

Tax 2.15 Methods of accounting for corporations. (section 71.11 (8), Wis. Stats.) No uniform method of accounting can be prescribed for all corporations, and the law contemplates that each corporation may return its income in accordance with the method of accounting regularly employed in keeping its books. If no method of accounting is regularly employed or if the method employed does not clearly reflect the income, the department of revenue may prescribe the method to be used. A method of accounting will not be regarded as clearly reflecting the income unless all items of gross income and all deductions are treated with reasonable consistency.

History: 1-2-56; am. Register, March, 1966, No. 123, eff. 4-1-66; am. Register, February, 1975, No. 230, eff. 3-1-75.

Tax 2.16 Change in method of accounting for corporations. (section 71.11 (8) (b), Wis. Stats.) (1) **GENERAL.** (a) A change in the method of accounting by corporations shall be made under section 71.11 (8) (b), Wis. Stats., which reads as follows: "In computing a corporation's taxable income for any taxable year, commencing after December 31, 1953, if such computation is under a method of accounting different from the method under which the taxpayer's taxable income for the preceding taxable year was computed, then there shall be taken into account those adjustments which are determined to be necessary solely by reason of the change in order to prevent amounts from being duplicated or omitted, except there shall not be taken into account any adjustment in respect of any taxable year to which this section does not apply, and except that this rule shall not modify or change the rule as to federal income and excess profits taxes set forth in s. 71.02 (1) (c)."

(b) A change in a corporation's method of accounting may involve an overall change of the entire accounting system or it may involve only a single item.

(c) No change in the method of accounting used in reporting income may be made without first obtaining the written permission of the department. Applications for such change shall be made in the manner described in sub. (5).

(d) In changing from a cash basis of accounting to an accrual basis of accounting, income accrued but not yet collected as of the close of the year of change shall be added to income actually received in cash during the year, and expenses accrued but not yet paid as of the close of the year shall be added to expenses actually paid during the year.

(2) **CHANGE IN METHOD OF ACCOUNTING FOR SINGLE ITEMS.** Any change in the accounting treatment of a single item, if "material", is deemed a change in the method of accounting under section 71.11 (8) (b), Wis. Stats. If an item is "material" for federal income tax purposes, it generally will be "material" for Wisconsin franchise/income tax purposes.

(3) **1953 ACCOUNT BALANCES.** (a) *Taxpayer-initiated change.* On a taxpayer-initiated change, the net 1953 account balances shall not be allowed as an offset in the year of change.

(b) *Department-initiated change.* 1. On a department-initiated change, the net 1953 balances shall be allowed as an offset in the year of change in accordance with the internal revenue code and federal regulations.

2. Net 1953 account balances shall be computed by the taxpayer and adequately supported by its accounting records in order for them to be allowed as offsets in the year of change.

3. No offset is available for taxpayers incorporated after December 31, 1953 or in connection with changes involving LIFO inventories.

(c) Paragraphs (a) and (b) shall apply to all tax years open to assessment or refund.

(4) **TRANSITIONAL ADJUSTMENTS.** The entire impact of a change in method of accounting shall be reflected in net income of the year of change for Wisconsin franchise/income tax purposes, thereby resulting in a doubling up of income and/or deductions in that year. (This represents a significant difference from the federal treatment which, in general, permits a 10-year amortization of the net transitional adjustment at the beginning of the year of change.)

(5) **APPLICATION FOR CHANGE IN METHOD OF ACCOUNTING.** (a) Applications to use the LIFO inventory method and subsequent changes in inventory accounting method shall be filed with the department pursuant to rule Tax 2.26. All other applications shall contain the following:

1. Nature of the taxpayer's business;
2. The method of accounting used in keeping its books;
3. The reason (s) for requesting the change;
4. A legible copy of federal Form 3115, "Application for Change in Accounting Method";
5. Legible copies of *all* subsequent correspondence with the internal revenue service pertaining to such application;
6. A statement, and whenever possible a schedule, which clearly indicate the manner in which it proposes to affect the change for Wisconsin franchise/income tax purposes;
7. A copy of the entry, its date and explanation, made on the books to accomplish the change. (When no book entry is made, the reason for its absence shall be stated.); and
8. Any other pertinent information.

(b) 1. Applications shall be filed before the end of the taxable year for which the change is to be effective. Such applications shall be in letter form with supporting schedules and data and mailed to: Wisconsin Department of Revenue, P.O. Box 8906, Madison, Wisconsin 53708.

2. The department has no form comparable to federal Form 3115.

Note: See *Ladish Co. v. Dept. of Revenue* (1975), 69 Wis. 2d 723, concerning a change in method of accounting for a single item.

Rules Tax 2.25, "Corporation accounting generally" and 2.26, "'Last in, first out' method of inventorying for corporations" describe department interpretations with respect to methods of accounting for inventories.

(8) **PROCEDURE FOR WISCONSIN RESIDENTS.** (a) Wisconsin residents employed in a state with which Wisconsin has reciprocity (as well as those employed in other states) shall file Form I-ES ("Wisconsin Declaration of Estimated Tax") with the Wisconsin department of revenue if

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their out-of-state employers do not withhold Wisconsin income tax from their personal service income and if they will have a sufficient Wisconsin tax liability to be required to file a declaration.

(b) Such Wisconsin residents may have their employers cease withholding the other state's income tax from their personal service income and may claim a refund from such state if income taxes are withheld from such income after the effective date of a reciprocity agreement.

(c) Wisconsin residents earning personal service income in states where it is taxable by the other state may claim a credit on their Wisconsin tax returns for net income taxes paid to such states.

(9) **DELINQUENT TAXES.** Reciprocal agreements shall not affect the withholding of delinquent Wisconsin income taxes, interest, penalties and costs under section 71.135, Wis. Stats.

Note: Forms 1-ES and W-220 and their instructions may be obtained by writing the Wisconsin Department of Revenue, P.O. Box 8903, Madison, Wisconsin 53708.

Out-of-state employers of Wisconsin residents wishing to withhold Wisconsin income tax from such employee's incomes may contact the department's compliance bureau, P.O. Box 8902, Madison, Wisconsin 53708.

The term "temporary or transitory" as used in the definition of an Illinois resident set forth in subsection (1) is not defined in either Illinois law or regulations. Therefore, whether or not the purpose for which an individual is in, or is absent from, Illinois is temporary or transitory in character depends upon the facts and circumstances of each particular case.

History: 1-2-56, am. Register, September, 1964, No. 105, eff. 10-1-64; am. Register, February, 1975, No. 230, eff. 3-1-75; am. Register, November, 1977, No. 263, eff. 12-1-77; r. and recr. Register, May, 1978, No. 269, eff. 6-1-78.

Tax 2.17 Cash method of accounting for corporations. (section 71.11 (8), Wis. Stats.) The use of the cash method of accounting and reporting does not properly reflect taxable income in cases where, at the end of the taxable year, the records reflect accounts receivable, accounts payable, or inventories.

Tax 2.18 Accrual method of accounting for corporations. (section 71.11 (8), Wis. Stats.) In all cases in which the production, purchase or sale of merchandise of any kind is an income producing factor, inventories are necessary, and no accounting method in regard to purchases and sales will correctly reflect the income except the accrual method. Special methods of accounting employed in special trades or businesses may, with the written approval of the department of revenue, be used in reporting income.

History: 1-2-56, am. Register, September, 1964, No. 105, eff. 10-1-64; am. Register, February, 1975, No. 230, eff. 3-1-75.

Tax 2.19 Instalment method of accounting for corporations. (section 71.11 (8), Wis. Stats.). (1) Subject to the approval of the department of revenue, a sale or other disposition by a corporation of real property, or a casual sale or other casual disposition of personal property (other than personal property of a kind which would properly be included in the inventory of the taxpayer if on hand at the close of the income year) for a price exceeding \$1000, may be returned on the instalment basis in the case of a sale or other disposition in an income year beginning on or after January 1, 1967, provided that in the income year of the sale or other disposition there are no payments or the payments (exclusive of evidences of indebtedness of the purchaser) do not exceed 30% of the selling price. On the instalment basis there shall be returned

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as income from the instalment sale in any income year that proportion of the instalment payments actually received in that year which the gross profit realized or to be realized when payment is completed, bears to the total contract price.

(2) Use of the instalment method, in each instance, shall be conditional upon the implied agreement of the corporation to take into income in any year in which it distributes the instalment obligation, the unreported balance of gain on the instalment sale or exchange.

(3) The instalment method shall not be permitted with respect to any instalment sale or exchange made subsequent to adoption of a plan of liquidation to which section 71.337, Wis. Stats., applies.

(4) Corporations regularly engaged in the business of selling personal property and keeping records on the instalment basis will be required to report for franchise or income tax purposes on the accrual basis.

(5) The expenses incident to each instalment sale or exchange must be deferred on the same basis that the profit arising from the sale or exchange is deferred.

(6) When property is sold or exchanged on the instalment basis at a loss, the loss may not be deferred beyond the income year in which the sale or exchange takes place.

History: 1-2-56; am. (2), Register, March, 1966, No. 123, eff. 4-1-66; r. and recr. Register, October, 1966, No. 130, effective with respect to income years beginning on and after January 1, 1967; am. Register, February, 1975, No. 230, eff. 3-1-75.

Tax 2.20 Accounting for acceptance corporations, dealers in commercial paper, mortgage discount companies and small loan companies. (section 71.11 (8), Wis. Stats.) (1) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (3) hereof, acceptance corporations and dealers in commercial paper must report the discount on the purchase of paper as income in the year of such purchase.

(2) Where the records of such acceptance corporations and dealers in commercial paper are kept upon the deferred profit basis, schedules should be attached to the tax returns clearly setting forth the unrealized profit accounts and reconciling the income and surplus per books with the taxable net income.

(3) Acceptance corporations and dealers in commercial paper may elect to report their taxable income on the deferred profit basis, provided that their books and records are kept on that basis and provided further that both the deferment of income, and the expenses incurred in producing said income is made in accordance with accepted accounting principles and practice. The election to so report

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