


Truth in Lending Act

Background and Summary

The Truth in Lending Act (TILA), 15 USC 1601 et seq., was enacted on May 29, 1968, as title I of the Consumer Credit Protection Act (Pub. L. 90-321). The TILA, implemented by Regulation Z (12 CFR 226), became effective July 1, 1969.

The TILA was first amended in 1970 to prohibit unsolicited credit cards. Additional major amendments to the TILA and Regulation Z were made by the Fair Credit Billing Act of 1974, the Consumer Leasing Act of 1976, the Truth in Lending Simplification and Reform Act of 1980, the Fair Credit and Charge Card Disclosure Act of 1988, and the Home Equity Loan Consumer Protection Act of 1988.

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Regulation Z also was amended to implement section 1204 of the Competitive Equality Banking Act of 1987 and, in 1988, to include adjustable rate mortgage loan disclosure requirements. All consumer leasing provisions were deleted from Regulation Z in 1981 and transferred to Regulation M (12 CFR 213).

The Home Ownership and Equity Protection Act of 1994 amended TILA. The law imposed new disclosure requirements and substantive limitations on certain closed-end mortgage loans bearing rates or fees above a certain percentage or amount. The law also included new disclosure requirements to assist consumers in comparing the costs and other material considerations involved in a reverse mortgage transaction and authorized the Federal Reserve Board to prohibit specific acts and practices in connection with mortgage transactions. Regulation Z was amended¹ to implement these legislative changes to TILA.

The TILA amendments of 1995 dealt primarily with tolerances for real estate secured credit. Regulation Z was amended on September 14, 1996 to incorporate changes to the TILA. Specifically, the revisions limit lenders' liability for disclosure errors in real estate secured loans consummated after September 30, 1995. The Economic Growth and Regulatory Paperwork Reduction Act of 1996 further amended TILA. The amendments were made to simplify and improve disclosures related to credit transactions.



Approved – FFIEC

¹ 60 FR 15463, March 24, 1995 and 66 FR 65604, December 20, 2001.

Format of Regulation Z

The disclosure rules creditors must follow differ depending on whether the creditor is offering open-end credit, such as credit cards or home-equity lines, or closed-end credit, such as car loans or mortgages.

Subpart A (sections 226.1 through 226.4) of the regulation provides general information that applies to open-end and closed-end credit transactions. It sets forth definitions and stipulates which transactions are covered and which are exempt from the regulation. It also contains the rules for determining which fees are finance charges.

Subpart B (sections 226.5 through 226.16) of the regulation contains rules for disclosures for home-equity loans, credit and charge card accounts, and other open-end credit.

Subpart B also covers rules for resolving billing errors, calculating annual percentage rates, credit balances, and advertising open-end credit. Special rules apply to credit card transactions only, such as certain prohibitions on the issuance of credit cards and restrictions on the right to offset a cardholder's indebtedness. Additional special rules apply to home-equity lines of credit, such as certain prohibitions against closing accounts or changing account terms.

Subpart C (sections 226.17 through 226.24) includes provisions for closed-end credit. Residential mortgage transactions, demand loans, and installment credit contracts, including direct loans by banks and purchased dealer paper, are included in the closed-end credit category. Subpart C also contains disclosure rules for regular and variable rate loans, refinancings and assumptions, credit balances, calculating annual percentage rates, and advertising closed-end credit.

Subpart D (sections 226.25 through 226.30), which applies to both open-end and closed-end credit, sets forth the duty of creditors to retain evidence of compliance with the regulation. It also clarifies the relationship between the regulation and state law, and requires creditors to set a cap for variable rate transactions secured by a consumer's dwelling.

Subpart E (sections 226.31 through 226.34) applies to certain home mortgage transactions including high-cost, closed-end mortgages and reverse mortgages. It requires additional disclosures and provides limitations for certain home mortgage transactions having rates or fees above a certain percentage or amount, and prohibits specific acts and practices in connection with those loans. Subpart E also includes disclosure requirements for reverse mortgage transactions (open-end and closed-end credit).

The appendices to the regulation set forth model forms and clauses that creditors may use when providing open-end and closed-end disclosures. The appendices contain detailed rules for calculating the APR for open-end credit (appendix F) and closed-end credit (appendixes D and J). The last two appendixes (appendixes K and L) provide total annual loan cost rate computations and assumed loan periods for reverse mortgage transactions.

Official staff interpretations of the regulation are published in a commentary that is normally updated annually in March. Good faith compliance with the commentary protects creditors from civil liability under the act. In addition, the commentary includes mandates, which are not necessarily explicit in Regulation Z, on disclosures or other actions required of creditors. It is virtually impossible to comply with Regulation Z without reference to and reliance on the commentary.

Note: The following narrative does not encompass all the sections of Regulation Z, but rather highlights areas that have caused the most problems with the calculation of the finance charge and the calculation of the annual percentage rate.

SUBPART A - GENERAL

Purpose of the TILA and Regulation Z

The Truth in Lending Act is intended to ensure that credit terms are disclosed in a meaningful way so consumers can compare credit terms more readily and knowledgeably. Before its enactment, consumers were faced with a bewildering array of credit terms and rates. It was difficult to compare loans because they were seldom presented in the same format. Now, all creditors must use the same credit terminology and expressions of rates. In addition to providing a uniform system for disclosures, the act is designed to:

- Protect consumers against inaccurate and unfair credit billing and credit card practices;
- Provide consumers with rescission rights;
- Provide for rate caps on certain dwelling-secured loans; and
- Impose limitations on home equity lines of credit and certain closed-end home mortgages.

The TILA and Regulation Z do not, however, tell financial institutions how much interest they may charge or whether they must grant a consumer a loan.

Summary of Coverage Considerations §226.1 & §226.2

Lenders must carefully consider several factors when deciding whether a loan requires Truth in Lending disclosures or is subject to other Regulation Z requirements. The coverage considerations under Regulation Z are addressed in more detail in the commentary to Regulation Z. For example, broad coverage considerations are included under section 226.1(c) of the regulation and relevant definitions appear in section 226.2.

Exempt Transactions §226.3

The following transactions are exempt from Regulation Z:

- Credit extended primarily for a business, commercial, or agricultural purpose;
- Credit extended to other than a natural person (including credit to government agencies or instrumentalities);
- Credit in excess of \$25,000 and not secured by real or personal property used as the principal dwelling of the consumer;
- Public utility credit;
- Credit extended by a broker-dealer registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) or the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC), involving securities or commodities accounts;
- Home fuel budget plans; and
- Certain student loan programs.

Footnote 4: If a credit card is involved, generally exempt credit (e.g., business or agricultural purpose credit) is still subject to requirements that govern the issuance of credit cards and liability for their unauthorized use. Credit cards must not be issued on an unsolicited basis and, if a credit card is lost or stolen, the cardholder must not be held liable for more than \$50 for the unauthorized use of the card.

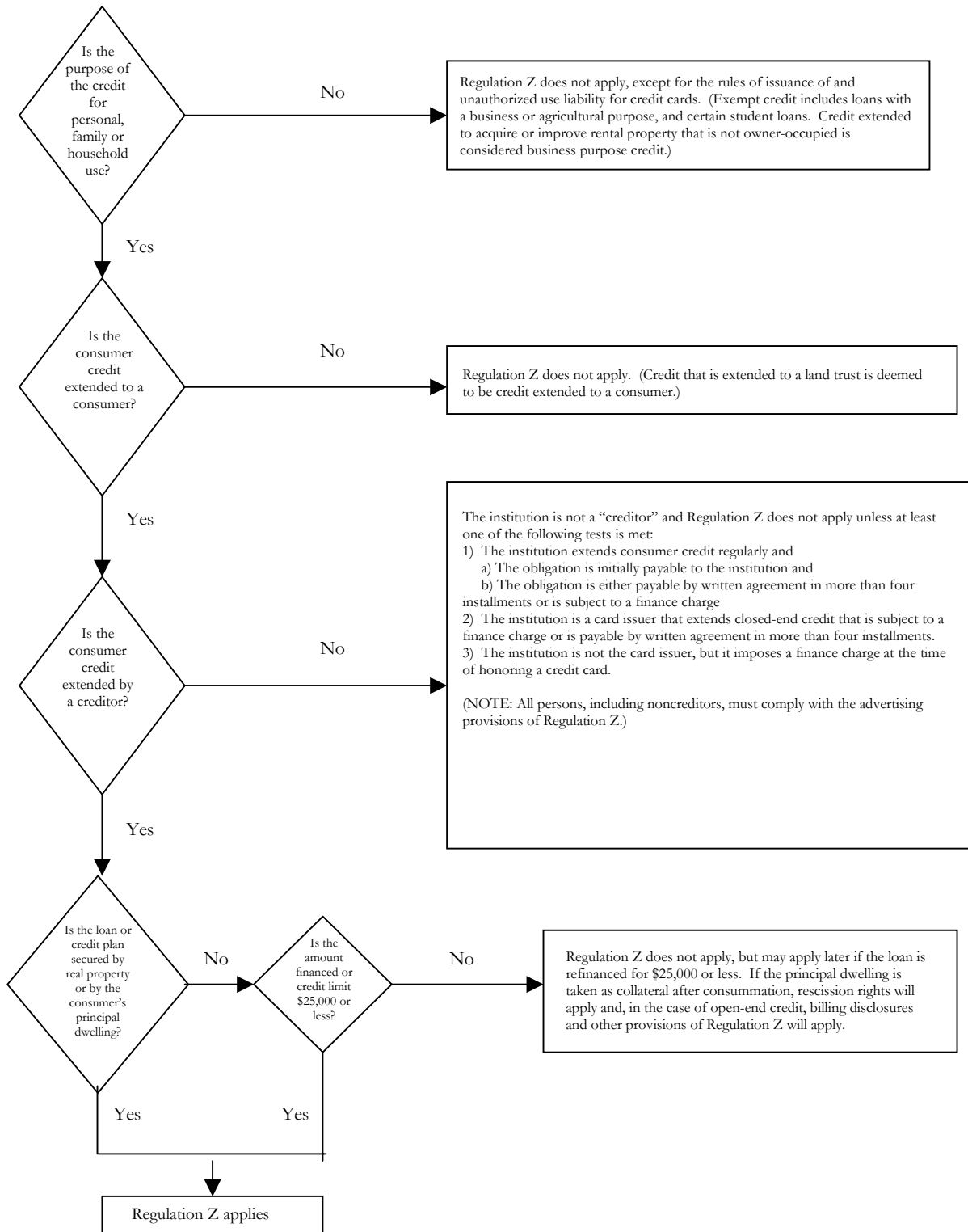
When determining whether credit is for consumer purposes, the creditor must evaluate all of the following:

- Any statement obtained from the consumer describing the purpose of the proceeds.
 - For example, a statement that the proceeds will be used for a vacation trip would indicate a consumer purpose.
 - If the loan has a mixed-purpose (e.g., proceeds will be used to buy a car that will be used for personal and business purposes), the lender must look to the primary purpose of the loan to decide whether disclosures are necessary. A statement of purpose from the consumer will help the lender make that decision.
 - A checked box indicating that the loan is for a business purpose, absent any documentation showing the intended use of the proceeds, could be insufficient evidence that the loan did not have a consumer purpose.

- The consumer's primary occupation and how it relates to the use of the proceeds. The higher the correlation between the consumer's occupation and the property purchased from the loan proceeds, the greater the likelihood that the loan has a business purpose. For example, proceeds used to purchase dental supplies for a dentist would indicate a business purpose.
- Personal management of the assets purchased from proceeds. The lower the degree of the borrower's personal involvement in the management of the investment or enterprise purchased by the loan proceeds, the less likely the loan will have a business purpose. For example, money borrowed to purchase stock in an automobile company by an individual who does not work for that company would indicate a personal investment and a consumer purpose.
- The size of the transaction. The larger the size of the transaction, the more likely the loan will have a business purpose. For example, if the loan is for a \$5,000,000 real estate transaction, that might indicate a business purpose.
- The amount of income derived from the property acquired by the loan proceeds relative to the borrower's total income. The lesser the income derived from the acquired property, the more likely the loan will have a consumer purpose. For example, if the borrower has an annual salary of \$100,000 and receives about \$500 in annual dividends from the acquired property, that would indicate a consumer purpose.

All five factors must be evaluated before the lender can conclude that disclosures are not necessary. Normally, no one factor, by itself, is sufficient reason to determine the applicability of Regulation Z. In any event, the financial institution may routinely furnish disclosures to the consumer. Disclosure under such circumstances does not control whether the transaction is covered, but can assure protection to the financial institution and compliance with the law.

Coverage Considerations under Regulation Z



DETERMINATION OF FINANCE CHARGE AND APR

Finance Charge (Open-End and Closed-End Credit) §226.4

The finance charge is a measure of the cost of consumer credit represented in dollars and cents. Along with APR disclosures, the disclosure of the finance charge is central to the uniform credit cost disclosure envisioned by the TILA.

The finance charge does not include any charge of a type payable in a comparable cash transaction. Examples of charges payable in a comparable cash transaction may include taxes, title, license fees, or registration fees paid in connection with an automobile purchase.

Finance charges include any charges or fees payable directly or indirectly by the consumer and imposed directly or indirectly by the financial institution either as an incident to or as a condition of an extension of consumer credit. The finance charge on a loan always includes any interest charges and often, other charges. Regulation Z includes examples, applicable both to open-end and closed-end credit transactions, of what must, must not, or need not be included in the disclosed finance charge (§226.4(b)).

Accuracy Tolerances (Closed-End Credit) §§226.18(d) & 226.23(h)

Regulation Z provides finance charge tolerances for legal accuracy that should not be confused with those provided in the TILA for reimbursement under regulatory agency orders. As with disclosed APRs, if a disclosed finance charge were legally accurate, it would not be subject to reimbursement.

Under TILA and Regulation Z, finance charge disclosures for open-end credit must be accurate since there is no tolerance for finance charge errors. However, both TILA and Regulation Z permit various finance charge accuracy tolerances for closed-end credit.

Tolerances for the finance charge in a closed-end transaction are generally \$5 if the amount financed is less than or equal to \$1,000 and \$10 if the amount financed exceeds \$1,000. Tolerances for certain transactions consummated on or after September 30, 1995 are noted below.

- Credit secured by real property or a dwelling (**closed-end credit only**):
 - The disclosed finance charge is considered accurate if it does not vary from the actual finance charge by more than \$100.
 - Overstatements are not violations.
- Rescission rights after the three-business-day rescission period (**closed-end credit only**):

- The disclosed finance charge is considered accurate if it does not vary from the actual finance charge by more than one-half of 1 percent of the credit extended.
- The disclosed finance charge is considered accurate if it does not vary from the actual finance charge by more than 1 percent of the credit extended for the initial and subsequent refinancings of residential mortgage transactions when the new loan is made at a different financial institution. (This excludes high cost mortgage loans subject to §226.32, transactions in which there are new advances, and new consolidations.)
- Rescission rights in foreclosure:
 - The disclosed finance charge is considered accurate if it does not vary from the actual finance charge by more than \$35.
 - Overstatements are not considered violations.
 - The consumer can rescind if a mortgage broker fee is not included as a finance charge.

Note: Normally, the finance charge tolerance for a rescindable transaction is either 0.5 percent of the credit transaction or, for certain refinancings, 1 percent of the credit transaction. However, in the event of a foreclosure, the consumer may exercise the right of rescission if the disclosed finance charge is understated by more than \$35.

See the “Finance Charge Tolerances” charts within these examination procedures for help in determining appropriate finance charge tolerances.

Calculating the Finance Charge (Closed-End Credit)

One of the more complex tasks under Regulation Z is determining whether a charge associated with an extension of credit must be included in, or excluded from, the disclosed finance charge. The finance charge initially includes any charge that is, or will be, connected with a specific loan. Charges imposed by third parties are finance charges if the financial institution requires use of the third party. Charges imposed by settlement or closing agents are finance charges if the bank requires the specific service that gave rise to the charge and the charge is not otherwise excluded. The “Finance Charge Tolerances” charts within this document briefly summarize the rules that must be considered.

Prepaid Finance Charges §226.18(b)

A prepaid finance charge is any finance charge paid separately to the financial institution or to a third party, in cash or by check before or at closing, settlement, or consummation of a transaction, or withheld from the proceeds of the credit at any time.

Prepaid finance charges effectively reduce the amount of funds available for the consumer's use, usually before or at the time the transaction is consummated.

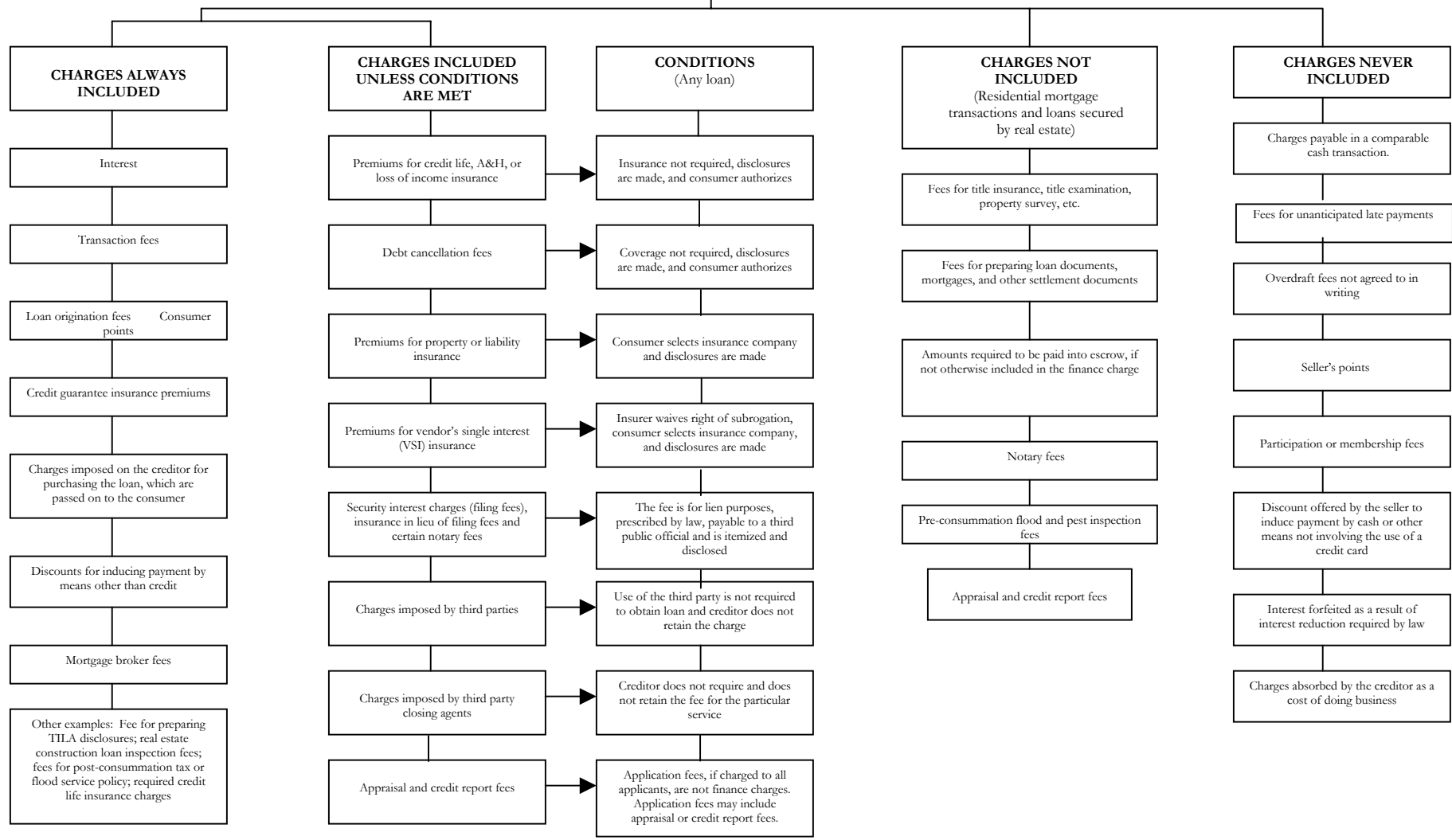
Examples of finance charges frequently prepaid by consumers are borrower's points, loan origination fees, real estate construction inspection fees, odd days' interest (interest attributable to part of the first payment period when that period is longer than a regular payment period), mortgage guarantee insurance fees paid to the Federal Housing Administration, private mortgage insurance (PMI) paid to such companies as the Mortgage Guaranty Insurance Company (MGIC), and, in non-real-estate transactions, credit report fees.

Precomputed Finance Charges

A precomputed finance charge includes, for example, interest added to the note amount that is computed by the add-on, discount, or simple interest methods. If reflected in the face amount of the debt instrument as part of the consumer's obligation, finance charges that are not viewed as prepaid finance charges are treated as precomputed finance charges that are earned over the life of the loan.

Finance Charge Chart

FINANCE CHARGE = DOLLAR COST OF CONSUMER CREDIT: It includes any charge payable directly or indirectly by the consumer and imposed directly or indirectly by the creditor as a condition of or incident to the extension of credit.



Instructions for the Finance Charge Chart

The finance charge initially includes any charge that is, or will be, connected with a specific loan. Charges imposed by third parties are finance charges if the creditor requires use of the third party. Charges imposed on the consumer by a settlement agent are finance charges only if the creditor requires the particular services for which the **settlement agent** is charging the borrower and the charge is not otherwise excluded from the finance charge.

Immediately below the finance charge definition, the chart presents five captions applicable to determining whether a loan related charge is a finance charge.

The first caption is **charges always included**. This category focuses on specific charges given in the regulation or commentary as examples of finance charges.

The second caption, **charges included unless conditions are met**, focuses on charges that must be included in the finance charge unless the creditor meets specific disclosure or other conditions to exclude the charges from the finance charge.

The third caption, **conditions**, focuses on the conditions that need to be met if the charges identified to the left of the conditions are permitted to be excluded from the finance charge. Although most charges under the second caption may be included in the finance charge at the creditor's option, third party charges and application fees (listed last under the third caption) must be excluded from the finance charge if the relevant conditions are met. However, inclusion of appraisal and credit report charges as part of the application fee is optional.

The fourth caption, **charges not included**, identifies fees or charges that are not included in the finance charge under conditions identified by the caption. If the credit transaction is secured by real property or the loan is a residential mortgage transaction, the charges identified in the column, if they are bona fide and reasonable in amount, must be excluded from the finance charge. For example, if a consumer loan is secured by a vacant lot or commercial real estate, any appraisal fees connected with the loan must not be included in the finance charge.

The fifth caption, **charges never included**, lists specific charges provided by the regulation as examples of those that automatically are not finance charges (e.g., fees for unanticipated late payments).

Annual Percentage Rate Definition §226.22 (Closed-End Credit)

Credit costs may vary depending on the interest rate, the amount of the loan and other charges, the timing and amounts of advances, and the repayment schedule. The APR, which must be disclosed in nearly all consumer credit transactions, is designed to take into account all relevant factors and to provide a uniform measure for comparing the cost of various credit transactions.

The APR is a measure of the cost of credit, expressed as a nominal yearly rate. It relates the amount and timing of value received by the consumer to the amount and timing of payments made. The disclosure of the APR is central to the uniform credit cost disclosure envisioned by the TILA.

The value of a closed-end credit APR must be disclosed as a single rate only, whether the loan has a single interest rate, a variable interest rate, a discounted variable interest rate, or graduated payments based on separate interest rates (step rates), and it must appear with the segregated disclosures. Segregated disclosures are grouped together and do not contain any information not directly related to the disclosures required under §226.18.

Since an APR measures the total cost of credit, including costs such as transaction charges or premiums for credit guarantee insurance, it is not an “interest” rate, as that term is generally used. APR calculations do not rely on definitions of interest in state law and often include charges, such as a commitment fee paid by the consumer, that are not viewed by some state usury statutes as interest. Conversely, an APR might not include a charge, such as a credit report fee in a real property transaction, which some state laws might view as interest for usury purposes. Furthermore, measuring the timing of value received and of payments made, which is essential if APR calculations are to be accurate, must be consistent with parameters under Regulation Z.

The APR is often considered to be the finance charge expressed as a percentage. However, two loans could require the same finance charge and still have different APRs because of differing values of the amount financed or of payment schedules. For example, the APR is 12 percent on a loan with an amount financed of \$5,000 and 36 equal monthly payments of \$166.07 each. It is 13.26 percent on a loan with an amount financed of \$4,500 and 35 equal monthly payments of \$152.18 each and final payment of \$152.22. In both cases the finance charge is \$978.52. The APRs on these example loans are not the same because an APR does not only reflect the finance charge. It relates the amount and timing of value received by the consumer to the amount and timing of payments made.

The APR is a function of:

- The amount financed, which is not necessarily equivalent to the loan amount. If the consumer must pay at closing a separate 1 percent loan origination fee (prepaid finance charge) on a \$100,000 residential mortgage loan, the loan amount is \$100,000, but the amount financed would be \$100,000 less the \$1,000 loan fee, or \$99,000.
- The finance charge, which is not necessarily equivalent to the total interest amount.
 - If the consumer must pay a \$25 credit report fee for an auto loan, the fee must be included in the finance charge. The finance charge in that case is the sum of the interest on the loan (i.e., interest generated by the application of a percentage rate against the loan amount) plus the \$25 credit report fee.

- If the consumer must pay a \$25 credit report fee for a home improvement loan secured by real property, the credit report fee must be excluded from the finance charge. The finance charge in that case would be only the interest on the loan.
- Interest, which is defined by state or other federal law, is not defined by Regulation Z.
- The payment schedule, which does not necessarily include only principal and interest (P + I) payments.
 - If the consumer borrows \$2,500 for a vacation trip at 14 percent simple interest per annum and repays that amount with 25 equal monthly payments beginning one month from consummation of the transaction, the monthly P + I payment will be \$115.87, if all months are considered equal, and the amount financed would be \$2,500. If the consumer's payments are increased by \$2.00 a month to pay a non-financed \$50 loan fee during the life of the loan, the amount financed would remain at \$2,500 but the payment schedule would be increased to \$117.87 a month, the finance charge would increase by \$50, and there would be a corresponding increase in the APR. This would be the case whether or not state law defines the \$50 loan fee as interest.
 - If the loan above has 55 days to the first payment and the consumer prepays interest at consummation (\$24.31 to cover the first 25 days), the amount financed would be \$2,500 - \$24.31, or \$2,475.69. Although the amount financed has been reduced to reflect the consumer's reduced use of available funds at consummation, the time interval during which the consumer has use of the \$2,475.69, 55 days to the first payment, has not changed. Since the first payment period exceeds the limitations of the regulation's minor irregularities provisions (see §226.17(c)(4)), it may not be treated as regular. In calculating the APR, the first payment period must not be reduced by 25 days (i.e., the first payment period may not be treated as one month).

Financial institutions may, if permitted by state or other law, precompute interest by applying a rate against a loan balance using a simple interest, add-on, discount or some other method, and may earn interest using a simple interest accrual system, the Rule of 78's (if permitted by law) or some other method. Unless the financial institution's internal interest earnings and accrual methods involve a simple interest rate based on a 360-day year that is applied over actual days (even that is important only for determining the accuracy of the payment schedule), it is not relevant in calculating an APR, since an APR is not an interest rate (as that term is commonly used under state or other law). Since the APR normally need not rely on the internal accrual systems of a bank, it always may be computed after the loan terms have been agreed upon (as long as it is disclosed before actual consummation of the transaction).

Special Requirements for Calculating the Finance Charge and APR

Proper calculation of the finance charge and APR are of primary importance. The regulation requires that the terms “finance charge” and “annual percentage rate” be disclosed more conspicuously than any other required disclosure. The finance charge and APR, more than any other disclosures, enable consumers to understand the cost of the credit and to comparison shop for credit. A creditor’s failure to disclose those values accurately can result in significant monetary damages to the creditor, either from a class action lawsuit or from a regulatory agency’s order to reimburse consumers for violations of law.

Footnote 45d: If an annual percentage rate or finance charge is disclosed incorrectly, the error is not, in itself, a violation of the regulation if:

- The error resulted from a corresponding error in a calculation tool **used in good faith** by the financial institution.
- Upon discovery of the error, the financial institution promptly discontinues use of that calculation tool for disclosure purposes.
- The financial institution notifies the Federal Reserve Board in writing of the error in the calculation tool.

When a financial institution claims a calculation tool was used in good faith, the financial institution assumes a reasonable degree of responsibility for ensuring that the tool in question provides the accuracy required by the regulation. For example, the financial institution might verify the results obtained using the tool by comparing those results to the figures obtained by using another calculation tool. The financial institution might also verify that the tool, if it is designed to operate under the actuarial method, produces figures similar to those provided by the examples in appendix J to the regulation. The calculation tool should be checked for accuracy before it is first used and periodically thereafter.

SUBPART B - OPEN-END CREDIT

The following is not a complete discussion of the open-end credit requirements in the Truth in Lending Act. Instead, the information provided below is offered to clarify otherwise confusing terms and requirements. Refer to §§226.5 through 226.16 and related commentary for a more thorough understanding of the Act.

Finance Charge (Open-End Credit) §226.6(a)

Each finance charge imposed must be individually itemized. The aggregate total amount of the finance charge need not be disclosed.

Determining the Balance and Computing the Finance Charge

The examiner must know how to compute the balance to which the periodic rate is applied. Common methods used are the previous balance method, the daily balance method, and the average daily balance method, which are described as follows:

- Previous balance method – The balance on which the periodic finance charge is computed is based on the balance outstanding at the start of the billing cycle. The periodic rate is multiplied by this balance to compute the finance charge.
- Daily balance method – A daily periodic rate is applied to either the balance on each day in the cycle or the sum of the balances on each of the days in the cycle. If a daily periodic rate is multiplied by the balance on each day in the billing cycle, the finance charge is the sum of the products. If the daily periodic rate is multiplied by the sum of all the daily balances, the result is the finance charge.
- Average daily balance method – The average daily balance is the sum of the daily balances (either including or excluding current transactions) divided by the number of days in the billing cycle. A periodic rate is then multiplied by the average daily balance to determine the finance charge. If the periodic rate is a daily one, the product of the rate multiplied by the average balance is multiplied by the number of days in the cycle.

In addition to those common methods, financial institutions have other ways of calculating the balance to which the periodic rate is applied. By reading the financial institution's explanation, the examiner should be able to calculate the balance to which the periodic rate was applied. In some cases, the examiner may need to obtain additional information from the financial institution to verify the explanation disclosed. Any inability to understand the disclosed explanation should be discussed with management, who should be reminded of Regulation Z's requirement that disclosures be clear and conspicuous.

When a balance is determined without first deducting all credits and payments made during the billing cycle, that fact and the amount of the credits and payments must be disclosed.

If the financial institution uses the daily balance method and applies a single daily periodic rate, disclosure of the balance to which the rate was applied may be stated as any of the following:

- A balance for each day in the billing cycle. The daily periodic rate is multiplied by the balance on each day and the sum of the products is the finance charge.
- A balance for each day in the billing cycle on which the balance in the account changes. The finance charge is figured by the same method as discussed previously, but the statement shows the balance only for those days on which the balance changed.

- The sum of the daily balances during the billing cycle. The balance on which the finance charge is computed is the sum of all the daily balances in the billing cycle. The daily periodic rate is multiplied by that balance to determine the finance charge.
- The average daily balance during the billing cycle. If this is stated, however, the financial institution must explain somewhere on the periodic statement or in an accompanying document that the finance charge is or may be determined by multiplying the average daily balance by the number of days in the billing cycle, rather than by multiplying the product by the daily periodic rate.

If the financial institution uses the daily balance method, but applies two or more daily periodic rates, the sum of the daily balances may not be used. Acceptable ways of disclosing the balances include:

- A balance for each day in the billing cycle;
- A balance for each day in the billing cycle on which the balance in the account changes; or
- Two or more average daily balances. If the average daily balances are stated, the financial institution shall indicate on the periodic statement or in an accompanying document that the finance charge is or may be determined by multiplying each of the average daily balances by the number of days in the billing cycle (or if the daily rate varies, by multiplying the number of days that the applicable rate was in effect), multiplying each of the results by the applicable daily periodic rate, and adding the products together.

In explaining the method used to find the balance on which the finance charge is computed, the financial institution need not reveal how it allocates payments or credits. That information may be disclosed as additional information, but all required information must be clear and conspicuous.

Finance Charge Resulting from Two or More Periodic Rates

Some financial institutions use more than one periodic rate in computing the finance charge. For example, one rate may apply to balances up to a certain amount and another rate to balances more than that amount. If two or more periodic rates apply, the financial institution must disclose all rates and conditions. The range of balances to which each rate applies also must be disclosed. It is not necessary, however, to break the finance charge into separate components based on the different rates.

Annual Percentage Rate (Open-End Credit)

Accuracy Tolerance §226.14

The disclosed annual percentage rate (APR) on an open-end credit account is accurate if it is within one-eighth of 1 percentage point of the APR calculated under Regulation Z.

Determination of APR

The regulation states two basic methods for determining the APR in open-end credit transactions. The first involves multiplying each periodic rate by the number of periods in a year. This method is used for disclosing:

- The corresponding APR in the initial disclosures;
- The corresponding APR on periodic statements;
- The APR in early disclosures for credit card accounts;
- The APR in early disclosures for home-equity plans;
- The APR in advertising; and
- The APR in oral disclosures.

The corresponding APR is prospective. In other words, it does not involve any particular finance charge or periodic balance.

The second method is the quotient method, used in computing the APR for periodic statements. The quotient method reflects the annualized equivalent of the rate that was actually applied during a cycle. This rate, also known as the historical rate, will differ from the corresponding APR if the creditor applies minimum, fixed, or transaction charges to the account during the cycle.

If the finance charge is determined by applying one or more periodic rates to a balance, and does not include any of the charges just mentioned, the financial institution may compute the historical rate using the quotient method. In that method, the financial institution divides the total finance charge for the cycle by the sum of the balances to which the periodic rates were applied and multiplies the quotient (expressed as a percentage) by the number of cycles in a year.

Alternatively, the financial institution may use the method for computing the corresponding APR. In that method, the financial institution multiplies each periodic rate by the number of periods in one year. If the finance charge includes a minimum, fixed, or transaction charge, the financial institution must use the appropriate variation of the quotient method. When transaction charges are imposed, the financial institution should refer to appendix F of this handbook for computational examples.

The regulation also contains a computation rule for small finance charges. If the finance charge includes a minimum, fixed, or transaction charge, and the total finance charge for the cycle does not exceed 50 cents, the financial institution may multiply each applicable periodic rate by the number of periods in a year to compute the APR.

Optional calculation methods also are provided for accounts involving daily periodic rates (§226.14(d)).

Brief Outline for Open-End Credit APR Calculations on Periodic Statements

Note: Assume monthly billing cycles for each of the calculations below.

I. APR when finance charge is determined solely by applying one or more periodic rates:

A. Monthly periodic rates:

1. Monthly rate x 12 = APR

or

2. (Total finance charge / applicable balance²) x 12 = APR

This calculation may be used when different rates apply to different balances.

A. Daily periodic rates:

1. Daily rate x 365 = APR

or

2. (Total finance charge / average daily balance) x 12 = APR

or

3. (Total finance charge / sum of balances) x 365 = APR

II. APR when finance charge includes a minimum, fixed, or other charge that is not calculated using a periodic rate (and does not include charges related to a specific transaction, like cash advance fees):

A. Monthly periodic rates:

1. (Total finance charge / amount of applicable balance³) x 12 = APR⁴

B. Daily periodic rates

² If zero, no APR can be determined. The amount of applicable balance is the balance calculation method and may include the average daily balance, adjusted balance, or previous balance method.

³ If zero, no APR can be determined. The amount of applicable balance is the balance calculation method and may include the average daily balance, adjusted balance, or previous balance method.

⁴ Loan fees, points, or similar finance charges that relate to the opening of the account must not be included in the calculation of the APR.

1. $(\text{Total finance charge} / \text{amount of applicable balance}^1) \times 365 = \text{APR}^4$
2. The following may be used if at least a portion of the finance charge is determined by the application of a daily periodic rate. If not, use the formula above.
 - a. $(\text{Total finance charge} / \text{average daily balance}) \times 12 = \text{APR}^3$
or
 - b. $(\text{Total finance charge} / \text{sum of balances}) \times 365 = \text{APR}^3$

C. Monthly and daily periodic rates

1. If the finance charge imposed during the billing cycle does not exceed \$.50 for a monthly or longer billing cycles (or pro rata part of \$.50 for a billing cycle shorter than monthly), the APR may be calculated by multiplying the monthly rate by 12 or the daily rate by 365.

III. If the total finance charge included a charge related to a specific transaction (such as a cash advance fee), even if the total finance charge also included any other minimum, fixed, or other charge not calculated using a periodic rate, then the monthly and daily APRs are calculated as follows: $(\text{total finance charge} / \text{the greater of: the transaction amounts that created the transaction fees or the sum of the balances and other amounts on which a finance charge was imposed during the billing cycle}^5) \times \text{number of billing cycles in a year (12)} = \text{APR}^5$

SUBPART C - CLOSED-END CREDIT

The following is not a complete discussion of the closed-end credit requirements in the Truth in Lending Act. Instead, the information provided below is offered to clarify otherwise confusing terms and requirements. Refer to §§226.17 through 226.24 and related commentary for a more thorough understanding of the Act.

Finance Charge (Closed-End Credit) §226.17(a)

The aggregate total amount of the finance charge must be disclosed. Each finance charge imposed need not be individually itemized and must not be itemized with the segregated disclosures.

⁵ The sum of the balances may include the average daily balance, adjusted balance, or previous balance method. Where a portion of the finance charge is determined by application of one or more daily periodic rates, sum of the balances also means the average of daily balances.

⁵ Cannot be less than the highest periodic rate applied, expressed as an APR.

Annual Percentage Rate (Closed-End Credit) §226.22

Accuracy Tolerances

The disclosed APR on a closed-end transaction is accurate for:

- Regular transactions (which include any single advance transaction with equal payments and equal payment periods, or an irregular first payment period and/or a first or last irregular payment), if it is within one-eighth of 1 percentage point of the APR calculated under Regulation Z (§226.22(a)(2)).
- Irregular transactions (which include multiple advance transactions and other transactions not considered regular), if it is within one-quarter of 1 percentage point of the APR calculated under Regulation Z (§226.22(a)(3)).
- Mortgage transactions, if it is within one-eighth of 1 percentage point for regular transactions or one-quarter of 1 percentage point for irregular transactions **and**:
 - The rate results from the disclosed finance charge; **and**
 - The disclosed finance charge would be considered accurate under §§226.18(d)(1) or 226.23(g) or (h) (§226.22(a)(4)).

Note: There is an additional tolerance for mortgage loans when the disclosed finance charge is calculated incorrectly but is considered accurate under §§226.18(d)(1) or 226.23(g) or (h) (§226.22(a)(5)).

Construction Loans §226.17(c)(6) and Appendix D

Construction and certain other multiple advance loans pose special problems in computing the finance charge and APR. In many instances, the amount and dates of advances are not predictable with certainty since they depend on the progress of the work. Regulation Z provides that the APR and finance charge for such loans may be estimated for disclosure.

At its option, the financial institution may rely on the representations of other parties to acquire necessary information (for example, it might look to the consumer for the dates of advances). In addition, if either the amounts or dates of advances are unknown (even if some of them are known), the financial institution may, at its option, use appendix D to the regulation to make calculations and disclosures. The finance charge and payment schedule obtained through appendix D may be used with volume one of the Federal Reserve Board's APR tables or with any other appropriate computation tool to determine the APR. If the financial institution elects not to use appendix D, or if appendix D cannot be applied to a loan (e.g., appendix D does not apply to a combined construction-permanent loan if the payments for the permanent loan begin during the construction period), the financial institution must make its estimates under §226.17(c)(2) and calculate the APR using multiple advance formulas.

On loans involving a series of advances under an agreement to extend credit up to a certain amount, a financial institution may treat all of the advances as a single transaction or disclose each advance as a separate transaction. If advances are disclosed separately, disclosures must be provided before each advance occurs, with the disclosures for the first advance provided before consummation.

In a transaction that finances the construction of a dwelling that may or will be permanently financed by the same financial institution, the construction-permanent financing phases may be disclosed in one of three ways listed below.

- As a single transaction, with one disclosure combining both phases.
- As two separate transactions, with one disclosure for each phase.
- As more than two transactions, with one disclosure for each advance and one for the permanent financing phase.

If two or more disclosures are furnished, buyer's points or similar amounts imposed on the consumer may be allocated among the transactions in any manner the financial institution chooses, as long as the charges are not applied more than once. In addition, if the financial institution chooses to give two sets of disclosures and the consumer is obligated for both construction and permanent phases at the outset, both sets of disclosures must be given to the consumer initially, before consummation of each transaction occurs.

If the creditor requires interest reserves for construction loans, special appendix D rules apply that can make the disclosure calculations quite complicated. The amount of interest reserves included in the commitment amount must not be treated as a prepaid finance charge.

If the lender uses appendix D for construction-only loans with required interest reserves, the lender must estimate construction interest using the interest reserve formula in appendix D. The lender's own interest reserve values must be completely disregarded for disclosure purposes.

If the lender uses appendix D for combination construction-permanent loans, the calculations can be much more complex. Appendix D is used to estimate the construction interest, which is then measured against the lender's contractual interest reserves.

If the interest reserve portion of the lender's contractual commitment amount exceeds the amount of construction interest estimated under appendix D, the excess value is considered part of the amount financed if the lender has contracted to disburse those amounts whether they ultimately are needed to pay for accrued construction interest. If the lender will not disburse the excess amount if it is not needed to pay for accrued construction interest, the excess amount must be ignored for disclosure purposes.

Calculating the Annual Percentage Rate §226.22

The APR must be determined under one of the following:

- The actuarial method, which is defined by Regulation Z and explained in appendix J to the regulation.
- The U.S. Rule, which is permitted by Regulation Z and briefly explained in appendix J to the regulation. The U.S. Rule is an accrual method that seems to have first surfaced officially in an early nineteenth century United States Supreme Court case, *Story v. Livingston* (38 U.S. 359).

Whichever method is used by the financial institution, the rate calculated will be accurate if it is able to “amortize” the amount financed while it generates the finance charge under the accrual method selected. Financial institutions also may rely on minor irregularities and accuracy tolerances in the regulation, both of which effectively permit somewhat imprecise, but still legal, APRs to be disclosed.

360-Day and 365-Day Years §226.17(c)(3)

Confusion often arises over whether to use the 360-day or 365-day year in computing interest, particularly when the finance charge is computed by applying a daily rate to an unpaid balance. Many single payment loans or loans payable on demand are in this category. There are also loans in this category that call for periodic installment payments.

Regulation Z does not require the use of one method of interest computation in preference to another (although state law may). It does, however, permit financial institutions to disregard the fact that months have different numbers of days when calculating and making disclosures. This means financial institutions may base their disclosures on calculation tools that assume all months have an equal number of days, even if their practice is to take account of the variations in months to collect interest.

For example, a financial institution may calculate disclosures using a financial calculator based on a 360-day year with 30-day months, when, in fact, it collects interest by applying a factor of 1/365 of the annual interest rate to actual days.

Disclosure violations may occur, however, when a financial institution applies a daily interest factor based on a 360-day year to the actual number of days between payments. In those situations, the financial institution must disclose the higher values of the finance charge, the APR, and the payment schedule resulting from this practice.

For example, a 12 percent simple interest rate divided by 360 days results in a daily rate of .033333 percent. If no charges are imposed except interest, and the amount financed is the same as the loan amount, applying the daily rate on a daily basis for a 365-day year on a \$10,000 one year, single payment, unsecured loan results in an APR of 12.17 percent (.033333% x 365 = 12.17%), and a finance charge of \$1,216.67. There would be a violation if the APR were disclosed as 12 percent or if the finance charge were disclosed as \$1,200 (12% x \$10,000).

However, if there are no other charges except interest, the application of a 360-day year daily rate over 365 days on a regular loan would not result in an APR in excess of the one eighth of one percentage point APR tolerance unless the nominal interest rate is greater than 9 percent. For irregular loans, with one-quarter of 1 percentage point APR tolerance, the nominal interest rate would have to be greater than 18 percent to exceed the tolerance.

Variable Rate Information §226.18(f)

If the terms of the legal obligation allow the financial institution, after consummation of the transaction, to increase the APR, the financial institution must furnish the consumer with certain information on variable rates. Graduated payment mortgages and step-rate transactions without a variable rate feature are not considered variable rate transactions. In addition, variable rate disclosures are not applicable to rate increases resulting from delinquency, default, assumption, acceleration, or transfer of the collateral.

Some of the more important transaction-specific variable rate disclosure requirements under §226.18 follow.

- Disclosures for variable rate loans must be given for the full term of the transaction and must be based on the terms in effect at the time of consummation.
- If the variable rate transaction includes either a seller buydown that is reflected in a contract or a consumer buydown, the disclosed APR should be a composite rate based on the lower rate for the buydown period and the rate that is the basis for the variable rate feature for the remainder of the term.
- If the initial rate is not determined by the index or formula used to make later interest rate adjustments, as in a discounted variable rate transaction, the disclosed APR must reflect a composite rate based on the initial rate for as long as it is applied and, for the remainder of the term, the rate that would have been applied using the index or formula at the time of consummation (i.e., the fully indexed rate).
 - If a loan contains a rate or payment cap that would prevent the initial rate or payment, at the time of the adjustment, from changing to the fully indexed rate, the effect of that rate or payment cap needs to be reflected in the disclosures.
 - The index at consummation need not be used if the contract provides a delay in the implementation of changes in an index value (e.g., the contract indicates that future rate changes are based on the index value in effect for some specified period, like 45 days before the change date). Instead, the financial institution may use any rate from the date of consummation back to the beginning of the specified period (e.g., during the previous 45-day period).

- If the initial interest rate is set according to the index or formula used for later adjustments, but is set at a value as of a date before consummation, disclosures should be based on the initial interest rate, even though the index may have changed by the consummation date.

For variable-rate loans that are not secured by the consumer's principal dwelling or that are secured by the consumer's principal dwelling but have a term of one year or less, creditors must disclose the circumstances under which the rate may increase, any limitations on the increase, the effect of an increase, and an example of the payment terms that would result from an increase (§226.18(f)(1)).

For variable-rate consumer loans secured by the consumer's principal dwelling and having a maturity of more than one year, creditors must state that the loan has a variable-rate feature and that disclosures were previously given. (§226.18(f)(2)) Extensive disclosures about the loan program are provided when consumers apply for such a loan (§226.19(b), and throughout the loan term when the rate or payment amount is changed (§226.20(c)).

Payment Schedule §226.18(g)

The disclosed payment schedule must reflect all components of the finance charge. It includes all payments scheduled to repay loan principal, interest on the loan, and any other finance charge payable by the consumer after consummation of the transaction.

However, any finance charge paid separately before or at consummation (e.g., odd days' interest) is not part of the payment schedule. It is a prepaid finance charge that must be reflected as a reduction in the value of the amount financed.

At the creditor's option, the payment schedule may include amounts beyond the amount financed and finance charge (e.g., certain insurance premiums or real estate escrow amounts such as taxes added to payments). However, when calculating the APR, the creditor must disregard such amounts.

If the obligation is a renewable balloon payment instrument that unconditionally obligates the financial institution to renew the short-term loan at the consumer's option or to renew the loan subject to conditions within the consumer's control, the payment schedule must be disclosed using the longer term of the renewal period or periods. The long-term loan must be disclosed with a variable rate feature.

If there are no renewal conditions or if the financial institution guarantees to renew the obligation in a refinancing, the payment schedule must be disclosed using the shorter balloon payment term. The short-term loan must be disclosed as a fixed rate loan, unless it contains a variable rate feature during the initial loan term.

Amount Financed §226.18(b)

Definition

The amount financed is the net amount of credit extended for the consumer's use. It should not be assumed that the amount financed under the regulation is equivalent to the note amount, proceeds, or principal amount of the loan. The amount financed normally equals the total of payments less the finance charge.

To calculate the amount financed, all amounts and charges connected with the transaction, either paid separately or included in the note amount, must first be identified. Any prepaid, precomputed, or other finance charge must then be determined.

The amount financed must not include any finance charges. If finance charges have been included in the obligation (either prepaid or precomputed), they must be subtracted from the face amount of the obligation when determining the amount financed. The resulting value must be reduced further by an amount equal to any prepaid finance charge paid separately. The final resulting value is the amount financed.

When calculating the amount financed, finance charges (whether in the note amount or paid separately) should not be subtracted more than once from the total amount of an obligation. Charges not in the note amount and not included in the finance charge (e.g., an appraisal fee paid separately in cash on a real estate loan) are not required to be disclosed under Regulation Z and must not be included in the amount financed.

In a multiple advance construction loan, proceeds placed in a temporary escrow account and awaiting disbursement in draws to the developer are not considered part of the amount financed until actually disbursed. Thus, if the entire commitment amount is disbursed into the lender's escrow account, the lender must not base disclosures on the assumption that all funds were disbursed immediately, even if the lender pays interest on the escrowed funds.

Required Deposit §226.18(r)

A required deposit, with certain exceptions, is one that the financial institution requires the consumer to maintain as a condition of the specific credit transaction. It can include a compensating balance or a deposit balance that secures the loan. The effect of a required deposit is not reflected in the APR. Also, a required deposit is not a finance charge since it is eventually released to the consumer. A deposit that earns at least 5 percent per year need not be considered a required deposit.

Calculating the Amount Financed

A consumer signs a note secured by real property in the amount of \$5,435. The note amount includes \$5,000 in proceeds disbursed to the consumer, \$400 in precomputed interest, \$25 paid to a credit reporting agency for a credit report, and a \$10 service charge. Additionally, the consumer pays a \$50

loan fee separately in cash at consummation. The consumer has no other debt with the financial institution. The amount financed is \$4,975.

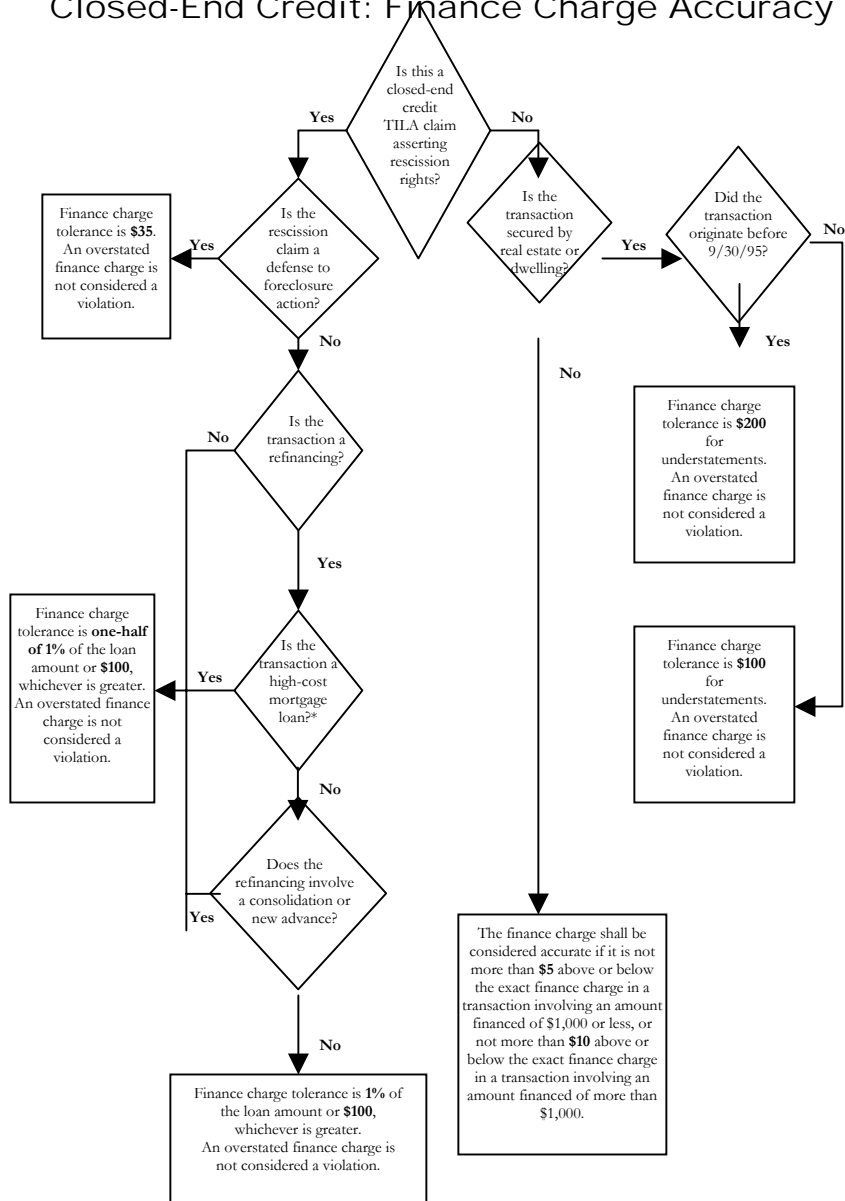
The amount financed may be calculated by first subtracting all finance charges included in the note amount ($\$5,435 - \$400 - \$10 = \$5,025$). The \$25 credit report fee is not a finance charge because the loan is secured by real property. The \$5,025 is further reduced by the amount of prepaid finance charges paid separately, for an amount financed of $\$5,025 - \$50 = \$4,975$. The answer is the same whether finance charges included in the obligation are considered prepaid or precomputed finance charges.

The financial institution may treat the \$10 service charge as an addition to the loan amount and not as a prepaid finance charge. If it does, the loan principal would be \$5,000. The \$5,000 loan principal does not include either the \$400 or the \$10 precomputed finance charge in the note. The loan principal is increased by other amounts that are financed which are not part of the finance charge (the \$25 credit report fee) and reduced by any prepaid finance charges (the \$50 loan fee, not the \$10 service charge) to arrive at the amount financed of $\$5,000 + \$25 - \$50 = \$4,975$.

Other Calculations

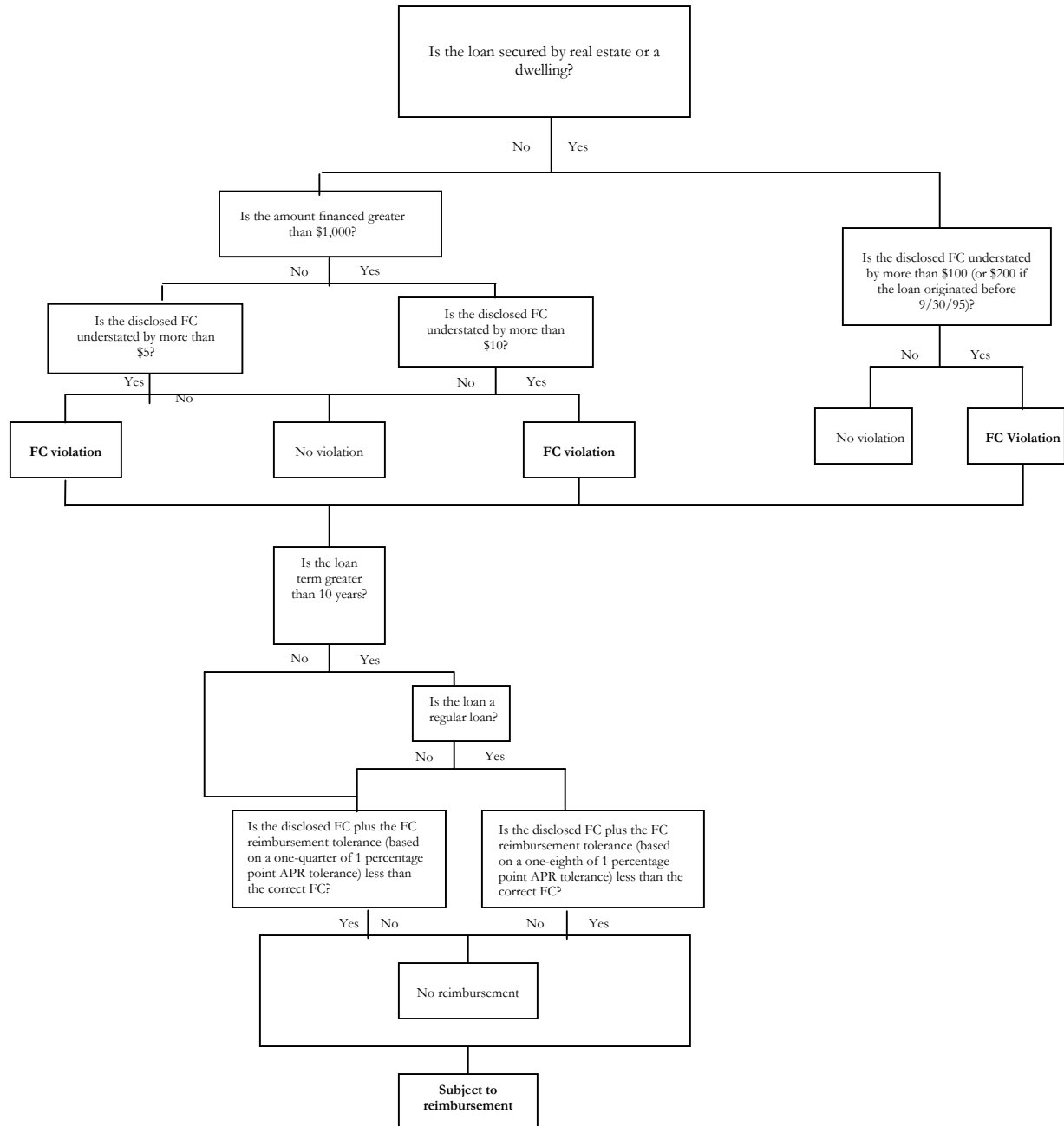
The financial institution may treat the \$10 service charge as a prepaid finance charge. If it does, the loan principal would be \$5,010. The \$5,010 loan principal does not include the \$400 precomputed finance charge. The loan principal is increased by other amounts that are financed which are not part of the finance charge (the \$25 credit report fee) and reduced by any prepaid finance charges (the \$50 loan fee and the \$10 service charge withheld from loan proceeds) to arrive at the same amount financed of $\$5,010 + \$25 - \$50 - \$10 = \$4,975$.

Closed-End Credit: Finance Charge Accuracy Tolerances

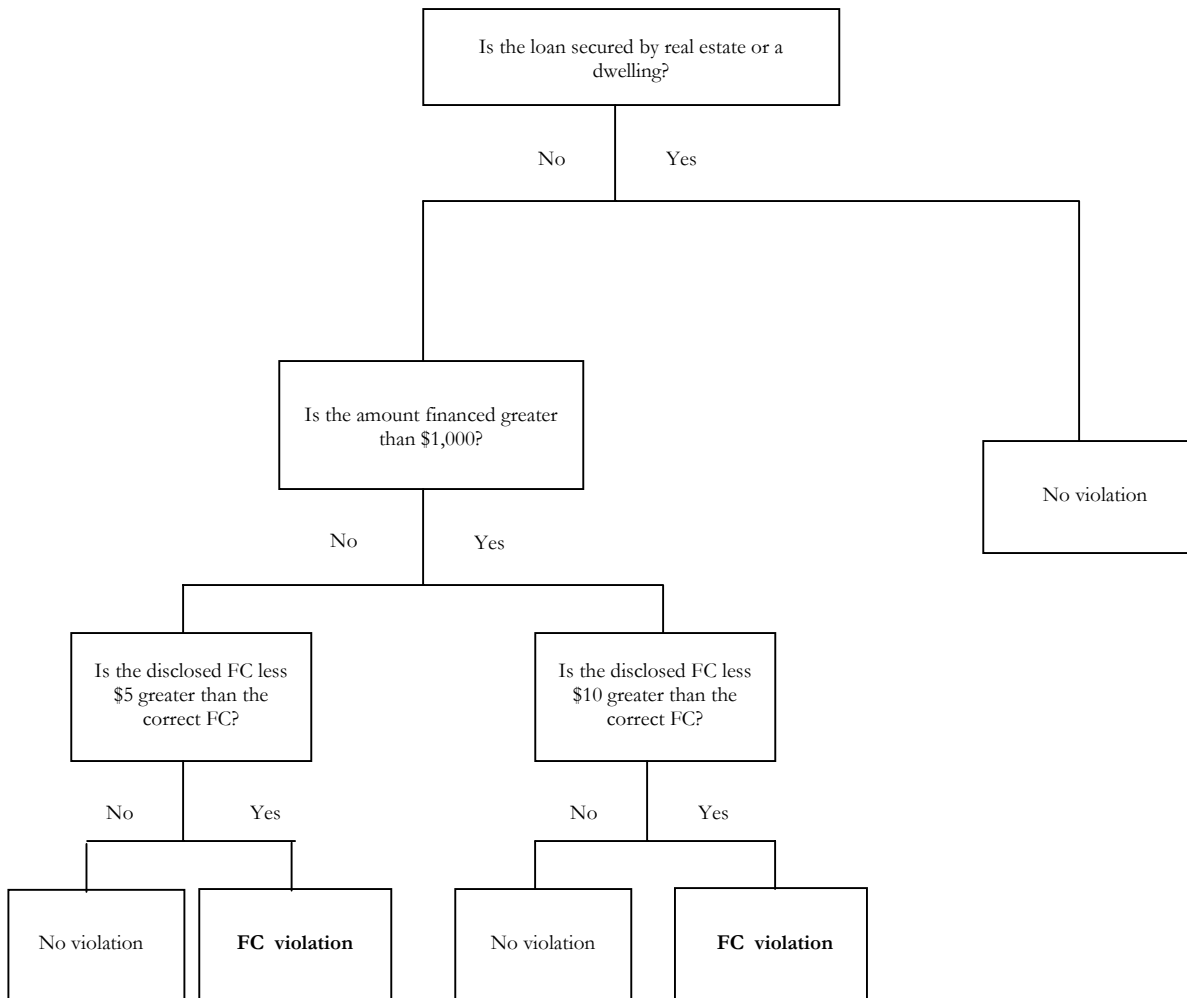


* See 15 USC 160 (aa) and 12 CFR 226.32

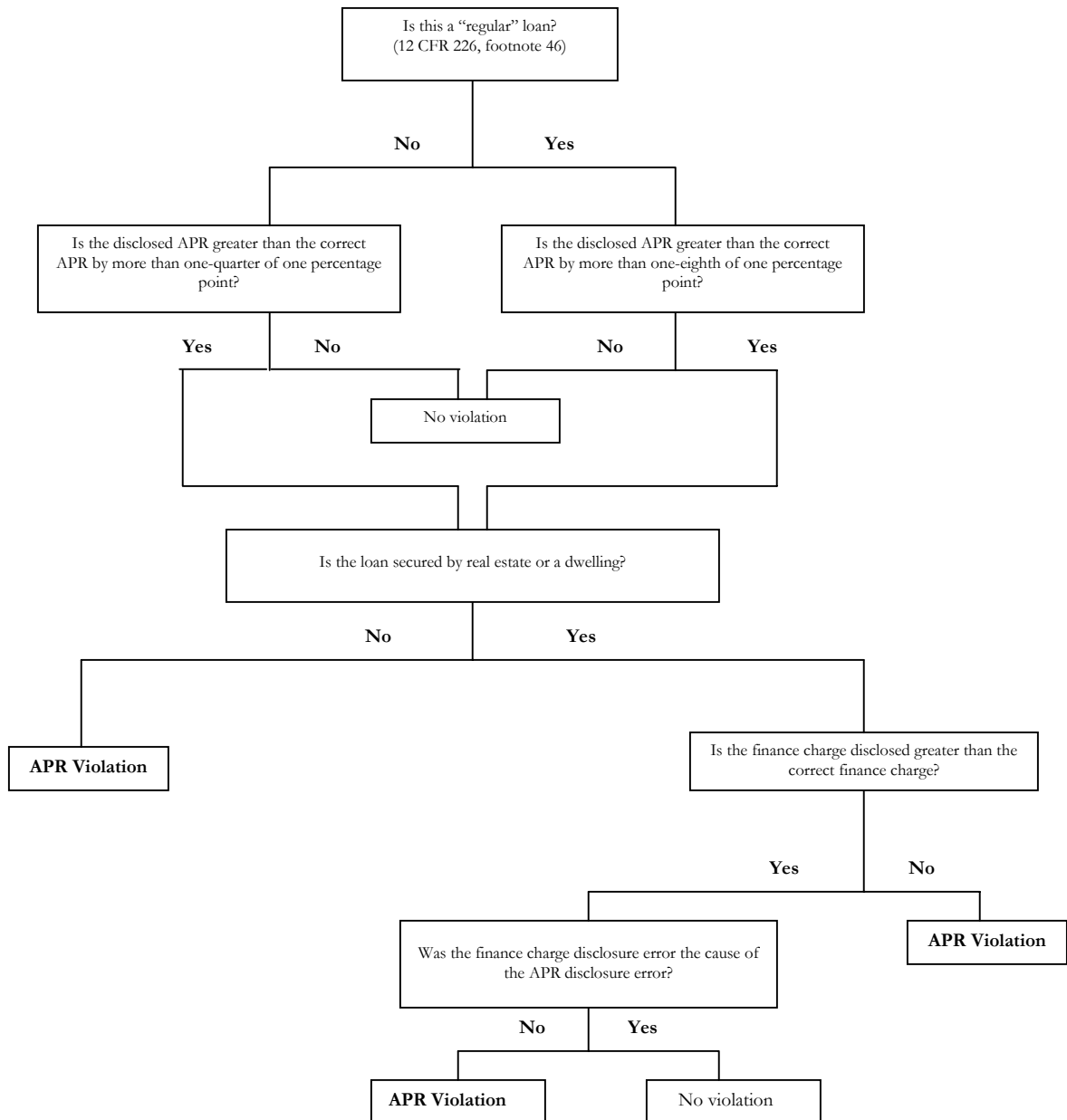
Closed-End Credit: Accuracy and Reimbursement Tolerances for **UNDERSTATED FINANCE CHARGES**



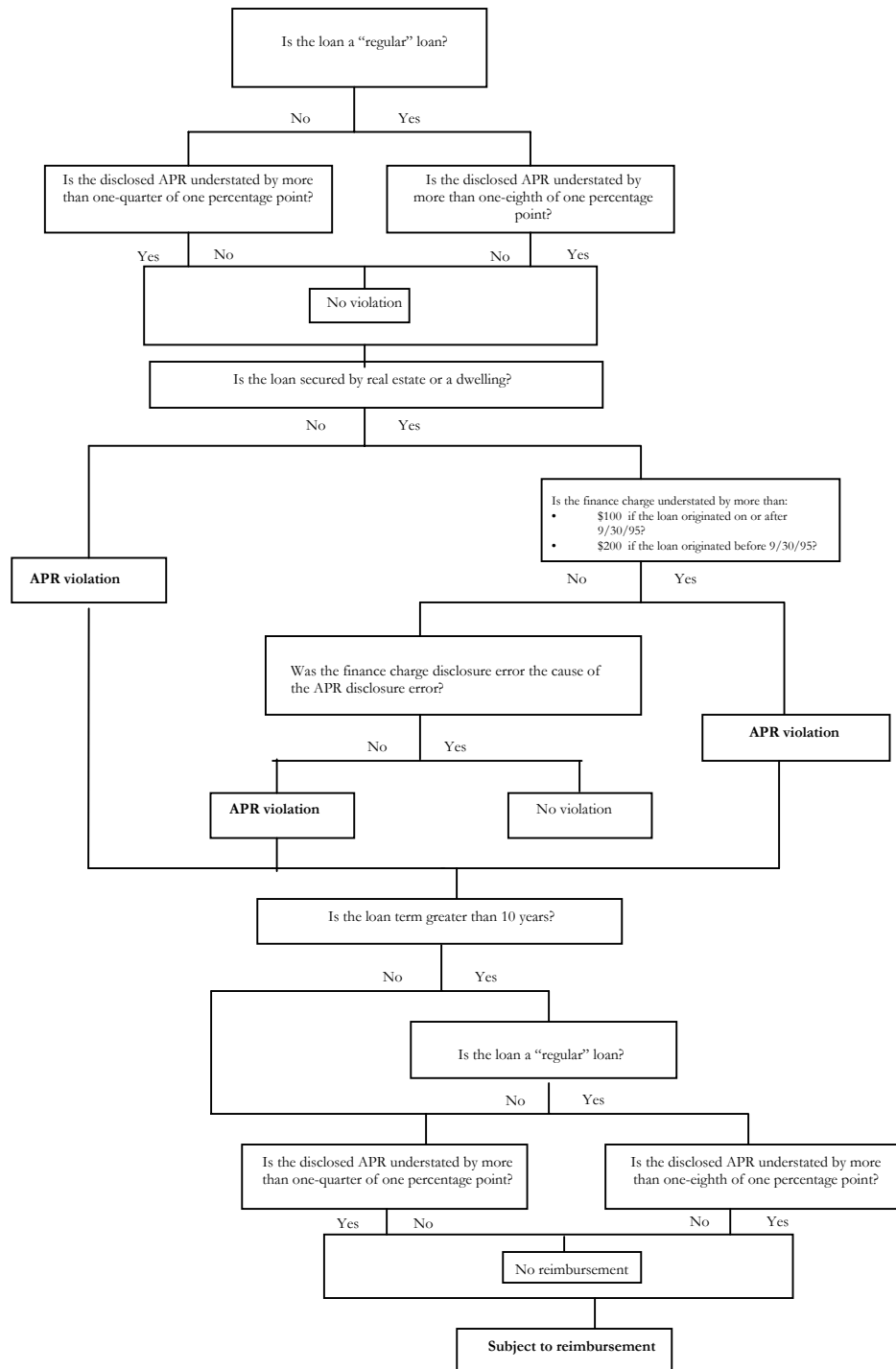
Closed-End Credit: Accuracy Tolerances for
OVERSTATED FINANCE CHARGES



Closed-End Credit: Accuracy Tolerances for
OVERSTATED APRs



Closed-End Credit: Accuracy and Reimbursement Tolerances For
UNDERSTATED APRs



Refinancings §226.20

When an obligation is satisfied and replaced by a new obligation to the original financial institution (or a holder or servicer of the original obligation) and is undertaken by the same consumer, it must be treated as a refinancing for which a complete set of new disclosures must be furnished. A refinancing may involve the consolidation of several existing obligations, disbursement of new money to the consumer, or the rescheduling of payments under an existing obligation. In any form, the new obligation must completely replace the earlier one to be considered a refinancing under the regulation. The finance charge on the new disclosure must include any unearned portion of the old finance charge that is not credited to the existing obligation. (§226.20(a))

The following transactions are not considered refinancings even if the existing obligation is satisfied and replaced by a new obligation undertaken by the same consumer:

- A renewal of an obligation with a single payment of principal and interest or with periodic interest payments and a final payment of principal with no change in the original terms.
- An APR reduction with a corresponding change in the payment schedule.
- An agreement involving a court proceeding.
- Changes in credit terms arising from the consumer's default or delinquency.
- The renewal of optional insurance purchased by the consumer and added to an existing transaction, if required disclosures were provided for the initial purchase of the insurance.

However, even if it is not accomplished by the cancellation of the old obligation and substitution of a new one, a new transaction subject to new disclosures results if the financial institution:

- Increases the rate based on a variable rate feature that was not previously disclosed; or
- Adds a variable rate feature to the obligation.

If, at the time a loan is renewed, the rate is increased, the increase is not considered a variable rate feature. It is the cost of renewal, similar to a flat fee, as long as the new rate remains fixed during the remaining life of the loan. If the original debt is not canceled in connection with such a renewal, the regulation does not require new disclosures. Also, changing the index of a variable rate transaction to a comparable index is not considered adding a variable rate feature to the obligation.

SUBPART D - MISCELLANEOUS

Civil Liability §130

If a creditor fails to comply with any requirements of the TILA, other than with the advertising provisions of chapter 3, it may be held liable to the consumer for:

- Actual damage, and
- The cost of any legal action together with reasonable attorney's fees in a successful action.

If it violates certain requirements of the TILA, the creditor also may be held liable for either of the following:

- In an individual action, twice the amount of the finance charge involved, but not less than \$100 or more than \$1,000. However, in an individual action relating to a closed-end credit transaction secured by real property or a dwelling, twice the amount of the finance charge involved, but not less than \$200 or more than \$2,000.
- In a class action, such amount as the court may allow. The total amount of recovery, however, cannot be more than \$500,000 or 1 percent of the creditor's net worth, whichever is less.

Civil actions that may be brought against a creditor also may be maintained against any assignee of the creditor if the violation is apparent on the face of the disclosure statement or other documents assigned, except where the assignment was involuntary.

A creditor that fails to comply with TILA's requirements for high-cost mortgage loans may be held liable to the consumer for all finance charges and fees paid to the creditor. Any subsequent assignee is subject to all claims and defenses that the consumer could assert against the creditor, unless the assignee demonstrates that it could not reasonably have determined that the loan was subject to §226.32.

Criminal Liability §112

Anyone who willingly and knowingly fails to comply with any requirement of the TILA will be fined not more than \$5,000 or imprisoned not more than one year, or both.

Administrative Actions §108

The TILA authorizes federal regulatory agencies to require financial institutions to make monetary and other adjustments to the consumers' accounts when the true finance charge or APR exceeds the disclosed finance charge or APR by more than a specified accuracy tolerance. That authorization

extends to unintentional errors, including isolated violations (e.g., an error that occurred only once or errors, often without a common cause, that occurred infrequently and randomly).

Under certain circumstances, the TILA requires federal regulatory agencies to order financial institutions to reimburse consumers when understatement of the APR or finance charge involves:

- Patterns or practices of violations (e.g., errors that occurred, often with a common cause, consistently or frequently, reflecting a pattern with a specific type or types of consumer credit).
- Gross negligence.
- Willful noncompliance intended to mislead the person to whom the credit was extended.

Any proceeding that may be brought by a regulatory agency against a creditor may be maintained against any assignee of the creditor if the violation is apparent on the face of the disclosure statement or other documents assigned, except where the assignment was involuntary. (§131)

Relationship to State Law §111

State laws providing rights, responsibilities, or procedures for consumers or financial institutions for consumer credit contracts may be:

- Preempted by federal law;
- Appropriate under state law and not preempted by federal law; or
- Substituted in lieu of TILA and Regulation Z requirements.

State law provisions are preempted to the extent that they contradict the requirements in the following chapters of the TILA and the implementing sections of Regulation Z:

- Chapter 1, “General Provisions,” which contains definitions and acceptable methods for determining finance charges and annual percentage rates. For example, a state law would be preempted if it required a bank to include in the finance charge any fees that the federal law excludes, such as seller’s points.
- Chapter 2, “Credit Transactions,” which contains disclosure requirements, rescission rights, and certain credit card provisions. For example, a state law would be preempted if it required a bank to use the terms “nominal annual interest rate” in lieu of “annual percentage rate.”
- Chapter 3, “Credit Advertising,” which contains consumer credit advertising rules and annual percentage rate oral disclosure requirements.

Conversely, state law provisions may be appropriate and are not preempted under federal law if they call for, without contradicting chapters 1, 2, or 3 of the TILA or the implementing sections of Regulation Z, either of the following:

- Disclosure of information not otherwise required. A state law that requires disclosure of the minimum periodic payment for open-end credit, for example, would not be preempted because it does not contradict federal law.
- Disclosures more detailed than those required. A state law that requires itemization of the amount financed, for example, would not be preempted, unless it contradicts federal law by requiring the itemization to appear with the disclosure of the amount financed in the segregated closed-end credit disclosures.

The relationship between state law and chapter 4 of the TILA (“Credit Billing”) involves two parts. The first part is concerned with sections 161 (correction of billing errors) and 162 (regulation of credit reports) of the act; the second part addresses the remaining sections of chapter 4.

State law provisions are preempted if they differ from the rights, responsibilities, or procedures contained in sections 161 or 162. An exception is made, however, for state law that allows a consumer to inquire about an account and requires the bank to respond to such inquiry beyond the time limits provided by federal law. Such a state law would not be preempted for the extra time period.

State law provisions are preempted if they result in violations of sections 163 through 171 of chapter 4. For example, a state law that allows the card issuer to offset the consumer’s credit-card indebtedness against funds held by the card issuer would be preempted, since it would violate 12 CFR 226.12(d). Conversely, a state law that requires periodic statements to be sent more than 14 days before the end of a free-ride period would not be preempted, since no violation of federal law is involved.

A bank, state, or other interested party may ask the Federal Reserve Board to determine whether state law contradicts chapters 1 through 3 of the TILA or Regulation Z. They also may ask if the state law is different from, or would result in violations of, chapter 4 of the TILA and the implementing provisions of Regulation Z. If the board determines that a disclosure required by state law (other than a requirement relating to the finance charge, annual percentage rate, or the disclosures required under §226.32) is substantially the same in meaning as a disclosure required under the act or Regulation Z, generally creditors in that state may make the state disclosure in lieu of the federal disclosure.

SUBPART E - SPECIAL RULES FOR CERTAIN HOME MORTGAGE TRANSACTIONS

General Rules §226.31

The requirements and limitations of this subpart are in addition to and not in lieu of those contained in other subparts of Regulation Z. The disclosures for high cost and reverse mortgage transactions must be made clearly and conspicuously in writing, in a form that the consumer may keep.

Certain Closed-End Home Mortgages §226.32

The requirements of this section apply to a consumer credit transaction secured by the consumer's principal dwelling, in which either:

- The APR at consummation will exceed by more than 8 percentage points for first-lien mortgage loans, or by more than 10 percentage points for subordinate-lien mortgage loans, the yield on Treasury securities having comparable periods of maturity to the loan's maturity (as of the 15th day of the month immediately preceding the month in which the application for the extension of credit is received by the creditor); or
- The total points and fees (see definition below) payable by the consumer at or before loan closing will exceed the greater of eight percent of the total loan amount or \$480 for the calendar year 2002. (This dollar amount is adjusted annually based on changes in the Consumer Price Index. See staff commentary to 32(a)(1)(ii) for a historical list of dollar amount adjustments.) (§226.32(a)(1))

Exemptions:

- Residential mortgage transactions (generally purchase money mortgages),
- Reverse mortgage transactions subject to §226.33, or
- Open-end credit plans subject to Subpart B of Regulation Z.

Points and Fees include the following:

- All items required to be disclosed under §226.4(a) and (b), except interest or the time-price differential;
- All compensation paid to mortgage brokers; and
- All items listed in §226.4(c)(7), other than amounts held for future taxes, unless all of the following conditions are met:

- The charge is reasonable;
- The creditor receives no direct or indirect compensation in connection with the charge;
- The charge is not paid to an affiliate of the creditor; and
- Premiums or other charges, paid at or before closing whether paid in cash or financed, for optional credit life, accident, health, or loss-of-income insurance, and other debt-protection or debt cancellation products written in connection with the credit transaction (§226.32(b)(1)).

Reverse Mortgages §226.33

A reverse mortgage is a non-recourse transaction secured by the consumer's principal dwelling which ties repayment (other than upon default) to the homeowner's death or permanent move from, or transfer of the title of, the home.

Specific Defenses §108

Defense Against Civil, Criminal, and Administrative Actions

A financial institution in violation of TILA may avoid liability by:

- Discovering the error before an action is brought against the financial institution, or before the consumer notifies the financial institution, in writing, of the error.
- Notifying the consumer of the error within 60 days of discovery.
- Making the necessary adjustments to the consumer's account, also within 60 days of discovery. (The consumer will pay no more than the lesser of the finance charge actually disclosed or the dollar equivalent of the APR actually disclosed.)

The above three actions also may allow the financial institution to avoid a regulatory order to reimburse the customer.

An error is "discovered" if it is:

- Discussed in a final, written report of examination.
- Identified through the financial institution's own procedures.
- An inaccurately disclosed APR or finance charge included in a regulatory agency notification to the financial institution.

When a disclosure error occurs, the financial institution is not required to re-disclose after a loan has been consummated or an account has been opened. If the financial institution corrects a disclosure error by merely re-disclosing required information accurately, without adjusting the consumer's account, the financial institution may still be subject to civil liability and an order to reimburse from its regulator.

The circumstances under which a financial institution may avoid liability under the TILA do not apply to violations of the Fair Credit Billing Act (chapter 4 of the TILA).

Additional Defenses Against Civil Actions

The financial institution may avoid liability in a civil action if it shows by a preponderance of evidence that the violation was not intentional and resulted from a bona fide error that occurred despite the maintenance of procedures to avoid the error.

A bona fide error may include a clerical, calculation, computer malfunction, programming, or printing error. It does not include an error of legal judgment.

Showing that a violation occurred unintentionally could be difficult if the financial institution is unable to produce evidence that explicitly indicates it has an internal controls program designed to ensure compliance. The financial institution's demonstrated commitment to compliance and its adoption of policies and procedures to detect errors before disclosures are furnished to consumers could strengthen its defense.

Statute of Limitations §§108 and 130

Civil actions may be brought within one year after the violation occurred. After that time, and if allowed by state law, the consumer may still assert the violation as a defense if a financial institution were to bring an action to collect the consumer's debt.

Criminal actions are not subject to the TILA one-year statute of limitations.

Regulatory administrative enforcement actions also are not subject to the one-year statute of limitations. However, enforcement actions under the policy guide involving erroneously disclosed APRs and finance charges are subject to time limitations by the TILA. Those limitations range from the date of the last regulatory examination of the financial institution, to as far back as 1969, depending on when loans were made, when violations were identified, whether the violations were repeat violations, and other factors.

There is no time limitation on willful violations intended to mislead the consumer. A summary of the various time limitations follows.

- For open-end credit, reimbursement applies to violations not older than two years.

- For closed-end credit, reimbursement is generally directed for loans with violations occurring since the immediately preceding examination.

RESCISSION RIGHTS (Open-End and Closed-End Credit) §226.15 and §226.23

TILA provides that for certain transactions secured by the consumer's principal dwelling, a consumer has three business days after becoming obligated on the debt to rescind the transaction. The right of rescission allows consumer(s) time to reexamine their credit agreements and cost disclosures and to reconsider whether they want to place their homes at risk by offering it/them as security for the credit. Transactions exempt from the right of rescission include residential mortgage transactions (§226.2(a)(24)) and refinancings or consolidations with the original creditor where no "new money" is advanced.

If a transaction is rescindable, consumers must be given a notice explaining that the creditor has a security interest in the consumer's home, that the consumer may rescind, how the consumer may rescind, the effects of rescission, and the date the rescission period expires.

To rescind a transaction, a consumer must notify the creditor in writing by midnight of the third business day after the latest of three events: (1) consummation of the transaction, (2) delivery of material TILA disclosures, or (3) receipt of the required notice of the right to rescind. For purposes of rescission, business day means every calendar day except Sundays and the legal public holidays (§226.2(a)(6)). The term "material disclosures" is defined in §226.23(a)(3) to mean the required disclosures of the annual percentage rate, the finance charge, the amount financed, the total of payments, the payment schedule, and the disclosures and limitations referred to in §226.32(c) and (d).

The creditor may not disburse any monies (except into an escrow account) and may not provide services or materials until the three-day rescission period has elapsed and the creditor is reasonably satisfied that the consumer has not rescinded. If the consumer rescinds the transaction, the creditor must refund all amounts paid by the consumer (even amounts disbursed to third parties) and terminate its security interest in the consumer's home.

A consumer may waive the three-day rescission period and receive immediate access to loan proceeds if the consumer has a "bona fide personal financial emergency." The consumer must give the creditor a signed and dated waiver statement that describes the emergency, specifically waives the right, and bears the signatures of all consumers entitled to rescind the transaction. The consumer provides the explanation for the bona fide personal financial emergency, but the creditor decides the sufficiency of the emergency.

If the required rescission notice or material TILA disclosures are not delivered or if they are inaccurate, the consumer's right to rescind may be extended from three days after becoming obligated on a loan to up to three years.