

§ 301.7122-1

26 CFR Ch. I (4-1-06 Edition)

- (i) Statute of limitations.
- (j) Inspection with respect to accepted offers to compromise.
- (k) Effective date.

[T.D. 9007, 67 FR 48029, July 23, 2002]

§ 301.7122-1 Compromises.

(a) *In general*—(1) If the Secretary determines that there are grounds for compromise under this section, the Secretary may, at the Secretary's discretion, compromise any civil or criminal liability arising under the internal revenue laws prior to reference of a case involving such a liability to the Department of Justice for prosecution or defense.

(2) An agreement to compromise may relate to a civil or criminal liability for taxes, interest, or penalties. Unless the terms of the offer and acceptance expressly provide otherwise, acceptance of an offer to compromise a civil liability does not remit a criminal liability, nor does acceptance of an offer to compromise a criminal liability remit a civil liability.

(b) *Grounds for compromise*—(1) *Doubt as to liability*. Doubt as to liability exists where there is a genuine dispute as to the existence or amount of the correct tax liability under the law. Doubt as to liability does not exist where the liability has been established by a final court decision or judgment concerning the existence or amount of the liability. See paragraph (f)(4) of this section for special rules applicable to rejection of offers in cases where the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is unable to locate the taxpayer's return or return information to verify the liability.

(2) *Doubt as to collectibility*. Doubt as to collectibility exists in any case where the taxpayer's assets and income are less than the full amount of the liability.

(3) *Promote effective tax administration*. (i) A compromise may be entered into to promote effective tax administration when the Secretary determines that, although collection in full could be achieved, collection of the full liability would cause the taxpayer economic hardship within the meaning of § 301.6343-1.

(ii) If there are no grounds for compromise under paragraphs (b)(1), (2), or (3)(i) of this section, the IRS may com-

promise to promote effective tax administration where compelling public policy or equity considerations identified by the taxpayer provide a sufficient basis for compromising the liability. Compromise will be justified only where, due to exceptional circumstances, collection of the full liability would undermine public confidence that the tax laws are being administered in a fair and equitable manner. A taxpayer proposing compromise under this paragraph (b)(3)(ii) will be expected to demonstrate circumstances that justify compromise even though a similarly situated taxpayer may have paid his liability in full.

(iii) No compromise to promote effective tax administration may be entered into if compromise of the liability would undermine compliance by taxpayers with the tax laws.

(c) *Special rules for evaluating offers to compromise*—(1) *In general*. Once a basis for compromise under paragraph (b) of this section has been identified, the decision to accept or reject an offer to compromise, as well as the terms and conditions agreed to, is left to the discretion of the Secretary. The determination whether to accept or reject an offer to compromise will be based upon consideration of all the facts and circumstances, including whether the circumstances of a particular case warrant acceptance of an amount that might not otherwise be acceptable under the Secretary's policies and procedures.

(2) *Doubt as to collectibility*—(i) *Allowable expenses*. A determination of doubt as to collectibility will include a determination of ability to pay. In determining ability to pay, the Secretary will permit taxpayers to retain sufficient funds to pay basic living expenses. The determination of the amount of such basic living expenses will be founded upon an evaluation of the individual facts and circumstances presented by the taxpayer's case. To guide this determination, guidelines published by the Secretary on national and local living expense standards will be taken into account.

(ii) *Nonliable spouses*—(A) *In general.* Where a taxpayer is offering to compromise a liability for which the taxpayer's spouse has no liability, the assets and income of the nonliable spouse will not be considered in determining the amount of an adequate offer. The assets and income of a nonliable spouse may be considered, however, to the extent property has been transferred by the taxpayer to the nonliable spouse under circumstances that would permit the IRS to effect collection of the taxpayer's liability from such property (e.g., property that was conveyed in fraud of creditors), property has been transferred by the taxpayer to the nonliable spouse for the purpose of removing the property from consideration by the IRS in evaluating the compromise, or as provided in paragraph (c)(2)(ii)(B) of this section. The IRS also may request information regarding the assets and income of the nonliable spouse for the purpose of verifying the amount of and responsibility for expenses claimed by the taxpayer.

(B) *Exception.* Where collection of the taxpayer's liability from the assets and income of the nonliable spouse is permitted by applicable state law (e.g., under state community property laws), the assets and income of the nonliable spouse will be considered in determining the amount of an adequate offer except to the extent that the taxpayer and the nonliable spouse demonstrate that collection of such assets and income would have a material and adverse impact on the standard of living of the taxpayer, the nonliable spouse, and their dependents.

(3) *Compromises to promote effective tax administration*—(i) Factors supporting (but not conclusive of) a determination that collection would cause economic hardship within the meaning of paragraph (b)(3)(i) of this section include, but are not limited to—

(A) Taxpayer is incapable of earning a living because of a long term illness, medical condition, or disability, and it is reasonably foreseeable that taxpayer's financial resources will be exhausted providing for care and support during the course of the condition;

(B) Although taxpayer has certain monthly income, that income is exhausted each month in providing for

the care of dependents with no other means of support; and

(C) Although taxpayer has certain assets, the taxpayer is unable to borrow against the equity in those assets and liquidation of those assets to pay outstanding tax liabilities would render the taxpayer unable to meet basic living expenses.

(ii) Factors supporting (but not conclusive of) a determination that compromise would undermine compliance within the meaning of paragraph (b)(3)(iii) of this section include, but are not limited to—

(A) Taxpayer has a history of non-compliance with the filing and payment requirements of the Internal Revenue Code;

(B) Taxpayer has taken deliberate actions to avoid the payment of taxes; and

(C) Taxpayer has encouraged others to refuse to comply with the tax laws.

(iii) The following examples illustrate the types of cases that may be compromised by the Secretary, at the Secretary's discretion, under the economic hardship provisions of paragraph (b)(3)(i) of this section:

Example 1. The taxpayer has assets sufficient to satisfy the tax liability. The taxpayer provides full time care and assistance to her dependent child, who has a serious long-term illness. It is expected that the taxpayer will need to use the equity in his assets to provide for adequate basic living expenses and medical care for his child. The taxpayer's overall compliance history does not weigh against compromise.

Example 2. The taxpayer is retired and his only income is from a pension. The taxpayer's only asset is a retirement account, and the funds in the account are sufficient to satisfy the liability. Liquidation of the retirement account would leave the taxpayer without an adequate means to provide for basic living expenses. The taxpayer's overall compliance history does not weigh against compromise.

Example 3. The taxpayer is disabled and lives on a fixed income that will not, after allowance of basic living expenses, permit full payment of his liability under an installment agreement. The taxpayer also owns a modest house that has been specially equipped to accommodate his disability. The taxpayer's equity in the house is sufficient to permit payment of the liability he owes.

However, because of his disability and limited earning potential, the taxpayer is unable to obtain a mortgage or otherwise borrow against this equity. In addition, because the taxpayer's home has been specially equipped to accommodate his disability, forced sale of the taxpayer's residence would create severe adverse consequences for the taxpayer. The taxpayer's overall compliance history does not weigh against compromise.

(iv) The following examples illustrate the types of cases that may be compromised by the Secretary, at the Secretary's discretion, under the public policy and equity provisions of paragraph (b)(3)(ii) of this section:

Example 1. In October of 1986, the taxpayer developed a serious illness that resulted in almost continuous hospitalizations for a number of years. The taxpayer's medical condition was such that during this period the taxpayer was unable to manage any of his financial affairs. The taxpayer has not filed tax returns since that time. The taxpayer's health has now improved and he has promptly begun to attend to his tax affairs. He discovers that the IRS prepared a substitute for return for the 1986 tax year on the basis of information returns it had received and had assessed a tax deficiency. When the taxpayer discovered the liability, with penalties and interest, the tax bill is more than three times the original tax liability. The taxpayer's overall compliance history does not weigh against compromise.

Example 2. The taxpayer is a salaried sales manager at a department store who has been able to place \$2,000 in a tax-deductible IRA account for each of the last two years. The taxpayer learns that he can earn a higher rate of interest on his IRA savings by moving those savings from a money management account to a certificate of deposit at a different financial institution. Prior to transferring his savings, the taxpayer submits an e-mail inquiry to the IRS at its Web Page, requesting information about the steps he must take to preserve the tax benefits he has enjoyed and to avoid penalties. The IRS responds in an answering e-mail that the taxpayer may withdraw his IRA savings from his neighborhood bank, but he must redeposit those savings in a new IRA account within 90 days. The taxpayer withdraws the funds and redeposits them in a new IRA account 63 days later. Upon audit, the taxpayer learns that he has been misinformed about the required rollover period and that he is liable for additional taxes, penalties and additions to tax for not having redeposited the amount within 60 days. Had it not been for the erroneous advice that is reflected in the taxpayer's retained copy of the IRS e-mail response to his inquiry, the taxpayer would have redeposited the amount within the re-

quired 60-day period. The taxpayer's overall compliance history does not weigh against compromise.

(d) *Procedures for submission and consideration of offers*—(1) *In general.* An offer to compromise a tax liability pursuant to section 7122 must be submitted according to the procedures, and in the form and manner, prescribed by the Secretary. An offer to compromise a tax liability must be made in writing, must be signed by the taxpayer under penalty of perjury, and must contain all of the information prescribed or requested by the Secretary. However, taxpayers submitting offers to compromise liabilities solely on the basis of doubt as to liability will not be required to provide financial statements.

(2) *When offers become pending and return of offers.* An offer to compromise becomes pending when it is accepted for processing. The IRS may not accept for processing any offer to compromise a liability following reference of a case involving such liability to the Department of Justice for prosecution or defense. If an offer accepted for processing does not contain sufficient information to permit the IRS to evaluate whether the offer should be accepted, the IRS will request that the taxpayer provide the needed additional information. If the taxpayer does not submit the additional information that the IRS has requested within a reasonable time period after such a request, the IRS may return the offer to the taxpayer. The IRS may also return an offer to compromise a tax liability if it determines that the offer was submitted solely to delay collection or was otherwise nonprocessable. An offer returned following acceptance for processing is deemed pending only for the period between the date the offer is accepted for processing and the date the IRS returns the offer to the taxpayer. See paragraphs (f)(5)(ii) and (g)(4) of this section for rules regarding the effect of such returns of offers.

(3) *Withdrawal.* An offer to compromise a tax liability may be withdrawn by the taxpayer or the taxpayer's representative at any time prior to the IRS' acceptance of the offer to compromise. An offer will be

considered withdrawn upon the IRS' receipt of written notification of the withdrawal of the offer either by personal delivery or certified mail, or upon issuance of a letter by the IRS confirming the taxpayer's intent to withdraw the offer.

(e) *Acceptance of an offer to compromise a tax liability.*—(1) An offer to compromise has not been accepted until the IRS issues a written notification of acceptance to the taxpayer or the taxpayer's representative.

(2) As additional consideration for the acceptance of an offer to compromise, the IRS may request that taxpayer enter into any collateral agreement or post any security which is deemed necessary for the protection of the interests of the United States.

(3) Offers may be accepted when they provide for payment of compromised amounts in one or more equal or unequal installments.

(4) If the final payment on an accepted offer to compromise is contingent upon the immediate and simultaneous release of a tax lien in whole or in part, such payment must be made in accordance with the forms, instructions, or procedures prescribed by the Secretary.

(5) Acceptance of an offer to compromise will conclusively settle the liability of the taxpayer specified in the offer. Compromise with one taxpayer does not extinguish the liability of, nor prevent the IRS from taking action to collect from, any person not named in the offer who is also liable for the tax to which the compromise relates. Neither the taxpayer nor the Government will, following acceptance of an offer to compromise, be permitted to reopen the case except in instances where—

(i) False information or documents are supplied in conjunction with the offer;

(ii) The ability to pay or the assets of the taxpayer are concealed; or

(iii) A mutual mistake of material fact sufficient to cause the offer agreement to be reformed or set aside is discovered.

(6) *Opinion of Chief Counsel.* Except as otherwise provided in this paragraph (e)(6), if an offer to compromise is accepted, there will be placed on file the opinion of the Chief Counsel for the IRS with respect to such compromise,

along with the reasons therefor. However, no such opinion will be required with respect to the compromise of any civil case in which the unpaid amount of tax assessed (including any interest, additional amount, addition to the tax, or assessable penalty) is less than \$50,000. Also placed on file will be a statement of—

(i) The amount of tax assessed;

(ii) The amount of interest, additional amount, addition to the tax, or assessable penalty, imposed by law on the person against whom the tax is assessed; and

(iii) The amount actually paid in accordance with the terms of the compromise.

(f) *Rejection of an offer to compromise.*

(1) An offer to compromise has not been rejected until the IRS issues a written notice to the taxpayer or his representative, advising of the rejection, the reason(s) for rejection, and the right to an appeal.

(2) The IRS may not notify a taxpayer or taxpayer's representative of the rejection of an offer to compromise until an independent administrative review of the proposed rejection is completed.

(3) No offer to compromise may be rejected solely on the basis of the amount of the offer without evaluating that offer under the provisions of this section and the Secretary's policies and procedures regarding the compromise of cases.

(4) *Offers based upon doubt as to liability.* Offers submitted on the basis of doubt as to liability cannot be rejected solely because the IRS is unable to locate the taxpayer's return or return information for verification of the liability.

(5) *Appeal of rejection of an offer to compromise*—(i) *In general.* The taxpayer may administratively appeal a rejection of an offer to compromise to the IRS Office of Appeals (Appeals) if, within the 30-day period commencing the day after the date on the letter of rejection, the taxpayer requests such an administrative review in the manner provided by the Secretary.

(ii) *Offer to compromise returned following a determination that the offer was nonprocessable, a failure by the taxpayer*

to provide requested information, or a determination that the offer was submitted for purposes of delay. Where a determination is made to return offer documents because the offer to compromise was nonprocessable, because the taxpayer failed to provide requested information, or because the IRS determined that the offer to compromise was submitted solely for purposes of delay under paragraph (d)(2) of this section, the return of the offer does not constitute a rejection of the offer for purposes of this provision and does not entitle the taxpayer to appeal the matter to Appeals under the provisions of this paragraph (f)(5). However, if the offer is returned because the taxpayer failed to provide requested financial information, the offer will not be returned until a managerial review of the proposed return is completed.

(g) *Effect of offer to compromise on collection activity*—(1) *In general.* The IRS will not levy against the property or rights to property of a taxpayer who submits an offer to compromise, to collect the liability that is the subject of the offer, during the period the offer is pending, for 30 days immediately following the rejection of the offer, and for any period when a timely filed appeal from the rejection is being considered by Appeals.

(2) *Revised offers submitted following rejection.* If, following the rejection of an offer to compromise, the taxpayer makes a good faith revision of that offer and submits the revised offer within 30 days after the date of rejection, the IRS will not levy to collect from the taxpayer the liability that is the subject of the revised offer to compromise while that revised offer is pending.

(3) *Jeopardy.* The IRS may levy to collect the liability that is the subject of an offer to compromise during the period the IRS is evaluating whether that offer will be accepted if it determines that collection of the liability is in jeopardy.

(4) *Offers to compromise determined by IRS to be nonprocessable or submitted solely for purposes of delay.* If the IRS determines, under paragraph (d)(2) of this section, that a pending offer did not contain sufficient information to permit evaluation of whether the offer

should be accepted, that the offer was submitted solely to delay collection, or that the offer was otherwise nonprocessable, then the IRS may levy to collect the liability that is the subject of that offer at any time after it returns the offer to the taxpayer.

(5) *Offsets under section 6402.* Notwithstanding the evaluation and processing of an offer to compromise, the IRS may, in accordance with section 6402, credit any overpayments made by the taxpayer against a liability that is the subject of an offer to compromise and may offset such overpayments against other liabilities owed by the taxpayer to the extent authorized by section 6402.

(6) *Proceedings in court.* Except as otherwise provided in this paragraph (g)(6), the IRS will not refer a case to the Department of Justice for the commencement of a proceeding in court, against a person named in a pending offer to compromise, if levy to collect the liability is prohibited by paragraph (g)(1) of this section. Without regard to whether a person is named in a pending offer to compromise, however, the IRS may authorize the Department of Justice to file a counterclaim or third-party complaint in a refund action or to join that person in any other proceeding in which liability for the tax that is the subject of the pending offer to compromise may be established or disputed, including a suit against the United States under 28 U.S.C. 2410. In addition, the United States may file a claim in any bankruptcy proceeding or insolvency action brought by or against such person.

(h) *Deposits.* Sums submitted with an offer to compromise a liability or during the pendency of an offer to compromise are considered deposits and will not be applied to the liability until the offer is accepted unless the taxpayer provides written authorization for application of the payments. If an offer to compromise is withdrawn, is determined to be nonprocessable, or is submitted solely for purposes of delay and returned to the taxpayer, any amount tendered with the offer, including all installments paid on the offer, will be refunded without interest. If an offer is rejected, any amount tendered

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with the offer, including all installments paid on the offer, will be refunded, without interest, after the conclusion of any review sought by the taxpayer with Appeals. Refund will not be required if the taxpayer has agreed in writing that amounts tendered pursuant to the offer may be applied to the liability for which the offer was submitted.

(i) *Statute of limitations*—(1) *Suspension of the statute of limitations on collection*. The statute of limitations on collection will be suspended while levy is prohibited under paragraph (g)(1) of this section.

(2) *Extension of the statute of limitations on assessment*. For any offer to compromise, the IRS may require, where appropriate, the extension of the statute of limitations on assessment. However, in any case where waiver of the running of the statutory period of limitations on assessment is sought, the taxpayer must be notified of the right to refuse to extend the period of limitations or to limit the extension to particular issues or particular periods of time.

(j) *Inspection with respect to accepted offers to compromise*. For provisions relating to the inspection of returns and accepted offers to compromise, see section 6103(k)(1).

(k) *Effective date*. This section applies to offers to compromise pending on or submitted on or after July 18, 2002.

[T.D. 9007, 67 FR 48029, July 23, 2002; 67 FR 53879, Aug. 20, 2002]

Crimes, Other Offenses, and Forfeitures

CRIMES

GENERAL PROVISIONS

§ 301.7207-1 Fraudulent returns, statements, or other documents.

Any person who willfully delivers or discloses to any officer or employee of the Internal Revenue Service any list, return, account, statement, or other document, known by him to be fraudulent or to be false as to any material matter, shall be fined not more than \$1,000, or imprisoned not more than 1 year, or both. Any person required pursuant to section 6047 (b) or (c) or, sec-

tion 6104(d), to furnish information to any officer or employee of the Internal Revenue Service or any other person who willfully furnishes to such officer or employee of the Internal Revenue Service or such other person any information known by him to be fraudulent or to be false as to any material matter shall be fined not more than \$1,000, or imprisoned not more than 1 year, or both.

[T.D. 7127, 36 FR 11505, June 15, 1971, as amended by T.D. 8026, 50 FR 20758, May 20, 1985]

§ 301.7209-1 Unauthorized use or sale of stamps.

(a) Any person who buys, sells, offers for sale, uses, transfers, takes or gives in exchange, or pledges or gives in pledge, except as authorized in the Code or in regulations made pursuant thereto, any stamp, coupon, ticket, book, or other device prescribed by the Commissioner under the Code for the collection or payment of any tax imposed by the Code, shall, upon conviction thereof, be fined not more than \$1,000, or imprisoned not more than 6 months, or both.

(b) For use or resale of unused documentary stamps, see paragraph (c) of § 43.6802-1 of this chapter (Documentary Stamp Tax Regulations).

§ 301.7214-1 Offenses by officers and employees of the United States.

Any officer or employee of the United States acting in connection with any revenue law of the United States required to make a written report under the provisions of section 7214(a)(8) shall submit such report to the Commissioner, or to a regional commissioner or district director.

§ 301.7216-1 Penalty for disclosure or use of tax return information.

(a) *In general*. Section 7216(a) provides in effect that, except as provided in section 7216(b), any tax return preparer (as described in paragraph (b)(2) of this section) who on or after January 1, 1972, discloses or uses any tax return information (as described in paragraph (b)(3) of this section) other than for the specific purpose of preparing, assisting in preparing, or obtaining or providing