

As the Commission may designate up to 90 days of such date if it finds such longer period to be appropriate and publishes its reasons for so finding or (ii) as to which the self-regulatory organization consents, the Commission will:

(A) by order approve such proposed rule change, or

(B) institute proceedings to determine whether the proposed rule change should be disapproved.

IV. Solicitation of Comments

Interested persons are invited to submit written data, views and arguments concerning the foregoing, including whether the proposal, as amended, is consistent with the Act. Persons making written submissions should file six copies thereof with the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 450 Fifth Street, NW., Washington, DC 20549-0609. Copies of the submission, all subsequent amendments, all written statements with respect to the proposed rule change that are filed with the Commission, and all written communications relating to the proposed rule change between the Commission and any person, other than those that may be withheld from the public in accordance with the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552, will be available for inspection and copying in the Commission's Public Reference Room. Copies of such filing will also be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of CBOE. All submissions should refer to File No. SR-CBOE-2002-55 and should be submitted by September 4, 2003.

For the Commission, by the Division of Market Regulation, pursuant to delegated authority.¹⁵

Margaret H. McFarland,

Deputy Secretary,

[FR Doc. 03-20696 Filed 8-13-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8010-01-P

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-48289; File No. SR-DTC-2002-14]

Self-Regulatory Organizations; The Depository Trust Company; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of a Proposed Rule Change Relating to the Fee Schedule for Services

August 6, 2003.

Pursuant to section 19(b)(1) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934

(“Act”),¹ notice is hereby given that on November 21, 2002, The Depository Trust Company (“DTC”) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (“Commission”) the proposed rule change as described in Items I, II, and III below, which items have been prepared primarily by DTC. The Commission is publishing this notice to solicit comments on the proposed rule change from interested persons.

I. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement of the Terms of Substance of the Proposed Rule Change

The proposed rule change amends DTC's service fee schedule to add a fifty-dollar fee for the assignment of a Financial Industry Number Standard (FINS) number.

II. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement of the Purpose of, and Statutory Basis for, the Proposed Rule Change

In its filing with the Commission, DTC included statements concerning the purpose of and basis for the proposed rule change and discussed any comments it received on the proposed rule change. The text of these statements may be examined at the places specified in Item IV below. DTC has prepared summaries, set forth in sections (A), (B), and (C) below, of the most significant aspects of such statements.²

(A) Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement of the Purpose of, and Statutory Basis for, the Proposed Rule Change

The purpose of the proposed rule change is to establish a fee for assigning FINS numbers. Industry participants use FINS numbers for identification purposes for such activities as making filings with the Securities Information Center (SIC). A firm requesting a FINS number provides DTC with information such as its legal name, business address, mailing address, contact person, and telephone number. DTC checks its database to determine whether the firm already has a FINS number. If the firm already has a FINS number, DTC provides the firm with that number. If the firm does not already have a FINS number, DTC will assign a FINS number to the firm. The proposed fee is designed to recover DTC's estimated service costs and became effective November 22, 2002.

DTC believes that the proposed rule change is consistent with the requirements of Section 17A of the Act

and the rules and regulations thereunder applicable to DTC because the fee will equitably be allocated among the parties who are assigned FINS numbers.

(B) Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement on Burden on Competition

DTC does not believe that the proposed rule change will impose any burden on competition that is not necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Act.

(C) Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement on Comments on the Proposed Rule Change Received from Members, Participants, or Others

No comments on the proposed rule change were solicited or received.

III. Date of Effectiveness of the Proposed Rule Change and Timing for Commission Action

Because the foregoing rule change establishes or changes fees to be imposed by DTC, it has become effective pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A)(ii) of the Act³ and Rule 19b-4(f)(2).⁴ At any time within sixty days of the filing of the proposed rule change, the Commission may summarily abrogate such rule change if it appears to the Commission that such action is necessary or appropriate in the public interest, for the protection of investors, or otherwise in furtherance of the purposes of the Act.

IV. Solicitation of Comments

Interested persons are invited to submit written data, views, and arguments concerning the foregoing, including whether the proposed rule change is consistent with the Act. Persons making written submissions should file six copies thereof with the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 450 Fifth Street NW., Washington, DC 20549-0609. Comments may also be submitted electronically at the following e-mail address: rule-comments@sec.gov. All comment letters should refer to File No. SR-DTC-2002-14. This file number should be included on the subject line if e-mail is used. To help us process and review comments more efficiently, comments should be sent in hardcopy or by e-mail but not by both methods. Copies of the submission, all subsequent amendments, all written statements with respect to the proposed rule change that are filed with the Commission, and all written communications relating to the

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

² The Commission has modified parts of these statements.

³ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A)(iii).

⁴ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(2).

¹⁵ 17 CFR 200.30(a)(12).

proposed rule change between the Commission and any person, other than those that may be withheld from the public in accordance with the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552, will be available for inspection and copying in the Commission's Public Reference Section, 450 Fifth Street NW., Washington, DC 20549. Copies of such filing will also be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of EMCC. All submissions should refer to the File No. SR-DTC-2002-14 and should be submitted by September 4, 2003.

For the Commission by the Division of Market Regulation, pursuant to delegated authority.⁵

Margaret H. McFarland,

Deputy Secretary.

[FR Doc. 03-20768 Filed 8-13-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8010-01-P

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-48294; File No. SR-NASD-2003-122]

Self-Regulatory Organizations; Notice of Filing of Proposed Rule Change by the National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc. Relating to Proposal To Conduct Background Verification and Charge Application Fee for NASD Neutral Roster Applicants

August 6, 2003.

Pursuant to Section 19(b)(1) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 ("Act")¹ and Rule 19b-4 thereunder,² notice is hereby given that on August 5, 2003, the National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc. ("NASD"), through its wholly owned subsidiary, NASD Dispute Resolution, Inc. ("NASD Dispute Resolution") filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("Commission") the proposed rule change as described in Items I, II, and III below, which Items have been prepared by NASD Dispute Resolution. The Commission is publishing this notice to solicit comments on the proposed rule change from interested persons.

I. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement of the Terms of Substance of the Proposed Rule Change

NASD Dispute Resolution proposes to conduct background verification and charge an application fee for NASD neutral roster applicants. NASD does

not propose any textual changes to the By-Laws or Rules of NASD.

II. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement of the Purpose of, and Statutory Basis for, the Proposed Rule Change

In its filing with the Commission, NASD Dispute Resolution included statements concerning the purpose of, and basis for, the proposed rule change and discussed any comments it received on the proposed rule change. The text of these statements may be examined at the places specified in Item IV below. NASD Dispute Resolution has prepared summaries, set forth in Sections A, B, and C below, of the most significant aspects of such statements.

A. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement of the Purpose of, and Statutory Basis for, the Proposed Rule Change

1. Purpose

NASD Dispute Resolution proposes to begin conducting background verifications of all new arbitrator applicants, and to assess an application fee to cover the cost of the verifications.

Background

NASD maintains a pool of approximately 7000 available arbitrators. Currently, arbitrator applicants submit biographical profile forms, together with two letters of reference. The biographical profile forms require applicants to provide detailed information on their business and employment histories, education, training, possible conflicts, experience, expertise, associations with industry members, and other matters. The application also requires a narrative background information statement in which applicants are asked to explain why they believe their experience and knowledge would benefit the process. Attorneys and accountants are further directed to provide specific details about their practices. A copy of the current NASD arbitrator application is attached as Exhibit 2 to the proposed rule change.

Arbitrator information is entered into NASD's database and is provided to parties in the form of a disclosure report during the arbitrator selection process. Arbitrators must update this biographical information on a regular basis. NASD sends frequent reminders to arbitrators about the importance of this obligation, especially after they are notified regarding possible service as an arbitrator. NASD requires arbitrators in each case to affirm that they have reviewed their disclosure report and

that it is accurate, and to complete a disclosure checklist attached to the oath. NASD provides each arbitrator on a panel with the co-panelists' biographical profiles in order to facilitate peer reviews for accuracy.³

In addition to gathering the above information, NASD currently checks records on the Central Registration Depository (CRD) for arbitrator applicants who have been registered with NASD, most of whom would be categorized as "non-public" arbitrators under NASD Rule 10308(a)(4). NASD currently does not verify any of the information provided by arbitrator applicants who do not have CRD records, most of whom would be classified as "public" arbitrators under NASD Rule 10308(a)(5).

Proposed Rule Change

NASD proposes to expand its verification of background information to cover all arbitrator applicants. NASD believes this will provide additional protection to parties using the Dispute Resolution forum, raise the standards of the neutral roster, and enhance investor confidence in the integrity of the forum.

Specifically, NASD Dispute Resolution has identified a vendor to provide the following verification services:

- Criminal check in the county of the applicant's residence;
- Federal criminal check;
- Employment verification; and
- Professional license verification.

The verification fee will be \$80.00 per application. This fee will cover the vendor's expected charge for verification of each application, with the understanding that the actual work required to verify each application will vary. For example, some applicants will have only one employer over the past ten years, and some will have two or more. NASD believes that having a single, reasonable fee for background verification will be more practical administratively than charging different fees that vary depending on each applicant's background. For this amount, the vendor will perform county and federal criminal record checks; verify any professional licenses; and check the last employer or, if the applicant has been employed for fewer than ten years by the same employer, then the last two employers. To keep the

³ For additional information on procedures designed to reveal potential conflicts of interest, see Professor Michael A. Perino, *Report to the SEC Regarding Arbitrator Conflict Disclosure Requirements in NASD and NYSE Securities Arbitrations* (Nov. 12, 2002), available on the Commission's Website, Market Regulation page, at: <http://www.sec.gov/pdf/arbconflict.pdf>.

⁵ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

² 17 CFR 240.19b-4.