

maximum amount provided for by Federal law; (2) assessed or enforced by an agency pursuant to Federal law; and (3) assessed or enforced pursuant to an administrative proceeding or a civil action in the Federal courts.

The Inflation Adjustment Act, as amended, requires agencies to adjust civil monetary penalties by the inflation adjustment described in section 5 of the Inflation Adjustment Act no later than January 15 of every year thereafter. The Act also provides that any increase in a civil monetary penalty shall apply only to civil monetary penalties, including those whose associated violation predated such an increase, which are assessed after the date the increase takes effect.

The Inflation Adjustment Act, as amended, provides that the inflation adjustment does not apply to civil monetary penalties under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the Tariff Act of 1930.

#### *Alcoholic Beverage Labeling Act*

The Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) administers the Federal Alcohol Administration Act (FAA Act) pursuant to section 1111(d) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, codified at 6 U.S.C. 531(d). The Secretary has delegated various authorities through Treasury Department Order 120-01, dated December 10, 2013, (superseding Treasury Department Order 120-01, dated January 24, 2003), to the TTB Administrator to perform the functions and duties in the administration and enforcement of this law.

The FAA Act contains the Alcoholic Beverage Labeling Act (ABLA) of 1988, Public Law 100-690, 27 U.S.C. 213-219a, which was enacted on November 18, 1988. Section 204 of the ABLA, codified in 27 U.S.C. 215, requires that a health warning statement appear on the labels of all containers of alcoholic beverages manufactured, imported, or bottled for sale or distribution in the United States, as well as on containers of alcoholic beverages that are manufactured, imported, bottled, or labeled for sale, distribution, or shipment to members or units of the U.S. Armed Forces, including those located outside the United States.

The health warning statement requirement applies to containers of alcoholic beverages manufactured, imported, or bottled for sale or distribution in the United States on or after November 18, 1989. The statement reads as follows:

GOVERNMENT WARNING: (1) According to the Surgeon General, women should not drink alcoholic beverages during pregnancy

because of the risk of birth defects. (2) Consumption of alcoholic beverages impairs your ability to drive a car or operate machinery, and may cause health problems.

Section 204 of the ABLA also specifies that the Secretary of the Treasury shall have the power to ensure the enforcement of the provisions of the ABLA and issue regulations to carry out them out. In addition, section 207 of the ABLA, codified in 27 U.S.C. 218, provides that any person who violates the provisions of the ABLA is subject to a civil penalty of not more than \$10,000, with each day constituting a separate offense.

Most of the civil monetary penalties administered by TTB are imposed by the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, and thus are not subject to the inflation adjustment mandated by the Inflation Adjustment Act. The only civil monetary penalty enforced by TTB that is subject to the inflation adjustment is the penalty imposed by the ABLA at 27 U.S.C. 218.

#### *TTB Regulations*

The TTB regulations implementing the ABLA are found in 27 CFR part 16, and the regulations implementing the Inflation Adjustment Act with respect to the ABLA penalty are found in 27 CFR 16.33. This section indicates that the ABLA provides that any person who violates the provisions of this part shall be subject to a civil penalty of not more than \$10,000, but also states that, pursuant to the provisions of the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act of 1990, as amended, this civil penalty is subject to periodic cost-of-living adjustment. Accordingly, any person who violates the provisions of 27 CFR part 16 shall be subject to a civil penalty of not more than the amount listed at [https://www.ttb.gov/regulation\\_guidance/ablapenalty.html](https://www.ttb.gov/regulation_guidance/ablapenalty.html). Each day shall constitute a separate offense.

To adjust the penalty, § 16.33(b) indicates that TTB will provide notice in the **Federal Register** and at the website mentioned above of cost-of-living adjustments to the civil penalty for violations of 27 CFR part 16.

#### *Penalty Adjustment*

In this document, TTB is publishing its yearly adjustment to the maximum ABLA penalty, as required by the amended Inflation Adjustment Act.

As mentioned earlier, the ABLA contains a maximum civil monetary penalty. For such penalties, Section 5 of the Inflation Adjustment Act indicates that the inflation adjustment shall be determined by increasing the maximum penalty by the cost-of-living adjustment.

The cost-of-living adjustment means the percentage (if any) by which the Consumer Price Index for all-urban consumers (CPI-U) for the month of October preceding the date of the adjustment exceeds the CPI-U for the month of October 1 year before the month of October preceding the date of the adjustment.

The CPI-U in October 2016 was 241.729, and the CPI-U in October 2017 was 246.663. The rate of inflation between October 2016 and October 2017 is therefore 2.041 percent. When applied to the current ABLA penalty of \$20,111, this rate of inflation yields a raw (unrounded) inflation adjustment of \$410.46551. Rounded to the nearest dollar, the inflation adjustment is \$410, meaning that the new maximum civil penalty for violations of the ABLA will be \$20,521.

The new maximum civil penalty will apply to all penalties that are assessed after January 12, 2018. TTB will also update its web page at [https://www.ttb.gov/regulation\\_guidance/ablapenalty.html](https://www.ttb.gov/regulation_guidance/ablapenalty.html) to reflect the adjusted penalty.

Dated: January 8, 2018.

**Amy R. Greenberg,**

*Director, Regulations and Rulings Division.*

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## **PENSION BENEFIT GUARANTY CORPORATION**

### **29 CFR Part 4022**

#### **Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Paying Benefits**

**AGENCY:** Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

**ACTION:** Final rule.

**SUMMARY:** This final rule amends the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation's regulation on Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans to prescribe interest assumptions under the regulation for valuation dates in February 2018. The interest assumptions are used for paying benefits under terminating single-employer plans covered by the pension insurance system administered by PBGC.

**DATES:** Effective February 1, 2018.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Daniel S. Liebman ([liebman.daniel@pbgc.gov](mailto:liebman.daniel@pbgc.gov)), Acting Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, 1200 K Street NW, Washington, DC 20005, 202-

326-4400 ext. 6510. (TTY/ASCII users may call the Federal relay service toll-free at 1-800-877-8339 and ask to be connected to 202-326-4400, ext. 6510.)

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** PBGC's regulation on Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans (29 CFR part 4022) prescribes actuarial assumptions—including interest assumptions—for paying plan benefits under terminated single-employer plans covered by title IV of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974. The interest assumptions in the regulation are also published on PBGC's website (<http://www.pbgc.gov>).

PBGC uses the interest assumptions in appendix B to part 4022 to determine whether a benefit is payable as a lump sum and to determine the amount to pay. Appendix C to part 4022 contains interest assumptions for private-sector pension practitioners to refer to if they wish to use lump-sum interest rates determined using PBGC's historical methodology. Currently, the rates in appendices B and C of the benefit payment regulation are the same.

The interest assumptions are intended to reflect current conditions in the financial and annuity markets. Assumptions under the benefit

payments regulation are updated monthly. This final rule updates the benefit payments interest assumptions for February 2018.<sup>1</sup>

The February 2018 interest assumptions under the benefit payments regulation will be 0.75 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. In comparison with the interest assumptions in effect for January 2018, these assumptions are unchanged.

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 payment of benefits under plans with valuation dates during February 2018, PBGC finds that good cause exists for making the assumptions set forth in this amendment effective less than 30 days after publication.

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 4022**

Employee benefit plans, Pension insurance, Pensions, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

In consideration of the foregoing, 29 CFR part 4022 is 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 292 is added at the end of the table to read as follows:

**Appendix B to Part 4022—Lump Sum Interest Rates for PBGC Payments**

\* \* \* \* \*

Rate set	For plans with a valuation date		Immediate annuity rate (percent)	Deferred annuities (percent)					
	On or after	Before		$i_1$	$i_2$	$i_3$	$n_1$	$n_2$	
* 292	* 2-1-18	* 3-1-18	* 0.75	* 4.00	* 4.00	* 4.00	* 4.00	* 7	* 8

■ 3. In appendix C to part 4022, Rate Set 292 is added at the end of the table to read as follows:

**Appendix C to Part 4022—Lump Sum Interest Rates for Private-Sector Payments**

\* \* \* \* \*

Rate set	For plans with a valuation date		Immediate annuity rate (percent)	Deferred annuities (percent)					
	On or after	Before		$i_1$	$i_2$	$i_3$	$n_1$	$n_2$	
* 292	* 2-1-18	* 3-1-18	* 0.75	* 4.00	* 4.00	* 4.00	* 4.00	* 7	* 8

<sup>1</sup> Appendix B to PBGC's regulation on Allocation of Assets in Single-Employer Plans (29 CFR part 4044) prescribes interest assumptions for valuing

benefits under terminating covered single-employer plans for purposes of allocation of assets under

ERISA section 4044. Those assumptions are updated quarterly.

Issued in Washington, DC.

**Daniel S. Liebman,**

*Acting Assistant General Counsel for  
Regulatory Affairs, Pension Benefit Guaranty  
Corporation.*

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## PENSION BENEFIT GUARANTY CORPORATION

### 29 CFR Parts 4071 and 4302

RIN 1212-AB45

#### Adjustment of Civil Penalties for Inflation

**AGENCY:** Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

**ACTION:** Final rule.

**SUMMARY:** The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation is required to amend its regulations annually to adjust for inflation the maximum civil penalty for failure to provide certain notices or other material information and for failure to provide certain multiemployer plan notices.

**DATES:** *Effective date:* This rule is effective on January 12, 2018.

*Applicability date:* The increases in the civil monetary penalties under sections 4071 and 4302 provided for in this rule apply to such penalties assessed after January 12, 2018.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Stephanie Cibinic, Deputy Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Affairs (*cibinic.stephanie@pbgc.gov*), Office of the General Counsel, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, 1200 K Street NW, Washington, DC 20005-4026; 202-326-4400 extension 6352. (TTY and TDD users may call the Federal relay service toll-free at 800-877-8339 and ask to be connected to 202-326-4400 extension 6352.)

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Executive Summary

##### *Purpose of the Regulatory Action*

This rule is needed to carry out the requirements of the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015 and Office of Management and Budget guidance M-18-03. The rule adjusts, as required for 2018, the maximum civil penalties under 29 CFR part 4071 and 29 CFR part 4302 that PBGC may assess for failure to provide certain notices or other material information and certain multiemployer plan notices.

PBGC's legal authority for this action comes from the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act of 1990 as

amended by the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015 and from sections 4002(b)(3), 4071, and 4302 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

##### *Major Provisions of the Regulatory Action*

This rule adjusts as required by law the maximum civil penalties that PBGC may assess under sections 4071 and 4302 of ERISA. The new maximum amounts are \$2,140 for section 4071 penalties and \$285 for section 4302 penalties.

##### Background

The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) administers title IV of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). Title IV has two provisions that authorize PBGC to assess civil monetary penalties.<sup>1</sup> Section 4302, added to ERISA by the Multiemployer Pension Plan Amendments Act of 1980, authorizes PBGC to assess a civil penalty of up to \$100 a day for failure to provide a notice under subtitle E of title IV of ERISA (dealing with multiemployer plans). Section 4071, added to ERISA by the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987, authorizes PBGC to assess a civil penalty of up to \$1,000 a day for failure to provide a notice or other material information under subtitles A, B, and C of title IV and sections 303(k)(4) and 306(g)(4) of title I of ERISA.

##### Adjustment of Civil Penalties

On November 2, 2015, the President signed into law the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015,<sup>2</sup> which requires agencies to adjust civil monetary penalties for inflation and to publish the adjustments in the **Federal Register**. An initial adjustment was required to be made by interim final rule published by July 1, 2016, and effective by August 1, 2016. Subsequent adjustments must be promulgated in January each year after 2016. In an interim final rule published on May 13, 2016 (at 81 FR 29765), PBGC adjusted the maximum penalty under section 4071 to \$2,063 and adjusted the maximum penalty under section 4302 to

\$275.<sup>3</sup> In a final rule published on January 31, 2017 (at 82 FR 8813), PBGC finalized its interim final rule and adjusted the maximum penalty under section 4071 to \$2,097 and the maximum penalty under section 4302 to \$279.<sup>4</sup>

On December 15, 2017, the Office of Management and Budget issued memorandum M-18-03 on implementation of the 2018 annual inflation adjustment pursuant to the 2015 act.<sup>5</sup> The memorandum provides agencies with the cost-of-living adjustment multiplier for 2018, which is based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U) for the month of October 2017, not seasonally adjusted. The multiplier for 2018 is 1.02041. The adjusted maximum amounts are \$2,140 for section 4071 penalties and \$285 for section 4302 penalties.

##### Compliance With Regulatory Requirements

The Office of Management and Budget has determined that this rule is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866 and therefore not subject to their review. As this is not a significant regulatory action under E.O. 12866, it is not considered an E.O. 13771 regulatory action.

The Office of Management and Budget also has determined that notice and public comment on this final rule are unnecessary because the adjustment of civil penalties implemented in the rule is required by law. See 5 U.S.C. 553(b).

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

##### List of Subjects

29 CFR Part 4071

Penalties.

29 CFR Part 4302

Penalties.

In consideration of the foregoing, PBGC amends 29 CFR parts 4071 and 4302 as follows:

<sup>1</sup> Under the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act of 1990, a penalty is a civil monetary penalty if (among other things) it is for a specific monetary amount or has a maximum amount specified by Federal law. Title IV also provides (in section 4007) for penalties for late payment of premiums, but those penalties are neither in a specified amount nor subject to a specified maximum amount.

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 701, Public Law 114-74, 129 Stat. 599-601 (Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015).

<sup>3</sup> The Office of Management and Budget issued memorandum M-16-06 on implementation of the 2015 act, including multipliers to use in the initial adjustment.

<sup>4</sup> The Office of Management and Budget issued memorandum M-17-11 on December 16, 2016, on implementation of the 2015 act, including the cost-of-living adjustment multiplier for 2017.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/M-18-03.pdf>