



PENSION BENEFIT GUARANTY CORPORATION

Proposed Submission of Information Collections for OMB Review; Comment Request; Multiemployer Plan Regulations

AGENCY: Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

ACTION: Notice of intention to request extension of OMB approval of information collections.

SUMMARY: The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) intends to request that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) extend approval, under the Paperwork Reduction Act, of collections of information in PBGC's regulations on multiemployer plans under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). This notice informs the public of PBGC's intent and solicits public comment on the collections of information.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before **[INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*]** to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be submitted by any of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.
- *Email:* paperwork.comments@pbgc.gov. Refer to refer to the multiemployer information collection and corresponding OMB control number in the subject line.
- *Mail or Hand Delivery:* Office of the General Counsel, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, 445 12th Street SW, Washington, DC 20024–2101.

Commenters are strongly encouraged to submit public comments electronically. Commenters who submit comments on paper by mail should allow sufficient time for mailed comments to be received before the close of the comment period.

All submissions received must include the agency's name (Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, or PBGC) and refer to the multiemployer information collection and corresponding OMB control number. All comments received will be posted without change to PBGC's

website, www.pbgc.gov, including any personal information provided. Do not submit comments that include any personally identifiable information (such as name, address, or other contact information) or confidential business information that you do not want publicly disclosed. Comments may be submitted anonymously.

Copies of the collections of information may also be obtained without charge by writing to the Disclosure Division (disclosure@pbgc.gov), Office of the General Counsel, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, 445 12th Street SW, Washington, DC 20024–2101, or calling 202–326–4040 during normal business hours. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Monica O’Donnell

(odonnell.monica@pbgc.gov), Attorney, Office of the General Counsel, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, 445 12th Street SW, Washington, DC 20024–2101; 202–229–5507. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 711 to access telecommunications relay services.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) intends to request that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) extend approval under the Paperwork Reduction Act of the collections of information in PBGC’s regulations on multiemployer plans under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). This notice informs the public of PBGC’s intent and solicits public comment on the collections of information.

The existing collections of information are approved through May 31, 2026, under each collection’s respective OMB control number. PBGC intends to request that OMB extend its approval of the collections of information for 3 years. An agency may not conduct or sponsor,

and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

PBGC is soliciting public comments to—

- Evaluate whether the proposed collections of information are necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;
- Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collections of information, including the validity of the methodologies and assumptions used;
- Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- Minimize the burden of the collections of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, *e.g.*, permitting electronic submission of responses.

Comments should identify the specific part number(s) of the regulation(s) to which they relate.

1. Extension of Special Withdrawal Liability Rules (29 CFR Part 4203) (OMB Control Number 1212-0023)

Sections 4203(f) and 4208(e)(3) of ERISA allow PBGC to permit a multiemployer plan to adopt special rules for determining whether a withdrawal from the plan has occurred, subject to PBGC approval.

The regulation specifies the information that a plan that adopts special rules must submit to PBGC about the rules, the plan, and the industry in which the plan operates. PBGC uses the information to determine whether the rules are appropriate for the industry in which the plan functions and do not pose a significant risk to the insurance system.

PBGC estimates that over the next 3 years, at most one plan sponsor will submit a request each year under this regulation. The estimated annual burden of the collection of information is 4 hours and \$15,000.

2. Variances for Sale of Assets (29 CFR Part 4204) (OMB Control Number 1212–0021)

If an employer's covered operations or contribution obligation under a plan ceases, the employer must generally pay withdrawal liability to the plan. Section 4204 of ERISA provides an exception, under certain conditions, where the cessation results from a sale of assets. Among other things, the buyer must furnish a bond or escrow, and the sale contract must provide for secondary liability of the seller.

The regulation establishes general variances (rules for avoiding the bond/escrow and sale-contract requirements) and authorizes plans to determine whether the variances apply in particular cases. It also allows buyers and sellers to request individual variances from PBGC. Plans and PBGC use the information to determine whether employers qualify for variances.

PBGC estimates that over the next 3 years, 100 employers will submit, and 100 plans will respond to, variance requests under the regulation, and one employer submits a variance request to PBGC each year. The estimated annual burden of the collection of information is 1,050 hours and \$702,000.

3. Reduction or Waiver of Complete Withdrawal Liability (29 CFR Part 4207) (OMB Control Number 1212–0044)

Section 4207 of ERISA allows PBGC to provide for abatement of an employer's complete withdrawal liability, and for plan adoption of alternative abatement rules, where appropriate.

Under the regulation, an employer applies to a plan for an abatement determination, providing information the plan needs to determine whether withdrawal liability should be abated, and the plan notifies the employer of its determination. The employer may, pending plan action,

furnish a bond or escrow instead of making withdrawal liability payments, and must notify the plan if it does so. When the plan then makes its determination, it must notify the bonding or escrow agent.

The regulation also permits a plan to adopt its own abatement rules and request PBGC approval. PBGC uses the information in such a request to determine whether the amendment should be approved.

PBGC estimates that each year over the next 3 years, at most one employer will submit, and one plan will respond to an application for abatement of complete withdrawal liability, and no plan sponsors will request approval of plan abatement rules from PBGC. The estimated annual burden of the collection of information is 0.5 hours and \$1,000.

4. Reduction or Waiver of Partial Withdrawal Liability (29 CFR Part 4208) (OMB Control Number 1212-0039)

Section 4208 of ERISA provides for abatement, in certain circumstances, of an employer's partial withdrawal liability and authorizes PBGC to issue additional partial withdrawal liability abatement rules.

Under the regulation, an employer applies to a plan for an abatement determination, providing information the plan needs to determine whether withdrawal liability should be abated, and the plan notifies the employer of its determination. The employer may, pending plan action, furnish a bond or escrow instead of making withdrawal liability payments, and must notify the plan if it does so. When the plan then makes its determination, it must notify the bonding or escrow agent.

The regulation also permits a plan to adopt its own abatement rules and request PBGC approval. PBGC uses the information in such a request to determine whether the amendment should be approved.

PBGC estimates that each year over the next 3 years, at most one employer will submit, and one plan will respond to an application for abatement of partial withdrawal liability, and no

plan sponsors will request approval of plan abatement rules from PBGC. The estimated annual burden of the collection of information is 0.50 hours and \$1,000.

5. Allocating Unfunded Vested Benefits to Withdrawing Employers (29 CFR Part 4211) (OMB Control Number 1212–0035)

Section 4211(c)(5)(A) of ERISA requires PBGC to prescribe how plans can, with PBGC approval, change the way they allocate unfunded vested benefits to withdrawing employers for purposes of calculating withdrawal liability.

The regulation prescribes the information that must be submitted to PBGC by a plan seeking such approval. PBGC uses the information to determine how the amendment changes the way the plan allocates unfunded vested benefits and how the amendment will affect the risk of loss to plan participants and PBGC.

PBGC estimates that each year over the next 3 years, 10 plan sponsors will submit approval requests under this regulation. The estimated annual burden of the collection of information is 200 hours and \$200,000.

6. Notice, Collection, and Redetermination of Withdrawal Liability (29 CFR Part 4219) (OMB Control Number 1212–0034)

Section 4219(c)(1)(D) of ERISA requires that PBGC prescribe regulations for the allocation of a plan’s total unfunded vested benefits in the event of a “mass withdrawal.” Section 4209(c) of ERISA deals with an employer’s liability for de minimis amounts if the employer withdraws in a “substantial withdrawal.”

The reporting requirements in the regulation give employers notice of a mass withdrawal or substantial withdrawal and advise them of their rights and liabilities. They also provide notice to PBGC so that it can monitor the plan, and they help PBGC assess the possible impact of a withdrawal event on participants and the multiemployer plan insurance program.

PBGC estimates that over the next 3 years, there will be two mass withdrawals and one substantial withdrawal per year. The plan sponsor of a plan subject to a withdrawal covered by

the regulation provides notices of the withdrawal to PBGC and to employers covered by the plan, liability assessments to the employers, and a certification to PBGC that assessments have been made. For a mass withdrawal, there are two assessments and two certifications that deal with two different types of liability. For a substantial withdrawal, there is one assessment and one certification (combined with the withdrawal notice to PBGC). The estimated annual burden of the collection of information is 15 hours and \$49,500.

**7. Procedures for PBGC Approval of Plan Amendments (29 CFR Part 4220)
(OMB Control Number 1212-0031)**

Under section 4220 of ERISA, a plan may, within certain limits, adopt special plan rules regarding when a withdrawal from the plan occurs and how the withdrawing employer's withdrawal liability is determined. Any such special rule is effective only if, within 90 days after receiving notice and a copy of the rule, PBGC either approves or fails to disapprove the rule.

The regulation provides rules for requesting PBGC's approval of an amendment. PBGC needs the required information to identify the plan; evaluate the risk of loss, if any, posed by the plan amendment; and determine whether to approve or disapprove the amendment.

PBGC estimates that each year over the next 3 years, at most one plan sponsor will submit an approval request under this regulation. The estimated annual burden of the collection of information is 2 hours and \$8,000.

Joseph Krettek,
Assistant General Counsel,
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.