separate account maintained for the participant's voluntary contributions. If a participant has elected to receive an annuity in lieu of his or her account balance, the benefit assigned to priority category 1 with respect to that participant is the present value of that annuity.

§ 4044.12 Priority category 2 benefits.

(a) *Definition.* The benefits in priority category 2 are participants' accrued benefits derived from mandatory employee contributions, whether to be paid as an annuity benefit with a pre-retirement death benefit that returns mandatory employee contributions or, if a participant so elects under the terms of the plan and subpart A of part 4022 of this chapter, as a lump sum benefit. Benefits are primarily basic-type benefits although nonbasic-type benefits may also be included as follows:

(1) *Basic-type benefits.* The basic-type benefit in priority category 2 with respect to each participant is the sum of the values of the annuity benefit and the pre-retirement death benefit determined under the provisions of paragraph (c)(1) of this section.

(2) *Nonbasic-type benefits.* If a participant elects to receive a lump sum benefit and if the value of the lump sum benefit exceeds the value of the basic-

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type benefit in priority category 2 determined with respect to the participant, the excess is a nonbasic-type benefit. There is no nonbasic-type benefit in priority category 2 for a participant who does not elect to receive a lump sum benefit.

(b) *Conversion of mandatory employee contributions to an annuity benefit.* Subject to the limitation set forth in paragraph (b)(3) of this section, a participant's accumulated mandatory employee contributions shall be converted to an annuity form of benefit payable at the normal retirement age or, if the plan provides for early retirement, at the expected retirement age. The conversion shall be made using the interest rates and factors specified in paragraph (b)(2) of this section. The form of the annuity benefit (e.g., straight life annuity, joint and survivor annuity, cash refund annuity, etc.) is the form that the participant or beneficiary is entitled to on the termination date. If the participant does not have a nonforfeitable right to a benefit, other than the return of his or her mandatory contributions in a lump sum, the annuity form of benefit is the form the participant would be entitled to if the participant had a nonforfeitable right to an annuity benefit under the plan on the termination date.

(1) *Accumulated mandatory employee contributions.* Subject to any addition for the cost of ancillary benefits plus interest, as provided in the following sentence, the amount of the accumulated mandatory employee contributions for each participant is the participant's total nonforfeitable mandatory employee contributions remaining in the plan on the termination date plus interest, if any, under the plan provisions. Mandatory employee contributions, if any, used after the effective date of the minimum vesting standards in section 203 of ERISA and section 411 of the Code for costs or to provide ancillary benefits such as life insurance or health insurance, plus interest under the plan provisions, shall be added to the contributions that remain in the plan to determine the accumulated mandatory employee contributions.