§ 1.441–4 Change of annual accounting period.

(a) Approval of the Commissioner. A taxpayer that has adopted an annual accounting period (as defined in §1.441–1(c)(3)) as its taxable year generally must continue to use that annual accounting period in computing its taxable income and for making its Federal income tax returns. If the taxpayer wants to change its annual accounting period and use a new taxable year, it must obtain the approval of the Commissioner, unless it is otherwise authorized to change without the approval of the Commissioner under either the Internal Revenue Code (e.g., section 444 and section 859) or the regulations thereunder (e.g., paragraph (c) of this section). In addition, as described in §1.441–1(c) and (d), a partnership, S corporation, electing S corporation, personal service corporation (PSC) generally is required to secure the approval of the Commissioner to adopt or retain an annual accounting period other than its required taxable year. The manner of obtaining approval from the Commissioner to adopt, change, or retain an annual accounting period is provided in paragraph (b) of this section. However, special rules for obtaining approval may be provided in other sections.

(b) Obtaining approval—(1) Time and manner for requesting approval. In order to secure the approval of the Commissioner to adopt, change, or retain an annual accounting period, a taxpayer must file an application, generally on Form 1128, “Application To Adopt, Change, or Retain a Tax Year,” with the Commissioner within such time and in such manner as is provided in administrative procedures published by the Commissioner.
Internal Revenue Service, Treasury § 1.442–1

(2) General requirements for approval.
An adoption, change, or retention in annual accounting period will be approved where the taxpayer establishes a business purpose for the requested annual accounting period and agrees to the Commissioner's prescribed terms, conditions, and adjustments for effecting the adoption, change, or retention. In determining whether a taxpayer has established a business purpose and which terms, conditions, and adjustments will be required, consideration will be given to all the facts and circumstances relating to the adoption, change, or retention, including the tax consequences resulting therefrom. Generally, the requirement of a business purpose will be satisfied, and adjustments to neutralize any tax consequences will not be required, if the requested annual accounting period coincides with the taxpayer’s required taxable year (as defined in §1.441–1(b)(2)), ownership taxable year, or natural business year. In the case of a partnership, S corporation, electing S corporations, and PSCs; and Rev. Proc. 66–50, 1966–2 C.B. 1260, automatic approval procedures for individuals. For availability of Revenue Procedures and Notices, see §601.601(d)(2) of this chapter.

(3) Administrative procedures. The Commissioner will prescribe administrative procedures under which a taxpayer may be permitted to adopt, change, or retain an annual accounting period. These administrative procedures will describe the business purpose requirements (including an ownership taxable year and a natural business year) and the terms, conditions, and adjustments necessary to obtain approval. Such terms, conditions, and adjustments may include adjustments necessary to neutralize the tax effects of a substantial distortion of income that would otherwise result from the requested annual accounting period including: a deferral of a substantial portion of the taxpayer’s income, or shifting of a substantial portion of deductions, from one taxable year to another; a similar deferral or shifting in the case of any other person, such as a beneficiary in an estate; the creation of a short period in which there is a substantial amount of income to offset an expiring net operating loss, capital loss, or credit. See, for example, Rev. Proc. 2002–39, 2002–22 I.R.B., procedures for obtaining the Commissioner’s prior approval of an adoption, change, or retention in annual accounting period through application to the national office; Rev. Proc. 2002–37, 2002–22 I.R.B., automatic approval procedures for certain corporations; Rev. Proc. 2002–38, 2002–22 I.R.B., automatic approval procedures for partnerships, S corporations, and PSCs; and Rev. Proc. 66–50, 1966–2 C.B. 1260, automatic approval procedures for individuals. For availability of Revenue Procedures and Notices, see §601.601(d)(2) of this chapter.

(4) Taxpayers to whom section 441(g) applies. If section 441(g) and §1.441–1(b)(1)(iv) apply to a taxpayer, the adoption of a fiscal year is treated as a change in the taxpayer’s annual accounting period under section 442. Therefore, that fiscal year can become the taxpayer’s taxable year only with the approval of the Commissioner. In addition to any other terms and conditions that may apply to such a change, the taxpayer must establish and maintain books that adequately and clearly reflect income for the short period involved in the change and for the fiscal year proposed.

(c) Special rule for change of annual accounting period by subsidiary corporation. A subsidiary corporation that is required to change its annual accounting period under §1.1502–76, relating to the taxable year of members of an affiliated group that file a consolidated return, does not need to obtain the approval of the Commissioner or file an application on Form 1128 with respect to that change.

(d) Special rule for newly married couples. (1) A newly married husband or wife may obtain automatic approval under this paragraph (d) to change his or her annual accounting period in order to use the annual accounting period of the other spouse so that a joint return may be filed for the first or second taxable year of that spouse ending after the date of marriage. Such automatic approval will be granted only if the newly married husband or wife...
§ 1.443–1 Returns for periods of less than 12 months.

(a) Returns for short period. A return for a short period, that is, for a taxable year consisting of a period of less than 12 months, shall be made under any of the following circumstances:

(1) Change of annual accounting period. In the case of a change in the annual accounting period of a taxpayer, a separate return must be filed for the short period of less than 12 months beginning with the close of the old taxable year and ending with the day preceding the first day of the new taxable year. However, such a return is not required for a short period of six days or less, or 359 days or more, resulting from a change from or to a 52–53-week taxable year. See section 441(f) and §1.441–2. The computation of the tax for a short period required to effect a change of annual accounting period is described in paragraph (b) of this section. In general, a return for a short period resulting from a change of annual accounting period shall be filed and the tax paid within the time prescribed for filing a return for a tax day of the short period. For rules applicable to a subsidiary corporation which becomes a member of an affiliated group which files a consolidated return, see §1.1502–76.

(2) Taxpayer not in existence for entire taxable year. If a taxpayer is not in existence for the entire taxable year, a return is required for the short period during which the taxpayer was in existence. For example, a corporation organized on August 1 and adopting the calendar year as its annual accounting period is required to file a return for the short period from August 1 to December 31, and returns for each calendar year thereafter. Similarly, a dissolving corporation which files its returns for the calendar year is required to file a return for the short period from January 1 to the date it goes out of existence. Income for the short period is not required to be annualized if the taxpayer is not in existence for the entire taxable year, and, in the case of a taxpayer other than a corporation, the deduction under section 151 for personal exemptions (or deductions in lieu thereof) need not be reduced under section 443(c). In general, the requirements with respect to the filing of returns and the payment of tax for a short period where the taxpayer has not been in existence for the entire taxable year are the same as for the filing of a return and the payment of tax for a taxable year of 12 months ending

Example. H & W marry on September 25, 2001. H is on a fiscal year ending June 30, and W is on a calendar year. H wishes to change to a calendar year in order to file joint returns with W. W’s first taxable year after marriage ends on December 31, 2001. H may not change to a calendar year for 2001 since, under this paragraph (d), he would have had to file a return for the short period from July 1 to December 31, 2002, by April 16, 2001. Since the date of marriage occurred subsequent to this due date, the return could not be filed under this paragraph (d). Therefore, H cannot change to a calendar year for 2001. However, H may change to a calendar year for 2002 by filing a return under this paragraph (d) by April 15, 2002, for the short period from July 1 to December 31, 2001. If H files such a return, H and W may file a joint return for calendar year 2002 (which is W’s second taxable year ending after the date of marriage).

(e) Effective date. The rules of this section are applicable for taxable years ending on or after May 17, 2002.