

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries**EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1996 AMENDMENT**

Pub. L. 104-188, title I, §1460(b), Aug. 20, 1996, 110 Stat. 1822, provided that:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the amendment made by this section [amending this section] shall take effect on January 1, 1975.

“(2) CIVIL ACTIONS.—The amendment made by this section shall not apply to any civil action commenced before November 7, 1995.”

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1989 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 101-239 effective, except as otherwise provided, as if included in the provision of the Tax Reform Act of 1986, Pub. L. 99-514, to which such amendment relates, see section 7891(f) of Pub. L. 101-239, set out as a note under section 1002 of this title.

**PLAN AMENDMENTS NOT REQUIRED UNTIL
JANUARY 1, 1998**

For provisions directing that if any amendments made by subtitle D [§§1401-1465] of title I of Pub. L. 104-188 require an amendment to any plan or annuity contract, such amendment shall not be required to be made before the first day of the first plan year beginning on or after Jan. 1, 1998, see section 1465 of Pub. L. 104-188, set out as a note under section 401 of Title 26, Internal Revenue Code.

§ 1102. Establishment of plan**(a) Named fiduciaries**

(1) Every employee benefit plan shall be established and maintained pursuant to a written instrument. Such instrument shall provide for one or more named fiduciaries who jointly or severally shall have authority to control and manage the operation and administration of the plan.

(2) For purposes of this subchapter, the term “named fiduciary” means a fiduciary who is named in the plan instrument, or who, pursuant to a procedure specified in the plan, is identified as a fiduciary (A) by a person who is an employer or employee organization with respect to the plan or (B) by such an employer and such an employee organization acting jointly.

(b) Requisite features of plan

Every employee benefit plan shall—

(1) provide a procedure for establishing and carrying out a funding policy and method consistent with the objectives of the plan and the requirements of this subchapter,

(2) describe any procedure under the plan for the allocation of responsibilities for the operation and administration of the plan (including any procedure described in section 1105(c)(1) of this title),

(3) provide a procedure for amending such plan, and for identifying the persons who have authority to amend the plan, and

(4) specify the basis on which payments are made to and from the plan.

(c) Optional features of plan

Any employee benefit plan may provide—

(1) that any person or group of persons may serve in more than one fiduciary capacity with respect to the plan (including service both as trustee and administrator);

(2) that a named fiduciary, or a fiduciary designated by a named fiduciary pursuant to a plan procedure described in section 1105(c)(1) of this title, may employ one or more persons

to render advice with regard to any responsibility such fiduciary has under the plan; or

(3) that a person who is a named fiduciary with respect to control or management of the assets of the plan may appoint an investment manager or managers to manage (including the power to acquire and dispose of) any assets of a plan.

(Pub. L. 93-406, title I, § 402, Sept. 2, 1974, 88 Stat. 875.)

§ 1103. Establishment of trust**(a) Benefit plan assets to be held in trust; authority of trustees**

Except as provided in subsection (b), all assets of an employee benefit plan shall be held in trust by one or more trustees. Such trustee or trustees shall be either named in the trust instrument or in the plan instrument described in section 1102(a) of this title or appointed by a person who is a named fiduciary, and upon acceptance of being named or appointed, the trustee or trustees shall have exclusive authority and discretion to manage and control the assets of the plan, except to the extent that—

(1) the plan expressly provides that the trustee or trustees are subject to the direction of a named fiduciary who is not a trustee, in which case the trustees shall be subject to proper directions of such fiduciary which are made in accordance with the terms of the plan and which are not contrary to this chapter, or

(2) authority to manage, acquire, or dispose of assets of the plan is delegated to one or more investment managers pursuant to section 1102(c)(3) of this title.

(b) Exceptions

The requirements of subsection (a) of this section shall not apply—

(1) to any assets of a plan which consist of insurance contracts or policies issued by an insurance company qualified to do business in a State;

(2) to any assets of such an insurance company or any assets of a plan which are held by such an insurance company;

(3) to a plan—

(A) some or all of the participants of which are employees described in section 401(c)(1) of title 26; or

(B) which consists of one or more individual retirement accounts described in section 408 of title 26;

to the extent that such plan's assets are held in one or more custodial accounts which qualify under section 401(f) or 408(h) of title 26, whichever is applicable.

(4) to a plan which the Secretary exempts from the requirement of subsection (a) and which is not subject to any of the following provisions of this chapter—

(A) part 2 of this subtitle,

(B) part 3 of this subtitle, or

(C) subchapter III of this chapter; or

(5) to a contract established and maintained under section 403(b) of title 26 to the extent that the assets of the contract are held in one or more custodial accounts pursuant to section 403(b)(7) of title 26.

(6) Any plan, fund or program under which an employer, all of whose stock is directly or indirectly owned by employees, former employees or their beneficiaries, proposes through an unfunded arrangement to compensate retired employees for benefits which were forfeited by such employees under a pension plan maintained by a former employer prior to the date such pension plan became subject to this chapter.

(c) Assets of plan not to inure to benefit of employer; allowable purposes of holding plan assets

(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), (3), or (4)¹ or subsection (d), or under sections 1342 and 1344 of this title (relating to termination of insured plans), or under section 420 of title 26 (as in effect on December 29, 2022), the assets of a plan shall never inure to the benefit of any employer and shall be held for the exclusive purposes of providing benefits to participants in the plan and their beneficiaries and defraying reasonable expenses of administering the plan.

(2)(A) In the case of a contribution, or a payment of withdrawal liability under part 1 of subtitle E of subchapter III—

(i) if such contribution or payment is made by an employer to a plan (other than a multiemployer plan) by a mistake of fact, paragraph (1) shall not prohibit the return of such contribution to the employer within one year after the payment of the contribution, and

(ii) if such contribution or payment is made by an employer to a multiemployer plan by a mistake of fact or law (other than a mistake relating to whether the plan is described in section 401(a) of title 26 or the trust which is part of such plan is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of title 26), paragraph (1) shall not prohibit the return of such contribution or payment to the employer within 6 months after the plan administrator determines that the contribution was made by such a mistake.

(B) If a contribution is conditioned on initial qualification of the plan under section 401 or 403(a) of title 26, and if the plan receives an adverse determination with respect to its initial qualification, then paragraph (1) shall not prohibit the return of such contribution to the employer within one year after such determination, but only if the application for the determination is made by the time prescribed by law for filing the employer's return for the taxable year in which such plan was adopted, or such later date as the Secretary of the Treasury may prescribe.

(C) If a contribution is conditioned upon the deductibility of the contribution under section 404 of title 26, then, to the extent the deduction is disallowed, paragraph (1) shall not prohibit the return to the employer of such contribution (to the extent disallowed) within one year after the disallowance of the deduction.

(3) In the case of a withdrawal liability payment which has been determined to be an overpayment, paragraph (1) shall not prohibit the return of such payment to the employer within 6 months after the date of such determination.

(d) Termination of plan

(1) Upon termination of a pension plan to which section 1321 of this title does not apply at the time of termination and to which this part applies (other than a plan to which no employer contributions have been made) the assets of the plan shall be allocated in accordance with the provisions of section 1344 of this title, except as otherwise provided in regulations of the Secretary.

(2) The assets of a welfare plan which terminates shall be distributed in accordance with the terms of the plan, except as otherwise provided in regulations of the Secretary.

(Pub. L. 93-406, title I, § 403, Sept. 2, 1974, 88 Stat. 876; Pub. L. 96-364, title III, § 310, title IV, §§ 402(b)(2), 410(a), 411(c), Sept. 26, 1980, 94 Stat. 1296, 1299, 1308; Pub. L. 100-203, title IX, § 9343(c), Dec. 22, 1987, 101 Stat. 1330-372; Pub. L. 101-239, title VII, §§ 7881(k), 7891(a)(1), 7894(e)(1)(A), (3), Dec. 19, 1989, 103 Stat. 2443, 2445, 2450; Pub. L. 101-508, title XII, § 12012(a), Nov. 5, 1990, 104 Stat. 1388-571; Pub. L. 103-465, title VII, § 731(c)(4)(B), Dec. 8, 1994, 108 Stat. 5004; Pub. L. 106-170, title V, § 535(a)(2)(B), Dec. 17, 1999, 113 Stat. 1934; Pub. L. 108-218, title II, § 204(b)(2), Apr. 10, 2004, 118 Stat. 609; Pub. L. 108-357, title VII, § 709(a)(2), Oct. 22, 2004, 118 Stat. 1551; Pub. L. 109-280, title I, § 108(a)(11), formerly § 107(a)(11), Aug. 17, 2006, 120 Stat. 819, renumbered Pub. L. 111-192, title II, § 202(a), June 25, 2010, 124 Stat. 1297; Pub. L. 112-141, div. D, title II, § 40241(b)(1), July 6, 2012, 126 Stat. 859; Pub. L. 114-41, title II, § 2007(b)(1), July 31, 2015, 129 Stat. 459; Pub. L. 117-328, div. T, title VI, § 606(b)(2), Dec. 29, 2022, 136 Stat. 5397.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

This chapter, referred to in subsecs. (a)(1) and (b)(4), (6), was in the original “this Act”, meaning Pub. L. 93-406, known as the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974. Titles I, III, and IV of such Act are classified principally to this chapter. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 1001 of this title and Tables.

Paragraph (2), (3), or (4), referred to in subsec. (c)(1), probably should be a reference only to par. (2) or (3) of subsec. (c), as par. (3) was struck out, and par. (4) was redesignated as (3), by Pub. L. 101-239, title VII, § 7881(k), Dec. 19, 1989, 103 Stat. 2443.

AMENDMENTS

2022—Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 117-328 substituted “(as in effect on December 29, 2022)” for “(as in effect on July 31, 2015)”.

2015—Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 114-41 substituted “July 31, 2015” for “July 6, 2012”. Amendment was executed to reflect the probable intent of Congress notwithstanding an extra closing quotation mark in the directory language.

2012—Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 112-141 substituted “July 6, 2012” for “August 17, 2006”.

2006—Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 109-280 substituted “August 17, 2006” for “October 22, 2004”.

2004—Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 108-357 substituted “October 22, 2004” for “April 10, 2004”.

Pub. L. 108-218 substituted “April 10, 2004” for “December 17, 1999”.

1999—Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 106-170 substituted “December 17, 1999” for “January 1, 1995”.

1994—Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 103-465 substituted “1995” for “1991”.

1990—Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 101-508 inserted “, or under section 420 of title 26 (as in effect on January 1, 1991)” after “insured plans”.

¹ See References in Text note below.

1989—Subsecs. (b)(3), (5), (c)(2)(A)(ii), (C). Pub. L. 101-239, § 7891(a)(1), substituted “Internal Revenue Code of 1986” for “Internal Revenue Code of 1954”, which for purposes of codification was translated as “title 26” thus requiring no change in text.

Subsec. (b)(3). Pub. L. 101-239, § 7894(e)(3), redesignated cls. (i) and (ii) as subpars. (A) and (B), respectively, struck out “, to the extent that such plan’s assets are held in one or more custodial accounts which qualify under section 401(f) or 408(h) of title 26, whichever is applicable” before the semicolon in subpar. (B), and inserted concluding provision “to the extent that such plan’s assets are held in one or more custodial accounts which qualify under section 401(f) or 408(h) of title 26, whichever is applicable.”

Subsec. (c)(2)(A). Pub. L. 101-239, § 7894(e)(1)(A), in introductory provisions, made technical amendment to reference to part 1 of subtitle E of subchapter III of this chapter to correct reference to corresponding part of original Act, requiring no change in text, and in cls. (i) and (ii), inserted “if such contribution or payment is” before “made by an employer”.

Subsec. (c)(3), (4). Pub. L. 101-239, § 7881(k), redesignated par. (4) as (3) and struck out former par. (3) which read as follows: “In the case of a contribution which would otherwise be an excess contribution (as defined in section 4979(c) of title 26) paragraph (1) shall not prohibit a correcting distribution with respect to such contribution from the plan to the employer to the extent permitted in such section to avoid payment of an excise tax on excess contributions under such section.”

1987—Subsec. (c)(2)(B). Pub. L. 100-203, § 9343(c)(1), amended subpar. (B) generally. Prior to amendment, subpar. (B) read as follows: “If a contribution is conditioned on qualification of the plan under section 401, 403(a), or 405(a) of title 26, and if the plan does not qualify, then paragraph (1) shall not prohibit the return of such contributions to the employer within one year after the date of denial of qualification of the plan.”

Subsec. (c)(3). Pub. L. 100-203, § 9343(c)(2), substituted “section 4979(c) of title 26” for “section 4972(b) of title 26”.

1980—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 96-364, § 402(b)(2), substituted “chapter” for “subchapter”.

Subsec. (b)(6). Pub. L. 96-364, § 411(c), added par. (6).

Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 96-364, § 310(1), inserted reference to par. (4).

Subsec. (c)(2)(A). Pub. L. 96-364, § 410(a), substituted provisions relating to contributions or payments of withdrawal liability under part 1 of subtitle E of subchapter III of this chapter made by an employer to a plan by a mistake of fact, and by an employer to a multiemployer plan by a mistake of fact or law, for provisions relating to contributions made by an employer by a mistake of fact.

Subsec. (c)(4). Pub. L. 96-364, § 310(2), added par. (4).

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2022 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 117-328 applicable to transfers made after Dec. 29, 2022, see section 606(c) of Pub. L. 117-328, set out as a note under section 420 of Title 26, Internal Revenue Code.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2006 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 109-280 applicable to plan years beginning after 2007, see section 108(e) of Pub. L. 109-280, set out as a note under section 1021 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1999 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 106-170 applicable to qualified transfers occurring after Dec. 17, 1999, see section 535(c)(1) of Pub. L. 106-170, set out as a note under section 420 of Title 26, Internal Revenue Code.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1990 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 101-508 applicable to qualified transfers under section 420 of title 26 made after Nov.

5, 1990, see section 12012(e) of Pub. L. 101-508, set out as a note under section 1021 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1989 AMENDMENT

Amendment by section 7881(k) of Pub. L. 101-239 effective, except as otherwise provided, as if included in the provision of the Pension Protection Act, Pub. L. 100-203, §§ 9302-9346, to which such amendment relates, see section 7882 of Pub. L. 101-239, set out as a note under section 401 of Title 26, Internal Revenue Code.

Amendment by section 7891(a)(1) of Pub. L. 101-239 effective, except as otherwise provided, as if included in the provision of the Tax Reform Act of 1986, Pub. L. 99-514, to which such amendment relates, see section 7891(f) of Pub. L. 101-239, set out as a note under section 1002 of this title.

Section 7894(e)(1)(B) of Pub. L. 101-239 provided that: “The amendments made by subparagraph (A) [amending this section] shall take effect as if included in section 410 of the Multiemployer Pension Plan Amendments Act of 1980 [Pub. L. 96-364].”

Amendment by section 7894(e)(3) of Pub. L. 101-239 effective, except as otherwise provided, as if originally included in the provision of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, Pub. L. 93-406, to which such amendment relates, see section 7894(i) of Pub. L. 101-239, set out as a note under section 1002 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1980 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 96-364 effective Sept. 26, 1980, except as specifically provided, see section 1461(e) of this title.

Amendment by section 410(a) of Pub. L. 96-364 effective Jan. 1, 1975, except with respect to contributions received by a collectively bargained plan maintained by more than one employer before Sept. 26, 1980, see section 410(c) of Pub. L. 96-364, set out as a note under section 401 of Title 26, Internal Revenue Code.

REGULATIONS

Secretary authorized, effective Sept. 2, 1974, to promulgate regulations wherever provisions of this part call for the promulgation of regulations, see sections 1031 and 1114 of this title.

APPLICABILITY OF AMENDMENTS BY SUBTITLES A AND B OF TITLE I OF PUB. L. 109-280

For special rules on applicability of amendments by subtitles A (§§ 101-108) and B (§§ 111-116) of title I of Pub. L. 109-280 to certain eligible cooperative plans, PBGC settlement plans, and eligible government contractor plans, see sections 104, 105, and 106 of Pub. L. 109-280, set out as notes under section 401 of Title 26, Internal Revenue Code.

§ 1104. Fiduciary duties

(a) Prudent man standard of care

(1) Subject to sections 1103(c) and (d), 1342, and 1344 of this title, a fiduciary shall discharge his duties with respect to a plan solely in the interest of the participants and beneficiaries and—

(A) for the exclusive purpose of:

(i) providing benefits to participants and their beneficiaries; and
(ii) defraying reasonable expenses of administering the plan;

(B) with the care, skill, prudence, and diligence under the circumstances then prevailing that a prudent man acting in a like capacity and familiar with such matters would use in the conduct of an enterprise of a like character and with like aims;

(C) by diversifying the investments of the plan so as to minimize the risk of large losses, unless under the circumstances it is clearly prudent not to do so; and