

*H. Proposed Rule 13800, Simplified Arbitrations:* This proposed rule provides that all provisions of the Code apply to simplified arbitrations, unless otherwise provided under proposed rule 13800. This means that the time within which parties must answer a statement of claim in simplified arbitrations is 45 days, as in regular arbitrations. Should this time be shortened for simplified arbitrations, as they are meant to be more expedient than regular arbitrations? If so, what would be an appropriate amount of time?

Comments may be submitted by any of the following methods:

*Electronic Comments*

- Use the Commission's Internet comment form (<http://www.sec.gov/rules/sro.shtml>); or
- Send an e-mail to [rule-comments@sec.gov](mailto:rule-comments@sec.gov). Please include File Number SR-NASD-2004-011 on the subject line.

*Paper Comments:*

- Send paper comments in triplicate to Jonathan G. Katz, Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 100 F Street, NE., Washington, DC 20549-9303.

All submissions should refer to File Number SR-NASD-2004-011. This file number should be included on the subject line if e-mail is used. To help the Commission process and review your comments more efficiently, please use only one method. The Commission will post all comments on the Commission's Internet Web site (<http://www.sec.gov/rules/sro.shtml>). 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 at the principal office of NASD. All comments received will be posted without change; the Commission does not edit personal identifying information from submissions. You should submit only information that you wish to make available publicly. All submissions should refer to the File Number SR-NASD-2004-011 and should be submitted on or before July 14, 2005.

For the Commission, by the Division of Market Regulation, pursuant to delegated authority.<sup>23</sup>

**Margaret H. McFarland,**

*Deputy Secretary.*

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## SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-51855; File No. SR-NASD-2004-013]

### Self-Regulatory Organizations; National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc.; Notice of Filing of Proposed Rule Change and Amendments Nos. 1 and 2 Thereto to Amend NASD Arbitration Rules for Mediation Proceedings

June 15, 2005.

Pursuant to Section 19(b)(1) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 ("Act")<sup>1</sup> and Rule 19b-4 thereunder,<sup>2</sup> notice is hereby given that on January 23, 2004, 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 ("SEC" or "Commission"), and amended on January 3, 2005 and April 8, 2005, 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 is proposing to amend the NASD Code of Arbitration Procedure ("Code") to reorganize the current rules, simplify the language, codify current practices, and implement several substantive changes. NASD is proposing to reorganize its current dispute resolution rules (Rules 10000 *et seq.*) into three separate procedural codes: The NASD Code of Arbitration Procedure for Customer Disputes ("Customer Code"); the NASD Code of Arbitration Procedure for Industry Disputes ("Industry Code"); and the NASD Code of Mediation Procedure ("Mediation Code"). The three new codes will replace the current NASD Code in its entirety.

This rule filing contains the proposed Mediation Code, the text of which is available on the NASD Web site at [http://www.nasd.com/web/idcplg?IdcService=SS\\_GET\\_PAGE&ssDocName=NASDW\\_009003&ssSourceNodeId=801](http://www.nasd.com/web/idcplg?IdcService=SS_GET_PAGE&ssDocName=NASDW_009003&ssSourceNodeId=801).<sup>3</sup> Also available at the same URL are a chart comparing the current mediation rules and the proposed Mediation Code and an old-to-new conversion guide.

#### 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 has 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 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

###### (a) Purpose

This rule filing is part of a comprehensive plan to reorganize and simplify the NASD Code of Arbitration Procedure. Specifically, NASD is proposing to reorganize its dispute resolution rules in a more logical, user-friendly way, including creating separate Codes for customer and industry arbitrations, and for mediations. At the same time, it is proposing to rewrite the three Codes using plain English, in accordance with the Commission's plain English guidelines. Although NASD is also proposing to implement several substantive rule changes to its arbitration rules, as described in the Customer and Industry Code rule filings, NASD is not proposing any substantive changes to the current rules governing mediations.

#### Reorganization

One of the most frequent criticisms of the current Code is that it is poorly organized. Parties, particularly infrequent users of the forum, have difficulty finding the rules they are looking for, because the rules are not presented in a logical order. The

<sup>23</sup> 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).

<sup>1</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

<sup>2</sup> 17 CFR 240.19b-4.

<sup>3</sup> The proposed Customer Code and the proposed Industry Code have been filed separately with the Commission as SR-NASD-2003-158 and SR-NASD-2004-011, respectively.

confusion is compounded by the fact that certain rules in the Code apply only to customer cases, some apply only to industry cases, and still others apply to both types of disputes. In addition, the current Code contains the NASD mediation rules, despite the fact that many matters are submitted directly to mediation, and do not arise out of an arbitration proceeding.

To address these concerns, NASD is proposing to divide the current Code into three separate Codes: The Customer Code, the Industry Code, and the Mediation Code. NASD believes that maintaining separate Codes will make it easier for parties to find the rules that apply to their disputes, particularly for parties to disputes that are submitted directly to mediation. NASD will maintain electronic versions of each code on its Web site, <http://www.nasd.com>, and will make paper copies available upon request.

In keeping with the current NASD rule numbering system, each of the three codes will be numbered in the thousands, and major sections will be numbered in the hundreds. Individual rules within those sections will be numbered in the tens (or ones, if necessary). The current method for numbering and lettering paragraphs within individual rules will remain unchanged. The Customer Code will use the Rule 12000 series, the Industry Code will use the Rule 13000 series, and the Mediation Code will use the Rule 14000 series, all of which are also currently unused. NASD will reserve the Rule 10000 series, which is currently used for NASD's dispute resolution rules, for future use.

#### Plain English

In 1998, the SEC launched an initiative to encourage issuers and self-regulatory organizations ("SROs") to use "plain English" in disclosure documents and other materials used by investors. At that time, the SEC published a "Plain English Handbook," to provide guidance to issuers and SROs in drafting such materials. The Plain English Handbook recommended using shorter, more common words; breaking long rules into shorter ones; using the active voice whenever possible; and using easy-to-read formatting, such as bullet points. NASD has implemented these guidelines wherever possible in revising the proposed Mediation Code, as well as the proposed Customer and Industry Codes.

#### Proposed Definitions Rule

NASD is also proposing to add a comprehensive definitions rule to the Mediation Code (proposed Rule 14100).

This rule would include definitions of terms used throughout the proposed Mediation Code. NASD believes that this rule will provide useful clarification for parties and mediators.

#### No Substantive Changes

The proposed rule change would establish a separate Mediation Code, and would shorten and simplify NASD's current mediation rules in a manner consistent with the proposed Customer and Industry Codes. However, with the exception of adding a definitions rule, as described above, NASD is not proposing any substantive changes to its current rules governing mediations.

#### (b) Statutory Basis

NASD believes that the proposed rule change is consistent with the provisions of Section 15A(b)(6) of the Act, which requires, among other things, that NASD's rules must be designed to prevent fraudulent and manipulative acts and practices, to promote just and equitable principles of trade, and, in general, to protect investors and the public interest. NASD believes that the proposed rule change will protect the public interest by making its mediation rules easier to find, and by making the mediation process more accessible to parties.

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

NASD does not believe that the proposed rule change will result in any burden on competition that is not necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Act, as amended.

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

Written comments were neither solicited nor received.

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

Within 35 days of the date of publication of this notice in the **Federal Register** or within such longer period (i) 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 proposed rule change, as amended, is consistent with the Act. In particular, the Commission solicits comments on whether the proposed rule change provides for mediation procedures that are fair to investors in customer disputes and to associated persons in industry disputes. Comments may be submitted by any of the following methods:

##### Electronic Comments

- Use the Commission's Internet comment form (<http://www.sec.gov/rules/sro.shtml>); or
- Send an e-mail to [rule-comments@sec.gov](mailto:rule-comments@sec.gov). Please include File Number SR-NASD-2004-013 on the subject line.

##### Paper Comments

- Send paper comments in triplicate to Jonathan G. Katz, Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 100 F Street, NE., Washington, DC 20549-9303.

All submissions should refer to File Number SR-NASD-2004-013. The file number should be included on the subject line if e-mail is used. To help the Commission process and review your comments more efficiently, please use only one method. The Commission will post all comments on the Commission's Internet Web site (<http://www.sec.gov/rules/sro.shtml>). 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 Section, 100 F Street, NE., Washington, DC 20549. Copies of such filing will also be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of NASD. All comments received will be posted without change; the Commission does not edit personal identifying information from submissions. You should submit only information that you wish to make available publicly. All submissions should refer to SR-2004-013 and should be submitted on or before July 14, 2005.

For the Commission, by the Division of Market Regulation, pursuant to delegated authority, 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).

**Margaret H. McFarland,**

*Deputy Secretary.*

[FR Doc. E5-3267 Filed 6-22-05; 8:45 am]

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## SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-51856; File No. SR-NASD-2003-158]

### Self-Regulatory Organizations; National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc.; Notice of Filing of Proposed Rule Change and Amendment Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4 Thereto To Amend NASD Arbitration Rules for Customer Disputes

June 15, 2005.

Pursuant to Section 19(b)(1) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 ("Act")<sup>1</sup> and Rule 19b-4 thereunder,<sup>2</sup> notice is hereby given that 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 ("SEC" or "Commission") on October 15, 2003, and amended on January 3, 2005, January 19, 2005, April 8, 2005, and June 10, 2005, 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 is proposing to amend the NASD Code of Arbitration Procedure ("Code") to reorganize the current rules, simplify the language, codify current practices, and implement several substantive changes. NASD is proposing to reorganize its current dispute resolution rules (Rules 10000 *et seq.*) into three separate procedural codes: The NASD Code of Arbitration Procedure for Customer Disputes ("Customer Code"); the NASD Code of Arbitration Procedure for Industry Disputes ("Industry Code"); and the NASD Code of Mediation Procedure ("Mediation Code"). The three new codes will replace the current NASD Code in its entirety. NASD is also proposing to make certain substantive

amendments to the Code as described herein. This rule filing contains the proposed Customer Code, the text of which is available on the NASD Web site at [http://www.nasd.com/web/idcplg?IdcService=SS\\_GET\\_PAGE&ssDocName=NASDW\\_009306&ssSourceNodeId=802](http://www.nasd.com/web/idcplg?IdcService=SS_GET_PAGE&ssDocName=NASDW_009306&ssSourceNodeId=802).<sup>3</sup> A chart comparing the current Code and the proposed Customer Code, as well as an old-to-new conversion guide, are also available at the same URL.<sup>4</sup>

#### 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 has 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 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

###### (a) Purpose

In 1998, the SEC launched an initiative to encourage issuers and self-regulatory organizations ("SROs") to use "plain English" in disclosure documents and other materials used by investors. Because the Code is used by investors, including investors who appear pro se in the NASD forum, NASD undertook to rewrite the current Code in "plain English." Over time, the goals of the plain English initiative expanded beyond simplifying the language and sentence structure of the rules in the Code to include:

- Reorganizing the Code in a more logical, user-friendly way, including creating separate Codes for customer and industry arbitrations, and for mediations; and
- Implementing several substantive rule changes, including codifying several common practices, to provide more guidance to parties and arbitrators,

<sup>3</sup> The proposed Industry Code and proposed Mediation Code have been filed separately with the Commission as SR-NASD-2004-011 and SR-NASD-2004-013, respectively.

<sup>4</sup> For purposes of this filing, the version of the current and proposed Codes used in the comparison and conversion charts reflects all Dispute Resolution rule filings approved by the Commission since the proposed rule change was filed on October 15, 2003.

and to streamline the administration of arbitrations in the NASD forum.

#### Plain English

When it launched its "plain English" initiative in 1998, the SEC published a "Plain English Handbook," to provide guidance to issuers and SROs in drafting materials intended to be used by investors. The SEC's Plain English Handbook recommended using shorter, more common words; breaking long rules into shorter ones; using the active voice whenever possible; and putting lists into easy-to-read formatting, such as bullet points.

In revising the Code, NASD has implemented these guidelines wherever possible. Throughout the proposed Code, NASD has simplified language and eliminated unnecessarily legalistic or arcane terminology. Long rules, such as current Rule 10308, governing arbitrator selection, and current Rule 10321, governing filing and responding to an arbitration claim, have been broken into several shorter rules. (See proposed Rules 12400-12406, and proposed Rules 12300-12313, respectively.) Where appropriate, lists are presented in bullet point format, and active verbs are used.

The proposed Code also contains a new definitions rule (proposed Rule 12100) that defines commonly used terms applicable throughout the Code. In the current Code, some rules, such as Rule 10308, contain definitions applicable to that rule only, but there is not a general definitions rule that applies to the entire Code. NASD believes that a comprehensive definitions rule will make the Code easier to understand and to use, and will help eliminate confusion about the meaning and scope of frequently used terms. It will also allow NASD to use shorter phrases, or single words, in place of longer phrases. For example, the phrase "dispute, claim, or controversy" has been replaced by the word "dispute," which has been defined in Rule 12100 to mean the longer phrase. This makes rules easier to read and understand, without changing the meaning of the Code.

#### Reorganization

One of the most frequent criticisms of the current Code is that it is poorly organized. Parties, particularly infrequent users of the forum, have difficulty finding the rules they are looking for, because the rules are not presented in a logical order. The confusion is compounded by the fact that certain rules in the Code apply only to customer cases, some apply only to industry cases, and still others apply to

<sup>1</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

<sup>2</sup> 17 CFR 240.19b-4.