Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

This chapter, referred to in subsec. (c)(7)(A), 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.

AMENDMENTS

2014—Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 113–235 inserted ''or to any arrangement relating to withdrawal liability involving the plan'' before period at end.

1984—Subsec. (c)(1)(C)(iii). Pub. L. 98–369 substituted ''September 26, 1980'' for ''April 29, 1980''.

§ 1400. Approval of amendments

(a) Amendment of covered multiemployer plan; procedures applicable

Except as provided in subsection (b), if an amendment to a multiemployer plan authorized by any preceding section of this part is adopted more than 36 months after the effective date of this section, the amendment shall be effective only if the corporation approves the amendment, or, within 90 days after the corporation receives notice and a copy of the amendment from the plan sponsor, fails to disapprove the amendment.

(b) Amendment respecting methods for computing withdrawal liability

An amendment permitted by section 1391(c)(5) of this title may be adopted only in accordance with that section.

(c) Criteria for disapproval by corporation

The corporation shall disapprove an amendment referred to in subsection (a) or (b) only if the corporation determines that the amendment creates an unreasonable risk of loss to plan participants and beneficiaries or to the corporation.

(Pub. L. 93–406, title IV, § 4220, as added Pub. L. 96–364, title I, § 104(2), Sept. 26, 1980, 94 Stat. 1239.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

For the effective date of this section, referred to in subsec. (a), see 1461(e)(2) of this title.

§ 1401. Resolution of disputes

(a) Arbitration proceedings; matters subject to arbitration, procedures applicable, etc.

(1) Any dispute between an employer and the plan sponsor of a multiemployer plan concerning a determination made under sections 1381 through 1399 of this title shall be resolved through arbitration. Either party may initiate the arbitration proceeding within a 60-day period after the earlier of—

(A) the date of notification to the employer under section 1399(b)(2)(B) of this title, or

(B) 120 days after the date of the employer's request under section 1399(b)(2)(A) of this title.

The parties may jointly initiate arbitration within the 180-day period after the date of the plan sponsor's demand under section 1399(b)(1) of this title.

(2) An arbitration proceeding under this section shall be conducted in accordance with fair and equitable procedures to be promulgated by the corporation. The plan sponsor may purchase insurance to cover potential liability of the arbitrator. If the parties have not provided for the costs of the arbitration, including arbitrator's fees, by agreement, the arbitrator shall assess such fees. The arbitrator may also award reasonable attorney's fees.

(3)(A) For purposes of any proceeding under this section, any determination made by a plan sponsor under sections 1381 through 1399 of this title and section 1405 of this title is presumed correct unless the party contesting the determination shows by a preponderance of the evidence that the determination was unreasonable or clearly erroneous.

(B) In the case of the determination of a plan's unfunded vested benefits for a plan year, the determination is presumed correct unless a party contesting the determination shows by a preponderance of evidence that—

(i) the actuarial assumptions and methods used in the determination were, in the aggregate, unreasonable (taking into account the experience of the plan and reasonable expectations), or

(ii) the plan's actuary made a significant error in applying the actuarial assumptions or methods.

(b) Alternative collection proceedings; civil action subsequent to arbitration award; conduct of arbitration proceedings

(1) If no arbitration proceeding has been initiated pursuant to subsection (a), the amounts demanded by the plan sponsor under section 1399(b)(1) of this title shall be due and owing on the schedule set forth by the plan sponsor. The plan sponsor may bring an action in a State or Federal court of competent jurisdiction for collection.

(2) Upon completion of the arbitration proceedings in favor of one of the parties, any party thereto may bring an action, no later than 30 days after the issuance of an arbitrator's award, in an appropriate United States district court in accordance with section 1451 of this title to enforce, vacate, or modify the arbitrator's award.

(3) Any arbitration proceedings under this section shall, to the extent consistent with this subchapter, be conducted in the same manner, subject to the same limitations, carried out with the same powers (including subpena power), and enforced in United States courts as an arbitration proceeding carried out under title 9.

(c) Presumption respecting finding of fact by arbitrator

In any proceeding under subsection (b), there shall be a presumption, rebuttable only by a clear preponderance of the evidence, that the findings of fact made by the arbitrator were correct.

(d) Payments by employer prior and subsequent to determination by arbitrator; adjustments; failure of employer to make payments

Payments shall be made by an employer in accordance with the determinations made under

this part until the arbitrator issues a final decision with respect to the determination submitted for arbitration, with any necessary adjustments in subsequent payments for overpayments or underpayments arising out of the decision of the arbitrator with respect to the determination. If the employer fails to make timely payment in accordance with such final decision, the employer shall be treated as being delinquent in the making of a contribution required under the plan (within the meaning of section 1145 of this title).

(e) Procedures applicable to certain disputes

(1) In general

If—

(A) a plan sponsor of a plan determines that—

(i) a complete or partial withdrawal of an employer has occurred, or

(ii) an employer is liable for withdrawal liability payments with respect to the complete or partial withdrawal of an employer from the plan,

(B) such determination is based in whole or in part on a finding by the plan sponsor under section 1392(c) of this title that a principal purpose of a transaction that occurred before January 1, 1999, was to evade or avoid withdrawal liability under this subtitle, and

(C) such transaction occurred at least 5 years before the date of the complete or partial withdrawal,

then the special rules under paragraph (2) shall be used in applying subsections (a) and (d) of this section and section 1399(c) of this title to the employer.

(2) Special rules

(A) Determination

Notwithstanding subsection (a)(3)—

(i) a determination by the plan sponsor under paragraph (1)(B) shall not be presumed to be correct, and

(ii) the plan sponsor shall have the burden to establish, by a preponderance of the evidence, the elements of the claim under section 1392(c) of this title that a principal purpose of the transaction was to evade or avoid withdrawal liability under this subtitle.

Nothing in this subparagraph shall affect the burden of establishing any other element of a claim for withdrawal liability under this subtitle.

(B) Procedure

Notwithstanding subsection (d) and section 1399(c) of this title, if an employer contests the plan sponsor's determination under paragraph (1) through an arbitration proceeding pursuant to subsection (a), or through a claim brought in a court of competent jurisdiction, the employer shall not be obligated to make any withdrawal liability payments until a final decision in the arbitration proceeding, or in court, upholds the plan sponsor's determination.

(f) Procedures applicable to certain disputes

(1) IN GENERAL.—If—

(A) a plan sponsor of a plan determines that—

(i) a complete or partial withdrawal of an employer has occurred, or

(ii) an employer is liable for withdrawal liability payments with respect to such complete or partial withdrawal, and

(B) such determination is based in whole or in part on a finding by the plan sponsor under section 1392(c) of this title that a principal purpose of any transaction which occurred after December 31, 1998, and at least 5 years (2 years in the case of a small employer) before the date of the complete or partial withdrawal was to evade or avoid withdrawal liability under this subtitle,

then the person against which the withdrawal liability is assessed based solely on the application of section 1392(c) of this title may elect to use the special rule under paragraph (2) in applying subsection (d) of this section and section 1399(c) of this title to such person.

(2) SPECIAL RULE.—Notwithstanding subsection (d) and section 1399(c) of this title, if an electing person contests the plan sponsor's determination with respect to withdrawal liability payments under paragraph (1) through an arbitration proceeding pursuant to subsection (a), through an action brought in a court of competent jurisdiction for review of such an arbitration decision, or as otherwise permitted by law, the electing person shall not be obligated to make the withdrawal liability payments until a final decision in the arbitration proceeding, or in court, upholds the plan sponsor's determination, but only if the electing person—

(A) provides notice to the plan sponsor of its election to apply the special rule in this paragraph within 90 days after the plan sponsor notifies the electing person of its liability by reason of the application of section 1392(c) of this title; and

(B) if a final decision in the arbitration proceeding, or in court, of the withdrawal liability dispute has not been rendered within 12 months from the date of such notice, the electing person provides to the plan, effective as of the first day following the 12-month period, a bond issued by a corporate surety company that is an acceptable surety for purposes of section 1112 of this title, or an amount held in escrow by a bank or similar financial institution satisfactory to the plan, in an amount equal to the sum of the withdrawal liability payments that would otherwise be due under subsection (d) and section 1399(c) of this title for the 12-month period beginning with the first anniversary of such notice. Such bond or escrow shall remain in effect until there is a final decision in the arbitration proceeding, or in court, of the withdrawal liability dispute, at which time such bond or escrow shall be paid to the plan if such final decision upholds the plan sponsor's determination.

(3) DEFINITION OF SMALL EMPLOYER.—For purposes of this subsection—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ''small employer'' means any employer which, for the calendar year in which the transaction referred to in paragraph (1)(B) occurred and for each of the 3 preceding years, on average—

(i) employs not more than 500 employees, and

(ii) is required to make contributions to the plan for not more than 250 employees.

(B) CONTROLLED GROUP.—Any group treated as a single employer under subsection (b)(1) of section 1301 of this title, without regard to any transaction that was a basis for the plan's finding under section 1392 of this title, shall be treated as a single employer for purposes of this subparagraph.

(4) ADDITIONAL SECURITY PENDING RESOLUTION OF DISPUTE.—If a withdrawal liability dispute to which this subsection applies is not concluded by 12 months after the electing person posts the bond or escrow described in paragraph (2), the electing person shall, at the start of each succeeding 12-month period, provide an additional bond or amount held in escrow equal to the sum of the withdrawal liability payments that would otherwise be payable to the plan during that period.

(5) The liability of the party furnishing a bond or escrow under this subsection shall be reduced, upon the payment of the bond or escrow to the plan, by the amount thereof.

(Pub. L. 93–406, title IV, § 4221, as added Pub. L. 96–364, title I, § 104(2), Sept. 26, 1980, 94 Stat. 1239; amended Pub. L. 108–218, title II, § 202(a), Apr. 10, 2004, 118 Stat. 608; Pub. L. 109–280, title II, § 204(d)(1), Aug. 17, 2006, 120 Stat. 887; Pub. L. 110–458, title I, § 105(b)(2), Dec. 23, 2008, 122 Stat. 5105.)

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2008—Subsecs. (e) to (g). Pub. L. 110–458 redesignated subsecs. (f) and (g) as (e) and (f), respectively, and struck out former subsec. (e). Prior to amendment, text read as follows: ''If any employer requests in writing that the plan sponsor make available to the employer general information necessary for the employer to compute its withdrawal liability with respect to the plan (other than information which is unique to that employer), the plan sponsor shall furnish the information to the employer without charge. If any employer requests in writing that the plan sponsor make an estimate of such employer's potential withdrawal liability with respect to the plan or to provide information unique to that employer, the plan sponsor may require the employer to pay the reasonable cost of making such estimate or providing such information.''

2006—Subsec. (g). Pub. L. 109–280 added subsec. (g).

2004—Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 108–218 added subsec. (f).

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2008 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 110–458 effective as if included in the provisions of Pub. L. 109–280 to which the amendment relates, except as otherwise provided, see section 112 of Pub. L. 110–458, set out as a note under section 72 of Title 26, Internal Revenue Code.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2006 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 109–280, title II, § 204(d)(2), Aug. 17, 2006, 120 Stat. 889, provided that: ''The amendments made by this subsection [amending this section] shall apply to any person that receives a notification under section 4219(b)(1) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 [29 U.S.C. 1399(b)(1)] on or after the date of enactment of this Act [Aug. 17, 2006] with respect to a transaction that occurred after December 31, 1998.''

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2004 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 108–218, title II, § 202(b), Apr. 10, 2004, 118 Stat. 609, provided that: ''The amendments made by this section [amending this section] shall apply to any employer that receives a notification under section 4219(b)(1) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1399(b)(1)) after October 31, 2003.''

§ 1402. Reimbursements for uncollectible withdrawal liability

(a) Required supplemental program to reimburse for payments due from employers uncollectible as a result of employer involvement in bankruptcy case or proceedings; program participation, premiums, etc.

By May 1, 1982, the corporation shall establish by regulation a supplemental program to reimburse multiemployer plans for withdrawal liability payments which are due from employers and which are determined to be uncollectible for reasons arising out of cases or proceedings involving the employers under title 11, or similar cases or proceedings. Participation in the supplemental program shall be on a voluntary basis, and a plan which elects coverage under the program shall pay premiums to the corporation in accordance with a premium schedule which shall be prescribed from time to time by the corporation. The premium schedule shall contain such rates and bases for the application of such rates as the corporation considers to be appropriate.

(b) Discretionary supplemental program to reimburse for payments due from employers uncollectible for other appropriate reasons

The corporation may provide under the program for reimbursement of amounts of withdrawal liability determined to be uncollectible for any other reasons the corporation considers appropriate.

(c) Payment of cost of program

The cost of the program (including such administrative and legal costs as the corporation considers appropriate) may be paid only out of premiums collected under such program.

(d) Terms and conditions, limitations, etc., of supplemental program

The supplemental program may be offered to eligible plans on such terms and conditions, and with such limitations with respect to the payment of reimbursements (including the exclusion of de minimis amounts of uncollectible employer liability, and the reduction or elimination of reimbursements which cannot be paid from collected premiums) and such restrictions on withdrawal from the program, as the corporation considers necessary and appropriate.

(e) Arrangements by corporation with private insurers for implementation of program; election of coverage by participating plans with private insurers

The corporation may enter into arrangements with private insurers to carry out in whole or in part the program authorized by this section and may require plans which elect coverage under the program to elect coverage by those private insurers.

(Pub. L. 93–406, title IV, § 4222, as added Pub. L. 96–364, title I, § 104(2), Sept. 26, 1980, 94 Stat. 1240.)