

§ 2200.203 Commencing E-Z Trial.

(a) *Selection.* Upon receipt of a Notice of Contest, the Chief Administrative Law Judge may, at his or her discretion, assign an appropriate case for E-Z Trial.

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Dated: November 7, 1997.

Earl R. Ohman, Jr.,

General Counsel.

[FR Doc. 97-29956 Filed 11-13-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7600-01-M

PENSION BENEFIT GUARANTY CORPORATION

29 CFR Part 4044

Allocation of Assets in Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Valuing Benefits

AGENCY: Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation's regulation on Allocation of Assets in Single-Employer Plans prescribes interest assumptions for valuing benefits under terminating single-employer plans. This final rule amends the regulation to adopt interest assumptions for plans with valuation dates in December 1997.

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 1, 1997.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Harold J. Ashner, Assistant General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, 1200 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20005, 202-326-4024. (For TTY and TDD, call 800-877-8339 and request connection to 202-326-4024).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The PBGC's regulation on Allocation of Assets in Single-Employer Plans (29 CFR part 4044) prescribes actuarial assumptions for valuing plan benefits of terminating single-employer plans covered by title IV of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974.

Among the actuarial assumptions prescribed in part 4044 are interest assumptions. These interest assumptions are intended to reflect current conditions in the financial and annuity markets.

Two sets of interest assumptions are prescribed, one set for the valuation of benefits to be paid as annuities and one set for the valuation of benefits to be paid as lump sums. This amendment adds to appendix B to part 4044 the annuity and lump sum interest assumptions for valuing benefits in plans with valuation dates during December 1997.

For annuity benefits, the interest assumptions will be 5.60 percent for the first 25 years following the valuation date and 5.00 percent thereafter. The annuity interest assumptions represent a decrease (from those in effect for November 1997) of 0.10 percent for the first 25 years following the valuation date and are otherwise unchanged. For benefits to be paid as lump sums, the interest assumptions to be used by the PBGC will be 4.50 percent for the period during which a benefit is in pay status and 4.00 percent during any years preceding the benefit's placement in pay status. The lump sum interest assumptions are unchanged from those in effect for November 1997.

The PBGC has determined that notice and public comment on this amendment

are impracticable and contrary to the public interest. This finding is based on the need to determine and issue new interest assumptions promptly so that the assumptions can reflect, as accurately as possible, current market conditions.

Because of the need to provide immediate guidance for the valuation of benefits in plans with valuation dates during December 1997, the PBGC finds that good cause exists for making the assumptions set forth in this amendment effective less than 30 days after publication.

The PBGC has determined that this action is not a "significant regulatory action" under the criteria set forth in Executive Order 12866.

Because no general notice of proposed rulemaking is required for this amendment, the Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980 does not apply. See 5 U.S.C. 601(2).

List of Subjects in 29 CFR Part 4044

Pension insurance, Pensions.

In consideration of the foregoing, 29 CFR part 4044 is amended as follows:

PART 4044—ALLOCATION OF ASSETS IN SINGLE-EMPLOYER PLANS

1. The authority citation for part 4044 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 29 U.S.C. 1301(a), 1302(b)(3), 1341, 1344, 1362.

2. In appendix B, a new entry is added to Table I, and Rate Set 50 is added to Table II, as set forth below. The introductory text of each table is republished for the convenience of the reader and remains unchanged.

Appendix B to Part 4044—Interest Rates Used to Value Annuities and Lump Sums

Table I.—Annuity Valuations

[This table sets forth, for each indicated calendar month, the interest rates (denoted by i_1 , i_2 , * * *, and referred to generally as i_t) assumed to be in effect between specified anniversaries of a valuation date that occurs within that calendar month; those anniversaries are specified in the columns adjacent to the rates. The last listed rate is assumed to be in effect after the last listed anniversary date.]

For valuation dates occurring in the month—	The values of i_t are:					
	i_t	for t =	i_t	for t =	i_t	for t =
* * * * *						
December 19970560	1-25	.0500	>25	N/A	N/A

Table II.—Lump Sum Valuations

[In using this table: (1) For benefits for which the participant or beneficiary is entitled to be in pay status on the valuation date, the immediate annuity rate shall apply; (2) For benefits for which the deferral period is y years (where y is an integer and $0 < y \leq n_1$), interest rate i_1 shall apply from the valuation date for a period of y years, and thereafter the immediate annuity rate shall apply; (3) For benefits for which the deferral period is y years (where y is an integer and $n_1 < y \leq n_1 + n_2$), interest rate i_2 shall apply from the valuation date for a period of $y - n_1$ years, interest rate i_1 shall apply for the following n_1 years, and thereafter the immediate annuity rate shall apply; (4) For benefits for which the deferral period is y years (where y is an integer and $y > n_1 + n_2$), interest rate i_3 shall apply from the valuation date for a period of $y - n_1 - n_2$ years, interest rate i_2 shall

apply for the following n_2 years, interest rate i_1 shall apply for the following n_1 years, and thereafter the immediate annuity rate shall apply.]

Rate set	For plans with a valuation date		Immediate annuity rate (percent)	Deferred annuities (percent)				
	On or after	Before		i_1	i_2	i_3	n_1	n_2
50	12-1-97	01-1-98	4.50	4.00	4.00	4.00	7	8

Issued in Washington, D.C., on this 10th day of November 1997.

David M. Strauss,

Executive Director, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

[FR Doc. 97-30043 Filed 11-13-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7708-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Office of the Secretary

32 CFR Part 285

[DoD 5400.7]

DoD Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Program

AGENCY: Department of Defense.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This revision conforms 32 CFR part 285, DoD Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) program, to the requirements of the Electronic Freedom of Information Act Amendments of 1996, as amended by Pub. L. 104-231.

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 29, 1997.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mr. C. Talbott, 703-697-1171.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On May 12, 1997 (62 FR 25875), the Department of Defense published a proposed rule for comment. No comments were received.

Executive Order 12866, Regulatory Planning and Review

It has been determined that this final rule (32 CFR part 285) is not a significant regulatory action. The rule does not:

(1) Have an annual effect to the economy of \$100 million or more or adversely affect in a material way the economy; a section of the economy; productivity; competition; jobs; the environment; public health or safety; or State, local, or tribal governments, or communities;

(2) Create a serious inconsistency or otherwise interfere with an action taken or planned by another Agency;

(3) Materially alter the budgetary impact of entitlements, grants, user fees,

or loan programs, or the rights and obligations of recipients thereof; or

(4) Raise novel legal or policy issues arising out of legal mandates, the President's priorities, or the principles set forth in this Executive order.

Public Law 96-354, Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601)

It has been certified that this rule is not subject to the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601) because it would not, if promulgated, have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. This rule implements the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552), a statute concerning the release of Federal Government records, and does not economically impact Federal Government relations with the private sector.

Public Law 96-511, Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35)

It has been certified that this part does not impose any reporting or recordkeeping requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

List of Subjects in 32 CFR Part 285

Freedom of information.

Accordingly, 32 CFR part 285 is revised to read as follows:

PART 285—DOD FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA) PROGRAM

Sec.

285.1 Purpose.

285.2 Applicability and scope.

285.3 Policy.

285.4 Responsibilities.

285.5 Information requirements.

Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552.

§ 285.1 Purpose.

This part:

(a) Updates policies and responsibilities for the implementation of the DoD FOIA Program under 5 U.S.C. 552.

(b) Continues to delegate authorities and responsibilities for the effective administration of the FOIA program.

§ 285.2 Applicability and scope.

(a) This part applies to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the

Military Departments, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, and the DoD Field Activities (hereafter referred to collectively as "the DoD Components").

(b) National Security Agency/Central Security Service records are subject to this part unless the records are exempt under section 6 of Pub. L. 86-36 (1959), codified at 50 U.S.C. 402 note. The records of the Defense Intelligence Agency, National Reconnaissance Office, and the National Imagery and Mapping Agency are also subject to this part unless the records are exempt under 10 U.S.C. 424.

§ 285.3 Policy.

It is DoD policy to:

(a) Promote public trust by making the maximum amount of information available to the public, in both hard copy and electronic formats, on the operation and activities of the Department of Defense, consistent with DoD responsibility to ensure national security.

(b) Allow a requester to obtain agency records from the Department of Defense that are available through other public information services without invoking the FOIA.

(c) Make available, under the procedures established by 32 CFR part 286, those agency records that are requested by a member of the general public who explicitly or implicitly cites the FOIA.

(d) Answer promptly all other requests for information, agency records, objects, and articles under established procedures and practices.

(e) Release agency records to the public unless those records are exempt from mandatory disclosure as outlined in 5 U.S.C. 552. Make discretionary disclosures of exempt records or information whenever disclosure would not foreseeably harm an interest protected by a FOIA exemption.

(f) Process requests by individuals for access to records about themselves contained in a Privacy Act system of records under procedures set forth in