
AGENCY: Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

ACTION: Final rule.

Effective April 1, 2007.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Catherine B. Klion, Manager, Regulatory and Policy Division, Legislative and Regulatory Department, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, 1200 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20005, 202–326–4024. (TTY/TDD users may call the Federal relay service toll-free at 1–800–877–8339 and ask to be connected to 202–326–4024.)

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The PBGC’s regulations prescribe actuarial assumptions—including interest assumptions—for valuing and paying plan benefits of terminating single-employer plans covered by title IV of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974. The interest assumptions are intended to reflect current conditions in the financial and annuity markets.

Three sets of interest assumptions are prescribed: (1) A set for the valuation of benefits for allocation purposes under section 4044 (found in Appendix B to part 4044), (2) a set for the PBGC to use to determine whether a benefit is payable as a lump sum and to determine lump-sum amounts to be paid by the PBGC (found in Appendix B to part 4022), and (3) a set for private-sector pension practitioners to refer to if they wish to use lump-sum interest rates determined using the PBGC’s historical methodology (found in Appendix C to part 4022).

This amendment (1) adds to Appendix B to part 4044 the interest assumptions for valuing benefits for allocation purposes in plans with valuation dates during April 2007, (2) adds to Appendix B to part 4022 the interest assumptions for the PBGC to use for its own lump-sum payments in plans with valuation dates during April 2007, and (3) adds to Appendix C to part 4022 the interest assumptions for private-sector pension practitioners to refer to if they wish to use lump-sum interest rates determined using the PBGC’s historical methodology for valuation dates during April 2007.

For valuation of benefits for allocation purposes, the interest assumptions that the PBGC will use (set forth in Appendix B to part 4044) will be 4.99 percent for the first 20 years following the valuation date and 4.66 percent thereafter. These interest assumptions represent a decrease (from those in effect for March 2007) of 0.23 percent for the first 20 years following the valuation date and 0.23 percent for all years thereafter.

The interest assumptions that the PBGC will use for its own lump-sum payments (set forth in Appendix B to part 4022) will be 2.75 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. These interest assumptions represent a decrease (from those in effect for March 2007) of 0.25 percent in the immediate annuity rate and are otherwise unchanged. For private-sector payments, the interest assumptions (set forth in Appendix C to part 4022) will be the same as those used by the PBGC for determining and paying lump sums (set forth in Appendix B to part 4022).

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 current market conditions as accurately as possible.

Because of the need to provide immediate guidance for the valuation and payment of benefits in plans with valuation dates during April 2007, 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
29 CFR Part 4022
Employee benefit plans, Pension insurance, Pensions, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

29 CFR Part 4044
Employee benefit plans, Pension insurance, Pensions.

In consideration of the foregoing, 29 CFR parts 4022 and 4044 are amended as follows:

PART 4022—BENEFITS PAYABLE IN TERMINATED SINGLE-EMPLOYER PLANS

1. The authority citation for part 4022 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 29 U.S.C. 1302, 1322, 1322b, 1341(c)(3)(D), and 1344.

2. In appendix B to part 4022, Rate Set 162, as set forth below, is added to the table.

Appendix B to Part 4022—Lump Sum Interest Rates For PBGC Payments
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3. In appendix C to part 4022, Rate Set 162, as set forth below, is added to the table.

Appendix C to Part 4022—Lump Sum Interest Rates For Private-Sector Payments
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4. The authority citation for part 4044 continues to read as follows:

PART 4044—ALLOCATION OF ASSETS IN SINGLE-EMPLOYER PLANS

5. In appendix B to part 4044, a new entry for April 2007, as set forth below, is added to the table.

Appendix B to Part 4044—Interest Rates Used to Value Benefits
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Issued in Washington, DC, on this 8th day of March 2007.


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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Minerals Management Service

30 CFR Part 250

RIN 1010–AD24

Oil and Gas and Sulphur Operations in the Outer Continental Shelf—Update of New and Reaffirmed Documents Incorporated by Reference

AGENCY: Minerals Management Service (MMS), Interior.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This final rule incorporates 33 new editions and 37 reaffirmed editions of documents previously incorporated by reference in regulations governing oil and gas and sulphur operations in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). The new and reaffirmed editions of these documents will ensure that lessees use the best and safest technologies available while operating in the OCS. The final rule also updates citations for documents that were incorporated by reference in recent final rules.


SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The MMS uses standards, specifications, and recommended practices developed by standard-setting organizations and the oil and gas industry as a means of establishing requirements for activities on the OCS. This practice, known as incorporation by reference, allows us to incorporate the provisions of technical standards into the regulations. The legal effect of incorporation by reference is that the material is treated as if the entire document were published in the Federal Register. This material, like any other properly issued regulation, then has the force and effect of law. We hold operators/lessees accountable for complying with the documents incorporated by reference in our regulations. We currently incorporate by reference 93 private sector consensus standards into the offshore operating regulations.

The regulations at 1 CFR part 51 govern how we and other Federal agencies incorporate various documents by reference. Agencies may only incorporate a document by reference by publishing the document title and affirmation/reaffirmation date in the Federal Register. Agencies must also gain approval from the Director of the Federal Register for each publication incorporated by reference. Incorporation by reference of a document or publication is limited to the specific edition, supplement, or addendum cited in the regulations.

Under 5 U.S.C. 553, MMS may update documents without an opportunity for public comment when we determine that the revisions to a document result in a new or revised edition, supplement, or addendum.