### Financial Close and Reporting

A critical but often poorly-executed part of the accounting cycle

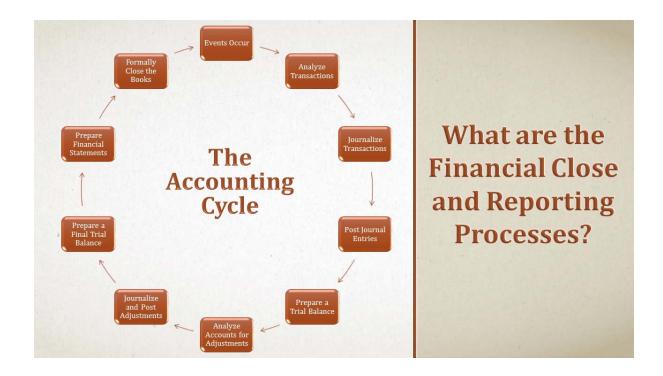
The financial close and reporting processes are a critical part of the accounting cycle and fundamental in having relevant and representationally faithful accounting records and financial statements. However, the process is often poorly executed – especially by small and medium-sized organizations.

# Why is this process so important?

Without performing the financial close and reporting processes, the accounting records and financial statement will be incomplete, inaccurate, and irrelevant.

The users of the financial statements will have not have decision-useful information.

Decisions made and actions taken will not be based on a representationally faithful picture of the organization's financial position and activities.

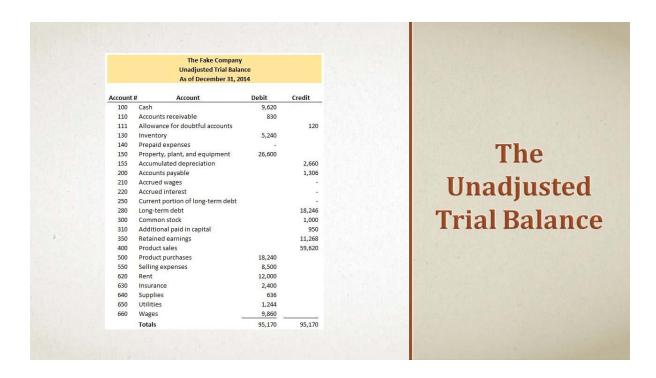


The activities performed at the end of the period that ensure all transactions and events have been recorded, all transactions and account balances have been measured appropriately, and that the financial statements are prepared properly.

### They include:

- Preparing a trial balance
- Identifying, collecting, and analyzing information for accounts that require adjustments
- Preparing the adjusting journal entries and posting them to the ledgers
- Preparing an adjusted, or final, trial balance
- Use the final trial balance to prepare the required financial statements
- Formally closing the accounting records for the period

They comprise the majority of the accounting cycle's steps.



This is the starting point for performing financial close and reporting processes.

The unadjusted trial balance is simply a listing of all accounts from the general ledger as of a particular point in time.

The general ledger comprises all accounts used by the organization:

- Balance sheet accounts (e.g., cash, fixed assets, accounts payable, common stock, etc.)
  - These are called "permanent" accounts because their balances are carried forward from one period to the next.
- Income statement accounts (e.g., revenue, expenses, other revenue and expenses, etc.)
  - These are called "temporary" accounts because their balances are closed at the end
    of the period and rolled up into the appropriate equity account

The trial balance *must* balance – that is, the sum of all debits must equal the sum of all credits.

### **Identifying, Collecting and Analyzing Information for Necessary Adjustments**

The next step is to identify, collect, and analyze information about transactions and events or regarding account balances that need to be recorded as adjusting entries.

A methodical approach is best practice. Work your way down the accounts on the trial balance and, for each, ask yourself:

- Does this account balance actually exist (or, not overstated)? Or, is it an account that no longer exists and yet the disposal of it was recorded elsewhere?
- Is the account balance complete (or, not understated)? Does it have all transactions and events recorded in it that should be recorded?
- Is the account valued appropriately? What's the proper valuation technique for this particular account? What are the factors in determining its value?
- Have revenues and expenses been allocated out of or into the account appropriately?
- Are all of the revenue or expense transactions that are recorded in this account applicable to the period being covered?
- Are there any revenue of expense transactions that have been earned or incurred but have yet to be recorded?

Use the answers to these questions to determine what information needs to be gathered, from whom or from where will it be gathered, and what analysis needs to be performed.

Develop a checklist of period-end adjustments that need to be made, the information required to be gathered, the analysis necessary, and the timelines of when to collect and analyze the data.



Inventory Example

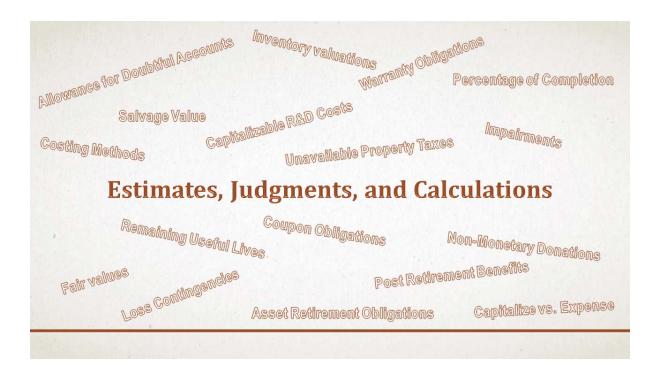
Suppose you have an Inventory balance on the unadjusted trial balance.

- Does the account balance actually exist? It's possible that there has been some inventory shrinkage that would mean the balance is overstated.
- Is the account balance complete? It's possible that some purchase orders issued before year end have been fulfilled and the invoice has simply not yet been received. Or, perhaps, goods are in transit at period end.
- *Is the inventory valued appropriately?* It's possible that the inventory is obsolete, or that its market value is lower than its cost.
- Does anything need to be allocated to or from inventory? For Works in Process Inventory, an allocation of overhead expenses often needs to be performed.

The last two questions are not applicable to Inventory.

The answers to these questions will provide you with a list of informational needs. For example, you will need to know the period-end physical inventory count. You will also need to look at open purchase orders at year end and determine if any were filled by period end. You will need to consider the marketability of the inventory and, if questionable, perform calculations to compare its market value to its cost. You will need to know which overhead costs are allocated to inventory and what calculations are used.

Once you have all of the necessary information, you will need to analyze it and compare your analysis results to the unadjusted balance. If there is a difference, then an adjustment will be necessary. If there is no difference, then no adjustment is necessary.



Accounting requires management to make *many* estimates, judgments, and calculations. The slide above shows a number of examples.

For financial statements to maintain their decision-usefulness, management must make these estimates, judgments, and calculations:

- Objectively and without bias
- Consistently from period to period
- Accurately (within materiality and cost constraints)

It's critical that those charged with governance know which estimates and judgments management is making, the rationale for the estimates and judgments, and how the calculations related to the estimates and judgments are performed.

Having that understanding will allow those charged with governance to ascertain the reasonableness and accuracy of the estimates and judgments and will help them detect any indications of management bias or fraud.

Estimates and judgments from prior periods should be evaluated by management and those charged with governance to determine how close to reality (representationally faithful) they were. Stark differences between reality and estimates should prompt changes in estimates or judgments and calculations should be revised. Stark differences should also be considered for indications of management bias or fraud.



### Inventory Example

Going back to our inventory example, management needs to make some estimates, judgments, and calculations to arrive at the proper period-end account balance.

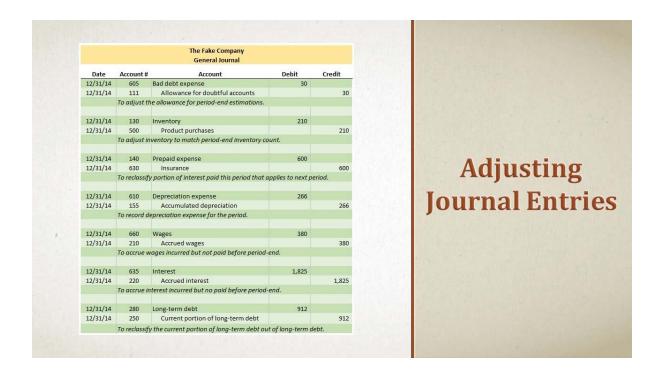
For example, management needs to make judgments on how inventory's costs flow. Will inventory be recorded on a Last-In, First-Out (LIFO) basis, First-In, First-Out (FIFO) basis, average cost basis, dollar-value LIFO basis, or some other costing method? Is the costing method appropriate, or still appropriate, and does it result in a faithful representation?

Management also needs to make judgments regarding the inventory's value. GAAP requires that inventory be recorded at the lower of cost or market (LCM). This requires estimates of the inventory's net realizable value (NRV), net realizable value less a normal profit, and comparisons to the recorded costs.

For Works in Process Inventory, management would need to determine which overhead costs should be allocated to inventory and estimate what percentage should be allocated.

These can be complicated calculations, so the information inputs need to be consistent from period to period, the method of calculation needs to be consistent, and the timing and manner of recording the adjustment should be consistent.

Management should document all factors of the adjustment and the Board should review them periodically.



Once the identification, collection, and analysis of adjusting information is complete, the accounting records need to be updated to with adjusting journal entries. These are recorded in the General Journal.

All journal entries should be supported by documentation (which is **not** just a printing out of the journal entry itself) and should be reviewed and approved by management.

- Documentation of the reasons for estimates and judgments made
- Source documents for the various factors in the calculation
- Worksheet of calculations and end results
- Documentation of authorization, review, and approval

Adjusting journal entries should be posted as of the date of the end of the period.

In accounting applications, journal entries are automatically posted to the ledger. But, if you're still keeping your records using pencil and paper, make sure you post the adjusting entries to the leger accounts (and once you're done that, you should think about entering the 21<sup>st</sup> century).

And always remember: debits must equal credits.

		The Fake Company Final Trial Balance As of December 31, 20	14		
A	Account #	Account	Debit	Credit	
	100	Cash	9,620		
	110	Accounts receivable	830		
	111	Allowance for doubtful accounts		150	
	130	Inventory	5,450		
	140	Prepaid expenses	600		
	150	Property, plant, and equipment	26,600		
	155	Accumulated depreciation		2,926	
	200	Accounts payable		1,306	
	210	Accrued wages		380	The Final
	220	Accrued interest		1,825	Illerillal
	250	Current portion of long-term debt		912	
	280	Long-term debt		17,334	m · I p I
	300	Common stock		1,000	Trial Balance
	310	Additional paid in capital		950	I I I I I Dalance
	350	Retained earnings		11,268	
	400	Product sales		59,620	
	500	Product purchases	18,030		
	550	Selling expenses	8,500		
	605	Bad debt expense	30		
	610	Depreciation expense	266		
	620	Rent	12,000		
	630	Insurance	1,800		
	635	Interest	1,825		
		Supplies	636		
	650	Utilities	1,244		
	660	Wages	10,240		Marine III and the second of t
		Totals	97,671	97,671	

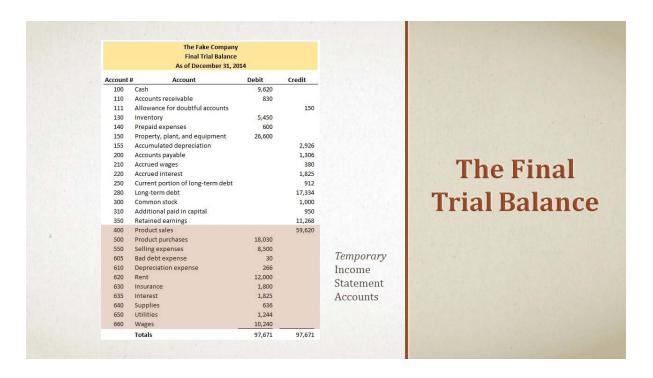
Once all adjustments are journalized and posted, a final trial balance needs to be generated.

Again, this is simply a listing of all permanent and temporary accounts in the general ledger and their balances as of the period end date.

As you can see from the example above (and when compared with the unadjusted trial balance from earlier) the adjusting journal entries have affected account balances. Some have been increased, others decreased, and some temporary accounts that were not on the unadjusted trial balance now have amounts.

The sum of all debits will still equal the sum of all credits.

The final trial balance will now be used by management to prepare the required financial statements.



The first step in preparing financial statements is to prepare the Income Statement.

The income statement is composed of all temporary accounts – accounts that get closed at the end of the period and rolled up into the equity accounts.

The income statement describes how equity changed throughout the period as a result of revenues, expenses, and other revenues and expenses.

The bottom line is either net income or net loss.

	Income S	The Fake Company Income Statement				
	For the Year Ended	December 31	, 2014			
	Product sales		\$	59,620		
	Product purchases	\$ 1	3,030			
	Selling expenses		3,500			
	Total cost of goods sold			26,530		
	Gross profit			33,09		
ne Statement						
Justinent	Rent	1	2,000			
	Wages		0,240			
	Interest		1,825			
	Insurance		1,800			
	Utilities		L,244			
	Supplies		636			
	Depreciation expense		266			
	Bad debt expense		30			
	Total operating expenses		0	28,04		
	Net income		\$	5,049		

The income statement is the easiest statement to produce because it's simply taking the items from the final trial balance and organizing them in the proper format.

The net income (or loss) is key to completing the balance sheet. This is why the income statement is prepared first.

Accounting applications will be able to prepare this for you automatically. Just be sure to have all of your adjustments posted – otherwise the income statement will not be complete or accurate.

	The Fake Company Final Trial Balance As of December 31, 20			
100 110 111 130 140 155 200 210 220 250 280 300	Cash Accounts receivable Allowance for doubtful accounts Inventory Prepaid expenses Property, plant, and equipment Accountlated depreciation Accounts payable Accrued wages Accrued interest Current portion of long-term debt Long-term debt Common stock	9,620 830 5,450 600 26,600	2,926 1,306 380 1,825 912 17,334 1,000	Permanent Balance Sheet Accounts  The Final Trial Balance
310 350 400 500 550 605 610 620 630 635 640 650	Additional paid in capital Retained earnings Product sales Product purchases Selling expenses Bad debt expense Depreciation expense Rent Insurance Interest Supplies Utilities Wages Totals	18,030 8,500 30 266 12,000 1,800 1,825 636 1,244 10,240 97,671	950 11,268 59,620	

The next step in preparing the financial statements is to prepare the Balance Sheet.

The balance sheet is a snapshot in time that describes the organization's financial position on a specific date.

In transferring accounts and amounts from the final trial balance, the preparer must remember to close the temporary accounts to the appropriate equity account, That is, whatever the net income or loss is, per the income statement, must be added to or subtracted from equity (in this case, the Retained Earnings account.)

Failure to do this will result in a balance sheet that doesn't balance. In fact, it will be out of balance by the net income or loss amount.

	The Fake Company Balance Sheet As of December 31, 20	14	
	Assets		
	Cash \$ Accounts receivable, net of allowance Inventory Prepaid expenses Total current assets	9,620 680 5,450 600	\$ 16,35
	Fixed assets Accumulated depreciation Net fixed assets	26,600 (2,926)	23,67
	Total assets		\$ 40,02
ice Sheet	Liabilities and Owners' E	quity	
	Accounts payable Accrued expenses Current portion of long-term debt Total current liabilities	1,306 2,205 912	\$ 4,42
	Long-term debt, less current portion Total liabilities		17,33- 21,75
	Common stock Additional paid in capital Retained earnings	1,000 950 16,317	
	Total owners' equity		18,26
	Total liabilities and owners' equity		\$ 40,02

The balance sheet is the second-easiest financial statement to prepare. With the exception of the equity account to which net income (loss) was closed, it simply takes the final trial balance amounts for all balance sheet accounts and arranges them in the proper format.

Notice in the example above that Retained Earnings is \$5,049 more than what it shows on the final trial balance. This is the net income amount that has been closed to retained earnings.

Accounting applications will be able to prepare this for you automatically. Just be sure to have all of your adjustments posted – otherwise the balance sheet will not be complete or accurate.

	The Fake Company Statement of Cash Flows For the Year Ended December 31, 2014
	Operating Activities  Net income \$ 5,0
	Adjustments to reconcile net income to
	net cash from operating activities:
	Depreciation expense \$ 266
	Bad debt expense 30
	Increase in accounts receivable (115)  Decrease in inventory 1,810
	Decrease in inventory 1,810 Increase in prepaid expense (100)
	Increase in accounts payable 406
	Decrease in accrued expenses (210)
	Total adjustments to net income 2,0
t of Cash Flows	Net cash provided by operating activities 7,1
	Investing Activities
	Purchase of equipment (5,0
	Net cash used in investing activities (5,0
	Financing Activities
	Payment on long-term debts (5
	Payment of dividleds (2,0
	Net cash used in financing activities (2,5
	Net decrease in cash (8
	Cash, beginning of the year 10,4
	Cash, end of the year \$ 9,6

The statement of cash flows is the most difficult statement to prepare. It requires management to:

- Identify non-cash items in the income statement and understand their effects on net income
- Use the prior-period balance sheet to determine how operating assets and liabilities have changed from the prior period to the current period
- Obtain and understand information about cash transactions occurring during the period that are not reported on the income statement
- Understand the difference between operating activities, investing activities, and financing activities

The statement of cash flows describes how cash has changed from the prior period to the current period and segregates those changes among three activity categories: operating activities, investing activities, and financing activities.

The end result – cash, end of year – should match the amount on the period-end balance sheet.

Most accounting applications are able to prepare a statement of cash flows for you automatically. However, there may be some "cash flow mappings" that are required for the application to categorize the cash transactions properly among operating, investing, and financing activities.

	The Fake Company Statement of Changes in Owners' Equity For the Year Ended December 31, 2014								
Statement of Changes		Common Stock		Additional Paid In Captial		Retained Earnings		Total	
in Owners' Equity	Beginning balance	\$	1,000	\$	950	\$	13,268	\$	15,218
	Net income Dividends		<b>5</b> 1				5,049		5,049
	Ending balance	\$	1,000	\$	950	\$	(2,000)	\$	18,267
		A STATE				N BI	Take !		

Once all the other statements have been prepared, the statement of owners' equity is relatively easy to prepare.

The statement of changes in owners' equity describes how the different components of equity have changed from the prior period to the current period. By contrast, the income statement describes how equity has changed only as a result of operating and non-operating activities (revenue, expenses, and other revenue and expenses). The statement of owners' equity, though, includes other changes to equity components – like proceeds from contributions to equity, payments of dividends, conversions of equity components (e.g., from preferred stock to common stock), and changes in other comprehensive income.

To prepare it properly, management will need to:

- Obtain beginning balances for each equity component from the prior period's balance sheet
- Obtain and understand information about cash transactions occurring during the period that affect equity components.
- Understand the differences between each of the components.

						The Fake Company Post Closing Trial Bala		
		The Fake Company				As of December 31, 2		
		General Journal						
			Debit		Account a	# Account Cash	Debit 9.620	Credit
Date 12/31/14	Account #	Account Product sales	59,620	Credit	110	Accounts receivable	830	
12/31/14		Product sales Product purchases	59,620	18,030	111	Allowance for doubtful accounts	030	150
12/31/14		Selling expenses		8.500	130	Inventory	5,450	130
12/31/14		Bad debt expense		30	140	Prepaid expenses	600	
12/31/14		Depreciation expense		266	150	Property, plant, and equipment	26,600	
12/31/14		Rent		12,000	155	Accumulated depreciation	8000 \$100 0000	2,926
12/31/14		Insurance		1,800	200	Accounts payable		1,306
12/31/14		Interest		1,825	210	Accrued wages		380
12/31/14		Supplies		636	220	Accrued interest		1,825
12/31/14		Utilities		1,244	250	Current portion of long-term debt		912
12/31/14		Wages		10,240	280	Long-term debt		17,334
12/31/14	350	Retained earnings		5,049	300	Common stock		1,000
	To close ter	mporary accounts to retained earnings	for the period.		310	Additional paid in capital		950
			Phillips Token New		350	Retained earnings		16,317
							43,100	43,100

The final step in the Financial Close and Reporting processes is to close the books for the period.

This is accomplished by preparing one final general journal entry, called the *closing entry*, to zero out all of the temporary accounts (by posting debits or credits to those accounts that are equal to and opposite of their final trial balance amounts) and recording the net difference to the appropriate equity account.

In the example above, notice that the revenue account is being *debited* for \$59,620 which will, when posted the ledger account, zero out the revenue account. Likewise, the expense accounts are being *credited* each in the amount of their final trial balance amounts. When posted to the ledger accounts, these will zero out the expense accounts. And, finally, notice that the net difference between the revenue and expense accounts (\$5,049, the net income for the period) is being credited to the Retained Earnings account (and, thus, increasing it in the ledger from its final trial balance amount).

Once the closing journal entry is posted to the ledger, a Post Closing Trial Balance is created. Notice that it only contains permanent (balance sheet) accounts. These balances will carry forward into the new period. The temporary (income statement) accounts are essentially re-set to zero so that activity for the new period can be recorded in them.

Accounting applications perform this journal entry automatically as part of the software's closing process.

# Other Items to Consider

### **Interim Financial Close and Reporting**

Many organizations only close their books once a year, even though economic decisions with respect to the organization are made throughout the year. Preparing financial statements *without* performing adjusting entries results in statements that do not faithfully represent the activities and economic condition of the organization.

Performing interim closes (e.g., every month or every quarter) provides decision-makers with decision-useful reports in a timelier manner. For example, operating budgets are often prepared well before the end of the fiscal period, so that they can be considered and decided upon. If decision-makers are using financial reports that don't faithfully represent economic reality, it's possible that they may make a decision that they would not have otherwise made.

### Management's Responsibility

The realities of small and medium sized organizations is that senior management often lacks the training or expertise to adequately understand the financial close and reporting processes. Instead, they either rely on their subordinates or on external parties, like independent auditors, to perform the procedures for them. The problem with this approach is that, despite other parties performing the procedures, **responsibility remains with management**. If management doesn't understand the processes, estimates, judgments, and calculations that go into closing the books and preparing the financial statements, they run the risk of fraud or other misstatements going undetected and still being held responsible for them.

To be a responsible manager, it's imperative to learn and fully understand these processes as part of the job.

### **Adjusting Journal Entries Procedures**

### <<Account Being Adjusted>>

Description In this space, describe why the account is likely to be adjusted, the

accounting rationale for the adjustment, the information that needs to be collected, the source of the information, and how the information should be

analyzed.

Assigned To In this space, name the person or position authorized to collect the required

information and perform the analysis to arrive at the adjustment amount.

Documentation In this space, describe what documents need to be maintained on file to

support the adjusting journal entry.

Standard DR/CR In this space, provide details about which accounts will be debited and which

accounts will be credited to properly post the adjustment.

Reviewer In this space, name the person or position authorized to review the supporting

documentation, estimates, judgments, and calculations, and to authorize the posting of the adjusting journal entries. This should not be the same person

to whom the analysis is assigned.

Recorder In this space, name the person or position authorized to journalize and post

the adjusting journal entry to the books. This should not be the same person

who reviews and approves the journal entries.

*Post-Reviewer* In this space, name the person or position authorized to verify that the journal

entry was posted correctly. This should not be the same person who journalizes and posts the entry. This is usually the same person as the

Reviewer, but doesn't have to be.

Deadlines In this space, provide deadlines for any portion of the procedure (e.g., date

that collection and analysis must be completed by, date that review must be completed by, etc.), or for the entire procedure to be complete. Deadlines are normally described in number of business days after the fiscal period end.

For example, Day 3 would be three day after fiscal period end.

Prepare one of these for every account that normally needs adjusting at year end. Review it with the responsible parties and ensure they understand their responsibilities. Maintain these on file.

### **Adjusting Journal Entries Procedures Example**

### **Allowance for Doubtful Accounts**

Description

Allowance for doubtful accounts is a contra-asset that offsets the accounts receivable account in the financial statements to ensure that accounts receivable is reported at it appropriate value, which is the amount that management *reasonably* expects to collect on outstanding receivable – also known as *net realizable value*.

Fake Company estimates the allowance using the balance sheet method (or, percentage of outstanding receivables method). Under this method, individual outstanding customer accounts at period end are categorized based on age (0-30) days outstanding, 31-60 days, 61-90 days, and 91 days or older). An estimated collection rate for each age category is assigned based on experience with our customers under our current credit policies. The then multiplied by the total of each category. The sum of these products is the amount that management reasonably expects to collect on outstanding receivables. The difference between this amount and the accounts receivable balance is the allowance for doubtful accounts. See the attached example.

Compare the amount calculated for the allowance for doubtful accounts with the unadjusted balance for the allowance for doubtful accounts. If there is a difference between the two, an adjustment should be posted.

Obtain the aging receivables report from Apex Accounting Software. In the main screen, select Reports > Customers > Aging Receivables Report. Ensure that the report date is as of the period end, December 31, 20XX.

Obtain the aging category percentages from historical collection data maintained in the AR/AP Clerk's office.

Assigned To Harry Burns, AR/AP Clerk

Documentation The aging report, support for the aging category percentages data, and the

calculations performed.

Standard DR/CR If the calculated allowance is less than the unadjusted balance, the journal entry will

be: DR Allowance for Doubtful Accounts / CR Bad Debts Expense

If the calculated allowance is greater than the unadjusted balance, the journal entry

will be: DR Bad Debts Expense / CR Allowance for Doubtful Accounts

Reviewer Sally J. Albright, CFO

Recorder Harry Burns, AR/AP Clerk

Post-Reviewer Sally Albright, CFO

Deadlines Collection and Analysis: +3

Review: +5 Recording: +6 Post-Review: +7

### **Allowance for Doubtful Accounts Calculation Example**

### Accounts Receivable Aging Summary As of December 31, 2011

Vendor	0 - 30	31 – 60	61 – 90	90 >	Total		
Acme Co	\$ 6,212	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,212		
Jim's Supplies	-	250	250	=	500		
Jack and Jill Catering	-	1,650	_	200	1,850		
Mary Contrary, Inc.	1,250	500	_	-	1,750		
Opie's Playhouse	-	-	-	2,250	2,250		
Yellow Belly Candies	-	-	300	300	600		
Zenith Appliances	4,220	<del>_</del>	600	<u>-</u> _	4,820		
Totals	11,682	2,400	1,150	2,750	17,982		
Historical Collection Rates	95%	<u>75%</u>	<u>40%</u>	<u> 10%</u>			
Net Realizable Value	<u>\$ 11,098</u>	<u>\$ 1,800</u>	<u>\$ 460</u>	<u>\$ 275</u>	13,633		
Allowance for Doubtful Accounts, as of December 31, 2011							
Allowance for Doubtful Acc	ounts, unadjust	ed balance			2,945		
Adjustment required, Credit	(Debit)				<u>\$ 1,404</u>		

Marchy Swins, Or 7001 Cook	1/3/2012
-	
Sally G. Albright, CFO	1/5/12
	Harry Burns, AR/AP Olerk  Sally G. Albright, C'FO