

SUBCHAPTER I—TEMPORARY BONDING RULES UNDER THE EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT INCOME SECURITY ACT OF 1974

PART 2580—TEMPORARY BONDING RULES

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Subpart A—Criteria for Determining Who Must Be Bonded

§ 2580.412-1 Statutory provisions.

Section 13(a) of the Welfare and Pension Plans Disclosure Act of 1958, as amended, states, in part, that:

Every administrator, officer and employee of any employee welfare benefit plan or of any employee pension benefit plan subject to this Act who handles funds or other property of such plan shall be bonded as herein provided; except that, where such plan is one under which the only assets from which benefits are paid are the general assets of a union or of an employer, the administrator, officers and employees of such plan shall be exempt from the bonding requirements of this section.

* * * Such bond shall provide protection to the plan against loss by reason of acts of fraud or dishonesty on the part of such administrator, officer, or employee, directly or through connivance with others.

§ 2580.412-2 Plans exempt from the coverage of section 13.

Only completely unfunded plans in which the plan benefits derive solely from the general assets of a union¹ or employer, and in which plan assets are not segregated in any way from the general assets of a union or employer and remain solely within the general assets until the time of distribution of benefits, shall be exempt from the bonding provisions. As such, the language “where such plan is one under which the only assets from which benefits are paid are the general assets of a union or of an employer” shall not be deemed to exempt a plan from the coverage of section 13 if the plan is one in which:

(a) Any benefits thereunder are provided or underwritten by an insurance carrier or service or other organization, or

¹For purposes of the exemption discussed in § 2580.412-2, the term “union” shall include “* * * any organization of any kind or any agency or employee representation committee, association, group, or plan, in which employees participate and which exists for the purpose in whole or in part, of dealing with employers concerning an employee welfare or pension benefit plan, or other matters incidental to employment relationships * * *” (29 U.S.C. 302(a)(3)).

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(b) There is a trust or other separate entity to which contributions are made or out of which benefits are paid, or

(c) Contributions to the plan are made by the employees, either through withholding or otherwise, or from any source other than the employer or union involved, or

(d) There is a separately maintained bank account or separately maintained books and records for the plan or other evidence of the existence of a segregated or separately maintained or administered fund out of which plan benefits are to be provided.

As a general rule, the presence of special ledger accounts or accounting entries for plan funds as an integral part of the general books and records of an employer or union shall not, in and of itself, be deemed sufficient evidence of segregation of plan funds to take a plan out of the exempt category, but shall be considered along with the other factors and criteria discussed above in determining whether the exemption applies. Again, it should be noted, however, that the fact that a plan is not exempt from the coverage of section 13 does not necessarily mean that its administrators, officers or employees are required to be bonded. As stated previously, this will depend in each case on whether or not they “handle” funds or other property of the plan within the meaning of section 13 and under the standards set forth in § 2580.412-6.

§ 2580.412-3 Plan administrators, officers and employees for purposes of section 13.

(a) *Administrator.* (1) For purposes of the bonding provisions, the term “administrator” is defined in the same manner as under section 5 of the Act and refers to:

(i) The person or persons designated by the terms of the plan or the collective bargaining agreement with responsibility for the ultimate control, disposition, or management of the money received or contributed; or

(ii) In the absence of such designation, the person or persons actually responsible for the control, disposition, or management of the money received or contributed, irrespective of whether

such control, disposition, or management is exercised directly or through an agent or trustee designated by such person or persons.

(2) Where by virtue of this definition, or regulations, interpretations or opinions issued with respect thereto, the term embodies natural persons such as members of the board of trustees of a trust, the bonding requirements shall apply to such persons.

(3) However, when by virtue of this definition or regulations, interpretations, or opinions issued with respect thereto, the administrator in a given case in an entity such as a partnership, corporation, mutual company, joint stock company, trust, unincorporated organization, union or employees' beneficiary association, the term shall be deemed to apply, in meeting the bonding requirements, only to those natural persons who:

(i) Are vested under the authority of the entity-administrator with the responsibility for carrying out functions constituting control, disposition or management of the money received or contributed within the definition of administrator, or who, acting on behalf of or under the actual or apparent authority of the entity-administrator, actually perform such functions, and who

(ii) "Handle" funds or other property of the plan within the meaning of these regulations.

(b) *Officers*. For purposes of the bonding provisions, the term "officer" shall include any person designated by the terms of a plan or collective bargaining agreement as an officer, any person performing or authorized to perform executive functions of the plan or any member of a board of trustees or similar governing body of a plan. The term shall include such persons regardless of whether they are representatives of or selected by an employer, employees or an employee organization. In its most frequent application the term will encompass those natural persons appointed or elected as officers of the plan or as members of boards or committees performing executive or supervisory functions for the plan, but who do not fall within the definition of administrator.

(c) *Employees*. For purposes of the bonding provisions the term "em-

ployee" shall, to the extent a person performs functions not falling within the definition of officer or administrator, include any employee who performs work for or directly related to a covered plan, regardless of whether technically he is employed, directly or indirectly, by or for a plan, a plan administrator, a trust, or by an employee organization or employer within the meaning of section 3(3) or 3(4) of the Act.

(d) *Other persons covered*. For purposes of the bonding provisions, the terms "administrator, officer, or employee" shall include any persons performing functions for the plan normally performed by administrators, officers, or employees of a plan. As such, the terms shall include persons indirectly employed, or otherwise delegated, to perform such work for the plan, such as pension consultants and planners, and attorneys who perform "handling" functions within the meaning of § 2580.412-6. On the other hand, the terms would not include those brokers or independent contractors who have contracted for the performance of functions which are not ordinarily carried out by the administrators, officers, or employees of a plan, such as securities, brokers who purchase and sell securities or armored motor vehicle companies.

[28 FR 14403, Dec. 27, 1963, as amended at 34 FR 5158, Mar. 13, 1969. Redesignated at 50 FR 26706, June 28, 1985]

§ 2580.412-4 "Funds or other property" of a plan.

The affirmative requirement for bonding persons falling within the definition of administrator, officer or employee is applicable only if they handle "funds or other property" of the plan concerned. The term "funds or other property" is intended to encompass all property which is used or may be used as a source for the payment of benefits to plan participants. It does not include permanent assets used in the operation of the plan such as land and buildings, furniture and fixtures or office and delivery equipment used in the operation of the plan. It does include all items in the nature of quick assets,

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such as cash, checks and other negotiable instruments, government obligations and marketable securities. It also includes all other property or items convertible into cash or having a cash value and held or acquired for the ultimate purpose of distribution to plan participants or beneficiaries. In the case of a plan which has investments, this would include all the investments of the plan even though not in the nature of quick assets, such as land and buildings, mortgages, and securities in closely held corporations. However, in a given case, the question of whether a person was "handling" such "funds or other property" so as to require bonding would depend on whether his relationship to this property was such that there was a risk that he, alone or in connivance with others, could cause a loss of such "funds or other property" through fraud or dishonesty.

§ 2580.412-5 Determining when "funds or other property" belong to a plan.

With respect to any contribution to a plan from any source, including employers, employees or employee organizations, the point at which any given item or amount becomes "funds or other property" of a plan for purposes of the bonding provisions shall be determined as described in this section.

(a) Where the plan administrator is a board of trustees, person or body other than the employer or employee organization establishing the plan, a contribution to the plan from any source shall become "funds or other property" of the plan at the time it is received by the plan administrator. Employee contributions collected by an employer and later turned over to the plan administrator would not become "funds or other property" of the plan until receipt by the plan administrator.

(b) Where the employer or employee organization establishing the plan is itself the plan administrator:

(1) Contributions from employees or other persons who are plan participants would normally become "funds or other property" of the plan at the time they are received by the employer or employee organization, except however that contributions made by withholding from employees' salaries shall not be considered "funds or other prop-

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erty" of the plan for purposes of the bonding provisions so long as they are retained in and not segregated in any way from the general assets of the withholding employer or employee organization.

(2) Contributions made to a plan by such employer or employee organization and contributions made by withholdings from employees' salaries would normally become "funds or other property" of the plan if and when they are taken out of the general assets of the employer or employee organization and placed in a special bank account or investment account; or identified on a separate set of books and records; or paid over to a corporate trustee or used to purchase benefits from an insurance carrier or service or other organization; or otherwise segregated, paid out or used for plan purposes, whichever shall occur first. Thus, if a plan is operated by a corporate trustee and no segregation from general assets is made of monies to be turned over to the corporate trustee prior to the actual transmittal of such monies, the contribution represented in the transmission becomes "funds or other property" of the plan at the time of receipt by the corporate trustee. On the other hand, if a special fund is first established from which monies are paid over to the corporate trustee, a given item would become "funds or other property" of the plan at the time it is placed in the special fund. Similarly, if plan benefits are provided through the medium of an insurance carrier or service or other organization and no segregation from general assets of monies used to purchase such benefits is made prior to turning such monies over to the organization contracting to provide benefits, plan funds or other property come into being at the time of receipt of payment for such benefits by the insurance carrier or service or other organization. In such a case, the "funds or other property" of the plan would be represented by the insurance contract or other obligations to pay benefits and would not be normally subject to "handling". Bonding would not be required for any person with respect to the purchase of such benefits directly from general assets nor with respect to

the bare existence of the contract obligation to pay benefits. However, if the particular arrangement were such that monies derived from, or by virtue of, the contract did subsequently flow back to the plan, bonding may be required if such monies returning to the plan are handled by plan administrators, officers or employees. (Further discussion on bonding of insured plans is contained in § 2580.412-6(b)(7)).

§ 2580.412-6 Determining when “funds or other property” are “handled” so as to require bonding.

(a) *General scope of term.* (1) A plan administrator, officer, or employee shall be deemed to be “handling” funds or other property of a plan, so as to require bonding under section 13, whenever his duties or activities with respect to given funds or other property are such that there is a risk that such funds or other property could be lost in the event of fraud or dishonesty on the part of such person, acting either alone or in collusion with others. While ordinarily, those plan administrators, officers and employees who “handle” within the meaning of section 13 will be those persons with duties related to the receipt, safekeeping and disbursement of funds, the scope of the term “handles” and the prohibitions of paragraph (b) of section 13 shall be deemed to encompass any relationship of an administrator, officer or employee with respect to funds or other property which can give rise to a risk of loss through fraud or dishonesty. This shall include relationships such as those which involve access to funds or other property or decisionmaking powers with respect to funds or property which can give rise to such risk of loss.

(2) Section 13 contains no exemptions based on the amount or value of funds or other property “handled”, nor is the determination of the existence of risk of loss based on the amount involved. However, regardless of the amount involved, a given duty or relationship to funds or other property shall not be considered “handling”, and bonding is not required, where it occurs under conditions and circumstances in which the risk that a loss will occur through fraud or dishonesty is negligible. This may be the case where the risk of mis-

handling is precluded by the nature of the funds or other property (e.g., checks, securities or title papers which can not be negotiated by the persons performing duties with respect to them). It may also be the case where significant risk of mishandling in the performance of duties of an essentially clerical character is precluded by fiscal controls.

(b) *General criteria for determining “handling”.* Subject to the application of the basic standard of risk of loss to each situation, general criteria for determining whether there is “handling” so as to require bonding are:

(1) *Physical contact.* Physical contact with cash, checks or similar property generally constitutes “handling”. However, persons who from time to time perform counting, packaging, tabulating, messenger or similar duties of an essentially clerical character involving physical contact with funds or other property would not be “handling” when they perform these duties under conditions and circumstances where risk of loss is negligible because of factors such as close supervision and control or the nature of the property.

(2) *Power to exercise physical contact or control.* Whether or not physical contact actually takes place, the power to secure physical possession of cash, checks or similar property through factors such as access to a safe deposit box or similar depository, access to cash or negotiable assets, powers of custody or safekeeping, power to withdraw funds from a bank or other account generally constitutes “handling”, regardless of whether the person in question has specific duties in these matters and regardless of whether the power or access is authorized.

(3) *Power to transfer to oneself or a third party or to negotiate for value.* With respect to property such as mortgages, title to land and buildings, or securities, while physical contact or the possibility of physical contact may not, of itself, give rise to risk of loss so as to constitute “handling”, a person shall be regarded as “handling” such items where he, through actual or apparent authority, can cause those items to be transferred to himself or to a third party or to be negotiated for value.

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(4) *Disbursement.* Persons who actually disburse funds or other property, such as officers or trustees authorized to sign checks or other negotiable instruments, or persons who make cash disbursements, shall be considered to be "handling" such funds or property. Whether other persons who may influence, authorize or direct disbursements or the signing or endorsing of checks or similar instruments will be considered to be "handling" funds or other property shall be determined by reference to the particular duties or responsibilities of such persons as applied to the basic criteria of risk of loss.

(5) *Signing or endorsing checks or other negotiable instruments.* In connection with disbursements or otherwise, any persons with the power to sign or endorse checks or similar instruments or otherwise render them transferable, whether individually or as co-signers with one or more persons, shall each be considered to be "handling" such funds or other property.

(6) *Supervisory or decision making responsibility.* To the extent a person's supervisory or decision making responsibility involves factors in relationship to funds discussed in paragraph (b)(1), (2), (3), (4), or (5) of this section, such persons shall be considered to be "handling" in the same manner as any person to whom the criteria of those paragraphs apply. To the extent that only general responsibility for the conduct of the business affairs of the plan is involved, including such functions as approval of contracts, authorization of disbursements, auditing of accounts, investment decisions, determination of benefit claims and similar responsibilities, such persons shall be considered to be "handling" whenever the facts of the particular case raise the possibility that funds or other property of the plan are likely to be lost in the event of their fraud or dishonesty. The mere fact of general supervision would not necessarily, in and of itself, mean that such persons are "handling." Factors to be accorded weight are the system of fiscal controls, the closeness and continuity of supervision, who is in fact charged with, or actually exercising final responsibility for determining whether specific disbursements, investments, contracts, or benefit claims are

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bona fide, regular and made in accordance with the applicable trust instrument or other plan documents.

(i) For example, persons having supervisory or decisionmaking responsibility would be "handling" to the extent they:

(a) Act in the capacity of plan "administrator" and have ultimate responsibility for the plan within the meaning of the definition of "administrator" (except to the extent that it can be shown that such persons could not, in fact, cause a loss to the plan to occur through fraud or dishonesty);

(b) Exercise close supervision over corporate trustees or other parties charged with dealing with plan funds or other property; exercise such close control over investment policy that they, in effect, determine all specific investments;

(c) Conduct, in effect, a continuing daily audit of the persons who "handle" funds;

(d) Regularly review and have veto power over the actions of a disbursing officer whose duties are essentially ministerial.

(ii) On the other hand, persons having supervisory or decisionmaking responsibility would not be "handling" to the extent:

(a) They merely conduct a periodic or sporadic audit of the persons who "handle" funds;

(b) Their duties with respect to investment policy are essentially advisory;

(c) They make a broad general allocation of funds or general authorization of disbursements intended to permit expenditures by a disbursing officer who has final responsibility for determining the propriety of any specific expenditure and making the actual disbursement;

(d) A bank or corporate trustee has all the day to day functions of administering the plan;

(e) They are in the nature of a Board of Directors of a corporation or similar authority acting for the corporation rather than for the plan and do not perform specific functions with respect to the operations of the plan.

(7) *Insured plan arrangements.* In many cases, plan contributions made

by employers or employee organizations or by withholding from employee's salaries are not segregated from the general assets of the employer or employee organization until payment for purchase of benefits from an insurance carrier or service or other organization. No bonding is required with respect to the payment of premiums or other payments made to purchase such benefits directly from general assets, nor with respect to the bare existence of the contract obligation to pay benefits. Such arrangements would not normally be subject to bonding except to the extent that monies returned by way of benefit payments, cash surrender, dividends, credits or otherwise, and which by the terms of the plan belonged to the plan (rather than to the employer, employee organization, insurance carrier or service or other organization) were subject to "handling" by plan administrators, officers or employees.

Subpart B—Scope and Form of the Bond

§ 2580.412-7 Statutory provision—scope of the bond.

The statute requires that the bond shall provide protection to the plan against loss by reason of acts of fraud or dishonesty on the part of a plan administrator, officer, or employee, directly or through connivance with others.

§ 2580.412-8 The nature of the duties or activities to which the bonding requirement relates.

The bond required under section 13 is limited to protection for those duties and activities from which loss can arise through fraud or dishonesty. It is not required to provide the same scope of coverage that is required in faithful discharge of duties bonds under the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959 or in the faithful performance bonds of public officials.

§ 2580.412-9 Meaning of fraud or dishonesty.

The term "fraud or dishonesty" shall be deemed to encompass all those risks of loss that might arise through dishonest or fraudulent acts in handling

of funds as delineated in § 2580.412-6. As such, the bond must provide recovery for loss occasioned by such acts even though no personal gain accrues to the person committing the act and the act is not subject to punishment as a crime or misdemeanor, provided that within the law of the state in which the act is committed, a court would afford recovery under a bond providing protection against fraud or dishonesty. As usually applied under state laws, the term "fraud or dishonesty" encompasses such matters as larceny, theft, embezzlement, forgery, misappropriation, wrongful abstraction, wrongful conversion, willful misapplication or any other fraudulent or dishonest acts. For the purposes of section 13, other fraudulent or dishonest acts shall also be deemed to include acts where losses result through any act or arrangement prohibited by title 18, section 1954 of the U.S. Code.

§ 2580.412-10 Individual or schedule or blanket form of bonds.

Section 13 provides that "any bond shall be in a form or of a type approved by the Secretary, including individual bonds or schedule or blanket forms of bonds which cover a group or class". Any form of bond which may be described as individual, schedule or blanket in form or any combination of such forms of bonds shall be acceptable to meet the requirements of section 13, provided that in each case, the form of the bond, in its particular clauses and application, is not inconsistent with meeting the substantive requirements of the statute for the persons and plan involved and with meeting the specific requirements of the regulations in this part. Basic types of bonds in general usage are:

(a) *Individual bond.* Covers a named individual in a stated penalty.

(b) *Name schedule bond.* Covers a number of named individuals in the respective amounts set opposite their names.

(c) *Position schedule bond.* Covers each of the occupants of positions listed in the schedule in the respective amounts set opposite such positions.

(d) *Blanket bonds.* Cover all the insured's officers and employees with no schedule or list of those covered being necessary and with all new officers and

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employees bonded automatically, in a blanket penalty which takes two forms—an aggregate penalty bond and a multiple penalty bond which are described below:

(1) The aggregate penalty blanket bond such as the Commercial Blanket Bond; the amount of the bond is available for dishonesty losses caused by persons covered thereunder or losses in which such person is concerned or implicated. Payment of loss on account of any such person does not reduce the amount of coverage available for losses other than those caused by such person or in which he was concerned or implicated.

(2) The multiple penalty bond such as the Blanket Position Bond giving separate coverage on each person for a uniform amount—the net effect being the same as though a separate bond were issued on each person covered thereunder and all of such bonds being for a uniform amount.

NOTE: For the purpose of section 13, blanket bonds which are either aggregate penalty or multiple penalty in form shall be permissible if they otherwise meet the requirements of the Act and the regulations in this part.

Bonding, to the extent required, of persons indirectly employed, or otherwise delegated, to perform functions for the plan which are normally performed by "administrators, officers, or employees" as described in § 2580.412-3(d) may be accomplished either by including them under individual or schedule bonds or other forms of bonds meeting the requirements of the Act, or naming them in what is known under general trade usage as an "Agents Rider" attached to a Blanket Bond.

Subpart C—Amount of the Bond

§ 2580.412-11 Statutory provision.

Section 13 requires that the amount of the bond be fixed at the beginning of each calendar, policy or other fiscal year, as the case may be, which constitutes the reporting year of the plan for purposes of the reporting provisions of the Act. The amount of the bond shall be not less than 10 per centum of the amount of funds handled, except that any such bond shall be in at least

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the amount of \$1,000 and no such bond shall be required in an amount in excess of \$500,000: *Provided*, That the Secretary, after due notice and opportunity for hearing to all interested parties, and after consideration of the record, may prescribe an amount in excess of \$500,000, which in no event shall exceed 10 per centum of the funds handled. For purposes of fixing the amount of such bond, the amount of funds handled shall be determined by the funds handled by the person, group, or class to be covered by such bond and by their predecessor or predecessors, if any, during the preceding reporting year, or if the plan has no preceding reporting year, the amount of funds to be handled during the current reporting year by such person, group, or class, estimated as provided in the regulations in this part. With respect to persons required to be bonded, section 13 shall be deemed to require the bond to insure from the first dollar of loss up to the requisite bond amount and not to permit the use of deductible or similar features whereby a portion of the risk within such requisite bond amount is assumed by the insured. Any request for variance from these requirements shall be made pursuant to the provisions of section 13(e) of the Act.

§ 2580.412-12 Relationship of determining the amount of the bond to "handling".

A determination of whether persons falling within the definition of administrator, officer or employee are required to be bonded depends on whether they "handle" funds or other property. Determining the amount of the bond is an aspect of the same process in that it requires a determination of what funds or other property are being handled or what amounts of funds or other property are subject to risk of loss with respect to the duties or powers of an administrator, officer or employee of a covered plan. Once this calculation is made, the required amount for which that person must be covered by a bond, either by himself or as a part of a group or class being bonded under a blanket or schedule bond, is not less than 10 percent of the amount "handled" or \$1,000, whichever is the greater amount, except that no such

bond shall be required in an amount greater than \$500,000 by virtue of these regulations. (See § 2580.412-17.)

§ 2580.412-13 The meaning of "funds" in determining the amount of the bond.

The amount of the bond depends on the amount of "funds" "handled", and shall be sufficient to provide bonding protection against risk of loss through fraud or dishonesty for all plan funds, including other property similar to funds or in the nature of funds. As such, the term "funds" shall be deemed to include and be equivalent to "funds and other property" of the plan as described in § 2580.412-4. With respect to any item of "funds or other property", which does not have a cash or readily ascertainable market value, the value of such property may be estimated on such basis as will reasonably reflect the loss the plan might suffer if it were mishandled.

§ 2580.412-14 Determining the amount of funds "handled" during the preceding reporting year.

(a) The amount of funds "handled" by each person falling within the definition of administrator, officer, or employee (or his predecessors) during the preceding reporting year shall be the total of funds subject to risk of loss, within the meaning of the definition of "handling" (see § 2580.412-6), through acts of fraud or dishonesty, directly or in connivance with others, by such person or his predecessors during the preceding reporting year. The relationship of the determination of the amount of funds "handled" to the determination of who is "handling" can best be illustrated by a situation that commonly arises with respect to executive personnel of a plan, where a bank or corporate trustee has the responsibility for the receipt, safekeeping, physical handling and investment of a plan's assets and the basic function of the executive personnel is to authorize payments to beneficiaries and payments for services to the corporate trustee, the actuary and the employees of the plan itself. Normally, in any given year, only a small portion of the plan's total assets is disbursed, and the question arises as to whether an adminis-

trator or executive personnel are "handling" only the amounts actually disbursed each year or whether they are "handling" the total amounts of the assets. The answer to this question depends on the same basic criterion that governs all questions of "handling", namely, the possibility of loss. If the authorized duties of the persons in question are strictly limited to disbursements of benefits and payments for services, and the fiscal controls and practical realities of the situation are such that these persons cannot gain access to funds which they are not legitimately allowed to disburse, the amount on which the bond is based may be limited to the amount actually disbursed in the reporting year. This would depend, in part, on the extent to which the bank or corporate trustee which has physical possession of the funds also has final responsibility for questioning and limiting disbursements from the plan, and on whether this responsibility is embodied in the original plan instruments. On the other hand, where insufficient fiscal controls exist so that the persons involved have free access to, or can obtain control of, the total amount of the fund, the bond shall reflect this fact and the amount "handled" shall be based on the total amount of the fund. This would generally occur with respect to persons such as the "administrator", regardless of what functions are performed by a bank or corporate trustee, since the "administrator" by definition retains ultimate power to revoke any arrangement with a bank or corporate trustee. In such case, the "administrator" would have the power to commit the total amount of funds involved to his control, unless the plan itself or other specific agreement (1) prevents the "administrator" from so doing or (2) requires that revocation cannot be had unless a new agreement providing for similar controls and limitations on the "handling" of funds is simultaneously entered into.

(b) Where the circumstances of "handling" are such that the total amount of a given account or fund is subject to "handling", the amount "handled" shall include the total of all such funds on hand at the beginning of

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the reporting year, plus any items received during the year for any reason, such as contributions or income, or items received as a result of sales, investments, reinvestment, interest or otherwise. It would not, however, be necessary to count the same item twice in arriving at the total funds "handled" by a given person during a reporting year. For example, a given person may have various duties or powers involving receipt, safekeeping or disbursement of funds which would place him in contact with the same funds at several times during the same year. Different duties, however, would not make it necessary to count the same item twice in arriving at the total "handled" by him. Similarly, where a person has several different positions with respect to a plan, it would not be necessary to count the same funds each time that they are "handled" by him in these different positions, so long as the amount of the bond is sufficient to meet the 10 percent requirement with respect to the total funds "handled" by him subject to risk or loss through fraud or dishonesty, whether acting alone or in collusion with others. In general, once an item properly within the category of "funds," has been counted as "handled" by a given person, it need not be counted again even though it should subsequently be "handled" by the same person during the same year.

§ 2580.412-15 Procedures to be used for estimating the amount of funds to be "handled" during the current reporting year in those cases where there is no preceding reporting year.

If for any reason a plan does not have a complete preceding reporting year, the amount "handled" by persons required to be covered by a bond shall be estimated at the beginning of the calendar, policy or other fiscal year, as the case may be, which would constitute either the operating year or the reporting year of the plan, whichever shall occur first, as follows:

(a) In the case of a plan having a previous experience year, even though it has no preceding reporting year, the estimate of the amount to be "handled" for any person required to be covered shall be based on the experience in the

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previous year by applying the same standards and criteria as in a plan which has a preceding reporting year. Similarly, where a plan is recently established, but has had, at the time a bond is obtained, sufficient experience to reasonably estimate a complete year's experience for persons required to be bonded, the amount of funds to be "handled" shall be projected to the complete year on the basis of the period in which the plan has had experience, unless, to the knowledge of the plan administrator, the given period of experience is so seasonal or unrepresentative of the complete year's experience as not to provide a reasonable basis for projecting the estimate for the complete year.

(b) Where a plan does not have any prior experience sufficient to allow it to estimate the amount "handled" in the manner outlined in paragraph (a) of this section, the amount to be "handled" by the administrators, officers and employees of the plan during the current reporting year shall be that amount initially required to fund or set up the plan, plus the amount of contributions required to be made under the plan formula from any source during the current reporting year. In most cases, the amount of contributions will be calculated by multiplying the total yearly contribution per participant (required by the plan formula from either employers, employees, employer organizations or any other source) by the number of participants in the plan at the beginning of such reporting year. In cases where the per capita contribution cannot readily be determined, such as in the case of certain insured plans covered by the Act, the amount of contributions shall be estimated on the amount of insurance premiums which are actuarially estimated as necessary to support the plan, or on such other actuarially estimated basis as may be applicable. In the case of a newly formed profit-sharing plan covered by the Act, if the employer establishing the plan has a previous year of experience, the amount of contributions required by the plan formula shall be estimated on the basis of the profits of the previous year. The amount of the bond shall then be fixed at 10 percent of this calculation, but

not more than \$500,000. A bond for such amount shall be obtained in any form the plan desires on all persons who are administrators, officers, or employees of the plan and who "handle" funds or other property of the plan.

§ 2580.412-16 Amount of bond required in given types of bonds or where more than one plan is insured in the same bond.

(a) As indicated in § 2580.412-10, the Act permits the use of blanket, schedule and individual forms of bonds so long as the amount of the bond penalty is sufficient to meet the requirements of the Act for any person who is an administrator, officer or employee of a plan handling funds or other property of the plan. Such person must be bonded for 10 percent of the amount he handles, and the amount of the bond must be sufficient to indemnify the plan for any losses in which such person is involved up to that amount.

(b) When individual or schedule bonds are written, the bond amount for each person must represent not less than 10 percent of the funds "handled" by the named individual or by the person in the position. When a blanket bond is written, the amount of the bond shall be at least 10 percent of the highest amount handled by any administrator, officer or employee to be covered under the bond. It should also be noted that if an individual or group or class covered under a blanket bond "handle" a large amount of funds or other property, while the remaining bondable persons "handle" only a smaller amount, it is permissible to obtain a blanket bond in an amount sufficient to meet the 10 percent requirements for all except the individual, group or class "handling" the larger amounts, with respect to whom excess indemnity shall be secured in an amount sufficient to meet the 10 percent requirement.

(c) The Act does not prohibit more than one plan from being named as insured under the same bond. However, any such bond must allow for recovery by each plan in an amount at least equal to that which would be required if bonded separately. This requirement has application where a person or persons sought to be bonded pursuant to the requirements of section 13 have

"handling" functions in more than one plan covered under the bond. Where such is the case, the amount of the bond must be sufficient to cover any such persons having functions in more than one plan for at least 10 percent of the total amount "handled" by them in all the plans covered under the bond. For example, X is the administrator of two welfare plans run by the same employer and he "handled" \$100,000 in the preceding reporting year for Plan A and \$500,000 in the preceding reporting year for Plan B. If both plans are covered under the same bond, the amount of the bond with respect to X shall be at least \$60,000 or ten percent of the total "handled" by X for both plans covered under the bond in which X has powers and duties of "handling" since Plan B is required to carry bond in at least the amount of \$50,000 and Plan A, \$10,000.

(d) Additionally, in order to meet the requirement that each plan be protected, it shall be necessary that arrangement be made either by the terms of the bond or rider to the bond or by separate agreement among the parties concerned, that payment of a loss sustained by one of such insureds shall not work to the detriment of any other plan covered under the bond with respect to the amount for which that plan is required to be covered. For example, if Plan A suffered a loss of \$30,000 as described above and such loss was recompensed in its entirety by the surety company, it would receive \$20,000 more than the \$10,000 protection required under section 13, and only \$30,000 would be available for recovery with respect to further losses caused by X. In a subsequently discovered defalcation of \$40,000 by X from Plan B, it would be necessary that the bond, rider, or separate agreement provide that such amount of recovery paid to Plan A in excess of the \$10,000 for which it is required to be covered, be made available by such insured to, or held for the use of, Plan B in such amount as Plan B would receive if bonded separately. Thus, in the instant case, Plan B would be able to recover the full \$40,000 of its loss. Where the funds or other property of several plans are commingled (if permitted by law) with each other or with other funds,

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such arrangement shall allow recovery to be attributed proportionately to the amount for which each plan is required to be protected. Thus, in the instant case, if funds or other property were commingled, and X caused a loss of these funds through fraud or dishonesty, one-sixth of the loss would be attributable to Plan A and five-sixths of the loss attributable to Plan B.

(e) The maximum amount of any bond with respect to any person in any one plan is \$500,000, but bonds covering more than one plan may be required to be over \$500,000 in order to meet the requirements of the Act, since persons covered by such a bond may have "handling" functions in more than one plan. The \$500,000 limitations for such persons applies only with respect to each separate plan in which they have such functions. The minimum bond coverage for any administrator, officer, or employee "handling" funds or other property of a plan is \$1,000 as respects each plan in which he has "handling" functions.

§ 2580.412-17 Bonds over \$500,000.

The Labor-Management Services Administrator, after due notice and opportunity for hearing to all interested parties, and after consideration of the record, may prescribe an amount in excess of \$500,000, which in no event shall exceed 10 per centum of the funds "handled." Any requirement for bonding in excess of \$500,000 shall be according to such other regulations as may be prescribed.

Subpart D—General Bond Rules

§ 2580.412-18 Naming of insureds.

Since section 13 is intended to protect funds or other property of all plans involved, bonds under this section shall allow for enforcement or recovery by those persons usually authorized to act for such plans in such matters. In most cases, the naming of the plan or plans as insured will provide for such recovery. Where it is not clear that such recovery will be provided, however, a rider shall be attached to the bond or separate agreement made among the parties concerned to make certain that any reimbursement collected under the bond

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will be for the benefit and use of the plan suffering a loss. Such rider or agreement shall always be required as respects any bond (a) where the employer or employee organization is first named joint insured with one or more plans, or (b) two or more plans are named joint insureds under a single bond with the first named acting for all insureds for the purpose of orderly servicing of the bond.

§ 2580.412-19 Term of the bond, discovery period, other bond clauses.

(a) *Term of the bond.* The amount of any required bond must in each instance be based on the amount of funds "handled" and must be fixed or estimated at the beginning of the plan's reporting year, that is, as soon after the date when such year begins as the necessary information from the preceding reporting year can practicably be ascertained. This does not mean, however, that a new bond must be obtained each year. There is nothing in the Act that prohibits a bond for a term longer than one year, with whatever advantages such a bond might offer by way of a lower premium. However, at the beginning of each reporting year the bond shall be in at least the requisite amount. If, for any reason, the bond is below the required level at that time, the existing bond shall either be increased to the proper amount, or a supplemental bond shall be obtained.

(b) *Discovery period.* A discovery period of no less than one year after the termination or cancellation of the bond is required. Any standard form written on a "discovery" basis, *i.e.*, providing that a loss must be discovered within the bond period as a prerequisite to recovery of such loss, however, will not be required to have a discovery period if it contains a provision giving the insured the right to purchase a discovery period of one year in the event of termination or cancellation and the insured has already given the surety notice that it desires such discovery period.

(c) *Other bond clauses.* A bond shall not be adequate to meet the requirements of section 13, if, with respect to

bonding coverage required under section 13, it contains a clause, or is otherwise, in contravention of the law of the State in which it is executed.

§ 2580.412-20 Use of existing bonds, separate bonds and additional bonding.

(a) *Additional bonding.* Section 13 neither prevents additional bonding beyond that required by its terms, nor prescribes the form in which additional coverage may be taken. Thus, so long as a particular bond meets the requirements of the regulations in this part as to the persons required to be bonded and provides coverage for such persons in at least the minimum required amount, additional coverage as to persons or amount may be taken in any form, either on the same or separate bond.

(b) *Use of existing bonds.* Insofar as a bond currently in use is adequate to meet the requirements of the Act and the regulations in this part or may be made adequate to meet these requirements through rider, modification or separate agreement between the parties, no further bonding is required.

(c) *Use of separate bonds.* The choice of whether persons required to be bonded should be bonded separately or under the same bond, whether given plans should be bonded separately or under the same bond, whether existing bonds should be used or separate bonds for Welfare and Pension Plans Disclosure Act bonding should be obtained, or whether the bond is underwritten by a single surety company or more than one surety company, either separately or on a cosurety basis, is left to the judgment of the parties concerned, so long as the bonding program adopted meets the requirements of the Act and the regulations in this part.

Subpart E—Qualified Agents, Brokers and Surety Companies for the Placing of Bonds

§ 2580.412-21 Corporate sureties holding grants of authority from the Secretary of the Treasury.

(a) The provisions of section 13 require that any surety company with which a bond is placed pursuant to that section must be a corporate surety

which holds a grant of authority from the Secretary of the Treasury under the Act of July 30, 1947 (6 U.S.C. 6-13), as an acceptable surety on Federal bonds. The Act provides, among other things, that in order for a surety company to be eligible for such grant of authority, it must be incorporated under the laws of the United States or of any State and the Secretary of the Treasury shall be satisfied of certain facts relating to its authority and capitalization. Such grants of authority are evidenced by Certificates of Authority which are issued by the Secretary of the Treasury and which expire on the April 30 following the date of their issuance. A list of the companies holding such Certificates of Authority is published annually in the **FEDERAL REGISTER**, usually in May or June. Changes in the list, occurring between May 1 and April 30, either by addition to or removal from the list of companies, are also published in the **FEDERAL REGISTER** following each such change.

(b) Where a surety becomes insolvent and is placed in receivership, or if for any other reason the Secretary of the Treasury determines that its financial condition is not satisfactory to him and he revokes the authority of such company to act as an acceptable surety under the Act of July 30, 1947, the “administrator” of the insured plan shall, upon knowledge of such facts, be responsible for securing a new bond with an acceptable surety.

(c) In obtaining or renewing a bond, the plan administrator shall assure that the surety is one which satisfies the requirements of this section. If the bond is for a term of more than one year, the plan administrator, at the beginning of each reporting year, shall assure that the surety continues to satisfy the requirements of this subpart.

§ 2580.412-22 Interests held in agents, brokers and surety companies.

Section 13(c) prohibits the placing of bonds, required to be obtained pursuant to section 13, with any surety or other company, or through any agent or broker in whose business operations a plan or any party in interest in a

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plan has significant control or financial interest, direct or indirect. An interpretation of this section has been issued (§ 2580.412-36 of this chapter).

Subpart F—Exemptions

SOURCE: 28 FR 14410, Dec. 27, 1963, unless otherwise noted. Redesignated at 50 FR 26706, June 28, 1985.

BONDS PLACED WITH CERTAIN REINSURING COMPANIES

§ 2580.412-23 Exemption.

An exemption from the bonding requirements of the Welfare and Pension Plans Disclosure Act is granted by this section whereby bonding arrangements (which otherwise comply with the requirements of section 13 of the Act and the regulations issued thereunder) with companies authorized by the Secretary of the Treasury as acceptable reinsurers on Federal bonds will satisfy the bonding requirements of the Act.

§ 2580.412-24 Conditions of exemption.

(a) This exemption obtains only with respect to the requirement of section 13(a) of the Act that all bonds required thereunder shall have as surety thereon, a corporate surety company, which is an acceptable surety on Federal bonds under authority granted by the Secretary of the Treasury pursuant to the Act of July 30, 1947 (6 U.S.C. 6-13).

(b) The exemption is granted upon the condition that if for any reason the authority of any such company to act as an acceptable reinsuring company is terminated, the administrator of a plan insured with such company, shall, upon knowledge of such fact, be responsible for securing a new bond with a company acceptable under the Act and the exemptions issued thereunder.

(c) In obtaining or renewing a bond, the plan administrator shall ascertain that the surety is one which satisfies the requirements of the Act and the exemptions thereunder. If the bond is for a term of more than one year, the plan administrator, at the beginning of each reporting year, shall ascertain that the surety continues to do so.

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BONDS PLACED WITH UNDERWRITERS AT LLOYDS, LONDON

§ 2580.412-25 Exemption.

An exemption from the bonding requirements of subsection 13(a) of the Welfare and Pension Plans Disclosure Act is granted by this section whereby arrangements (which otherwise comply with the requirements of section 13 of the Act and the regulations issued thereunder), with the Underwriters at Lloyds, London will satisfy the bonding requirements of the Act.

§ 2580.412-26 Conditions of exemption.

(a) This exemption obtains only with respect to the requirements of section 13(a) of the Act that all bonds required thereunder shall have as surety thereon, a corporate surety company, which is an acceptable surety on Federal bonds under authority granted by the Secretary of the Treasury, pursuant to the Act of July 30, 1947 (6 U.S.C. 6-13).

(b) This exemption is granted on the following conditions:

(1) Underwriters at Lloyds, London shall continue to be licensed in a state of the United States to enter into bonding arrangements of the type required by the Act.

(2) Underwriters at Lloyds, London, shall file with the Office of Pension and Welfare Benefit Programs two (2) copies of each annual statement required to be made to the Commissioner of Insurance of those states in which Underwriters at Lloyds, London are licensed. Copies of annual statements shall be filed with the Office of Pension and Welfare Benefit Programs within the same period required by the respective states.

(3) All bonding arrangements entered into by Underwriters at Lloyds, London under section 13 of the Act shall contain a "Service of Suit Clause" in substantial conformity with that set forth in the petition for exemption.

BANKING INSTITUTIONS SUBJECT TO FEDERAL REGULATION

§ 2580.412-27 Exemption.

An exemption from the bonding requirements of subsections 13 (a) and (b)

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of the Welfare and Pension Plans Disclosure Act is granted whereby banking institutions and trust companies specified in § 2580.412-28 are not required to comply with subsections 13 (a) and (b) of the Act, with respect to welfare and pension benefit plans covered by the Act.

[34 FR 5158, Mar. 13, 1969. Redesignated at 50 FR 26706, June 28, 1985]

§ 2580.412-28 Conditions of exemption.

This exemption applies only to those banking institutions and trust companies subject to regulation and examination by the Comptroller of the Currency or the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, or the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATIONS
SUBJECT TO FEDERAL REGULATION

§ 2580.412-29 Exemption.

An exemption from the bonding requirements of subsections 13 (a) and (b) of the Welfare and Pension Plans Disclosure Act is granted whereby savings and loan associations (including building and loan associations, cooperative banks and homestead associations) specified in § 2580.412-30 are not required to comply with subsections 13 (a) and (b) of the Act, with respect to welfare and pension benefit plans covered by the Act for the benefit of their own employees, where such a savings and loan association is the administrator of such plans.

[32 FR 6840, May 4, 1967. Redesignated at 50 FR 26706, June 28, 1985]

§ 2580.412-30 Conditions of exemption.

This exemption applies only to those savings and loan associations (including building and loan associations, cooperative banks and homestead associations) subject to regulation and examination by the Federal Home Loan Bank Board.

[32 FR 6840, May 4, 1967. Redesignated at 50 FR 26706, June 28, 1985]

INSURANCE CARRIERS, SERVICE AND
OTHER SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS

§ 2580.412-31 Exemption.

An exemption from the bonding requirements of subsection 13 (a) and (b) of the Welfare and Pension Plans Disclosure Act is granted whereby any insurance carrier or service or other similar organization specified in § 2580.412-32 is not required to comply with subsections 13 (a) and (b) of the Act with respect to any welfare or pension benefit plan covered by the Act which is established or maintained for the benefit of persons other than the employees of such insurance carrier or service or other similar organization.

[34 FR 5158, Mar. 13, 1969. Redesignated at 50 FR 26706, June 28, 1985]

§ 2580.412-32 Conditions of exemption.

This exemption applies only to those insurance carriers, service or other similar organizations providing or underwriting welfare or pension plan benefits in accordance with State law.

[34 FR 5158, Mar. 13, 1969. Redesignated at 50 FR 26706, June 28, 1985]

**Subpart G—Prohibition Against
Bonding by Parties Interested
in the Plan**

SOURCE: 28 FR 14412, Dec. 27, 1963, unless otherwise noted. Redesignated at 50 FR 26706, June 28, 1985.

§ 2580.412-33 Introductory statement.

(a) This part discusses the meaning and scope of section 13(c) of the Welfare and Pension Plans Disclosure Act of 1958 (76 Stat. 39, 29 U.S.C. 308d(c)) (hereinafter referred to as the Act). This provision makes it unlawful "for any person to procure any bond [required by the Act] from any surety or other company or through any agent or broker in whose business operations such plan or any party in interest in such plan has any significant control or financial interest, direct or indirect." Because the prohibition contained in this provision is broadly stated, it becomes a matter of importance to determine more specifically the types of arrangements intended to be prohibited.

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(b) The provisions of section 13 of the Act, including 13(c) are subject to the general investigatory authority of the Director, Office of Labor-Management and Welfare-Pension Reports, embodied in section 9 of the Act. The correctness of an interpretation of these provisions can be determined finally and authoritatively only by the courts. It is necessary, however, for the Labor-Management Services Administrator to reach informed conclusions as to the meaning of the law to enable him to carry out his statutory duties of administration and enforcement. The interpretations of the Labor-Management Services Administrator contained in this part, which are issued upon the advice of the Solicitor of Labor, indicate the construction of the law which will guide the Labor-Management Services Administrator in performing his duties unless and until he is directed otherwise by authoritative ruling of the courts or unless and until he subsequently decides that his prior interpretation is incorrect. Under section 12 of the Act, the interpretations contained in this part, if relied upon in good faith, will constitute a defense in any action or proceeding based on any Act or omission in alleged violation of section 13(c) of the Act. The omission, however to discuss a particular problem in this part, or in interpretations supplementing it, should not be taken to indicate the adoption of any position by the Labor-Management Services Administrator with respect to such problem or to constitute an administrative interpretation or practice. Interpretations of the Labor-Management Services Administrator with respect to 13(c) are set forth in this part to provide those affected by the provisions of the Act with "a practical guide * * * as to how the office representing the public interest in its enforcement will seek to apply it" (*Skidmore v. Swift & Co.*, 323 U.S. 134, 138).

(c) To the extent that prior opinions and interpretations relating to 13(c) are inconsistent with the principles stated in this part, they are hereby rescinded and withdrawn.

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§ 2580.412-34 General.

The purpose of section 13(c), as shown by its legislative history, is similar to a closely related provision contained in section 502(a) of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959 (73 Stat. 536; 29 U.S.C. 502(a)). The fundamental purpose of Congress under 13(c) is to insure against potential abuses arising from significant financial or other influential interests affecting the objectivity of the plan or parties in interest in the plan and agents, brokers, or surety or other companies, in securing and providing the bond specified in section 13(a). As will be explained more fully below, this prohibition, however, was not intended to preclude the placing of bonds through or with certain parties in interest in plans which provide a variety of services to the plan, one of which is a bonding service.

§ 2580.412-35 Disqualification of agents, brokers and sureties.

Since 13(c) is to be construed as disqualifying any agent, broker, surety or other company from having a bond placed through or with it, if the plan or any party in interest in the plan has a significant financial interest or control in such agent, broker, surety or other company, a question of fact will necessarily arise in many cases as to whether the financial interest or control held is sufficiently significant to disqualify the agent, broker or surety. Although no rule of guidance can be established to govern each and every case in which this question arises, in general, the essential test is whether the existing financial interest or control held is incompatible with an unbiased exercise of judgment in regard to procuring the bond or bonding the plan's personnel. In regard to the foregoing, it is also to be pointed out that lack of knowledge or consent on the part of persons responsible for procuring bonds with respect to the existence of a significant financial interest or control rendering the bonding arrangement unlawful will not be deemed a mitigating factor where such persons have failed to make a reasonable examination into the pertinent circumstances affecting the procuring of the bond.

**§ 2580.412-36 Application of 13(c) to
“party in interest”.**

(a) Under 13(c), an agent, broker or surety or other company is disqualified from having a bond placed through or with it if a “party in interest” in the plan has any significant control or financial interest in such agent, broker, surety or other company. Section 3(13) of the Act defines the term “party in interest” to mean “any administrator, officer, trustee, custodian, counsel, or employee of any employee welfare benefit plan or a person providing benefit plan services to any such plan, or an employer any of whose employees are covered by such a plan or officer or employee or agent of such employer, or an officer or agent or employee of an employee organization having members covered by such plan.”

(b) A basic question presented is whether the effect of 13(c) is to prohibit persons from placing a bond through or with any “party in interest” in the plan. The language used in 13(c) appears to indicate that in this connection the intent of Congress was to eliminate those instances where the existing financial interest or control held by the “party in interest” in the agent, broker, surety or other company is incompatible with an unbiased exercise of judgment in regard to procuring the bond or bonding the plan’s personnel. Accordingly, not all parties in interest are disqualified from procuring or providing bonds for the plan. Thus where a “party in interest” or its affiliate provides multiple benefit plan services to plans, persons are not prohibited from availing themselves of the bonding services provided by the “party in interest” or its affiliate merely because the plan has already availed itself, or will avail itself, of other services provided by the “party in interest.” In this case, it is inherent in the nature of the “party in interest” or its affiliate as an individual or organization providing multiple benefit plan services, one of which is a bonding service, that the existing financial interest or control held is not, in and of itself, incompatible with an unbiased exercise of judgment in regard to procuring the bond or bonding the plan’s personnel. In short, there is no distinction between this type of relationship and the

ordinary arm’s length business relationship which may be established between a plan-customer and an agent, broker or surety company, a relationship which Congress could not have intended to disturb. On the other hand, where a “party in interest” in the plan or an affiliate does not provide a bonding service as part of its general business operations, 13(c) would prohibit any person from procuring the bond through or with any agent, broker, surety or other company, with respect to which the “party in interest” has any significant control or financial interest, direct or indirect. In this case, the failure of the “party in interest” or its affiliate to provide a bonding service as part of its general business operations raises the possibility of less than an arm’s length business relationship between the plan and the agent, broker, surety or other company since the objectivity of either the plan or the agent, broker or surety may be influenced by the “party in interest”.

(c) The application of the principles discussed in this section is illustrated by the following examples:

Example 1. B, a broker, renders actuarial and consultant service to plan P. B has also procured a group life insurance policy for plan P. B may also place a bond for P with surety company S, provided that neither B nor P has any significant control or financial interest, direct or indirect, in S and provided that neither P nor any other “party in interest” in P, e.g., an officer of the plan, has any significant control or financial interest, direct or indirect, in B or S.

Example 2. I, a life insurance company, has provided a group life insurance policy for plan P. I is affiliated with S, a surety company, and has a significant financial interest or control in S. P is not prohibited from obtaining a bond from S since I’s affiliation with S does not ordinarily, in and of itself, affect the objectivity of P in procuring the bond or the objectivity of S in bonding P’s personnel. However, if any other “party in interest” as defined in section 3(13) of the Act, such as the employer whose employees are covered by P, should have a significant financial interest or control in S, S could not write the bond for P, since the employer’s interest affects the objectivity of P and S.