

## 2. Statutory Basis

The Exchange believes that the proposed rule change is consistent with Section 6(b) of the Act,<sup>7</sup> in general, and furthers the objectives of Section 6(b)(5) of the Act,<sup>8</sup> in particular, in that it is designed to promote just and equitable principles of trade and to remove impediments to and perfect the mechanism of a free and open market and a national market system, and, according to the Exchange, is not designed to permit unfair discrimination between customers, brokers, or dealers, or to regulate by virtue of any authority matters not related to the administration of the Exchange.

### *B. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement on Burden on Competition*

The Exchange 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*

Written comments were neither solicited nor received with respect to the proposed rule change.

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

Because, the foregoing proposed rule change (1) does not significantly affect the protection of investors or the public interest; (2) does not impose any significant burden on competition; and (3) by its terms, does not become operative until 30 days from the date on which it was filed, or such shorter time as the Commission may designate if consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest, and the Exchange provided the Commission with written notice of its intent to file the proposed rule change at least five business days prior to the date of filing of the proposed rule change,<sup>9</sup> or such shorter time as designated by the Commission, it has become effective pursuant to section 19(b)(3)(A) of the Act<sup>10</sup> and Rule 19b-4(f)(6) thereunder.<sup>11</sup>

Although Rule 19b-4(f)(6) under the Act<sup>12</sup> requires that an Exchange submit a notice of its intent to file at least five business days prior to the filing date, the Commission waived this requirement at the BSE's request. The BSE has also requested that the Commission waive the 30-day operative delay. The Commission believes waiving the 30-day operative delay is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest. Acceleration of the operative date will allow the Exchange to substitute the proposed classes for those that it was unable to list according to the BOX original allocation plan as set forth in chapter XXXVII of the BSE Rules. For these reasons, the Commission designates the proposal to be effective and operative upon filing with the Commission.<sup>13</sup> At any time within 60 days of the filing of this 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. 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-BSE-2004-16 on the subject line.

### *Paper Comments*

- Send paper comments in triplicate to Jonathan G. Katz, Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 450 Fifth Street, NW., Washington, DC 20549-0609.

All submissions should refer to File Number SR-BSE-2004-16. 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 in the Commission's Public Reference Section, 450 Fifth Street, NW., Washington, DC 20549. Copies of such filing also will be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of the BSE. 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 File Number SR-BSE-2004-16 and should be submitted on or before July 9, 2004.

For the Commission, by the Division of Market Regulation, pursuant to delegated authority.<sup>14</sup>

**Margaret H. McFarland,**  
*Deputy Secretary.*

[FR Doc. 04-13846 Filed 6-17-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8010-01-P

## SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-49852; File No. SR-NASD-2004-039]

### **Self-Regulatory Organizations; Notice of Filing of Proposed Rule Change and Amendment No. 1 by National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc. Relating to Reducing the Time for Chairperson Selection**

June 14, 2004.

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 March 4, 2004, National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc. ("NASD"), through its wholly owned subsidiary, NASD Dispute Resolution, Inc. ("Dispute Resolution") filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC" or "Commission") the proposed rule change as described in Items I, II, and III below, which Items have been prepared by NASD. On May 13, 2004,

<sup>7</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78f(b).

<sup>8</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78f(b)(5).

<sup>9</sup> See letter from John Boese, Vice President and Chief Regulatory Officer, BSE, to Nancy Sanow, Assistant Director, Division, Commission, dated May 25, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A).

<sup>11</sup> 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> For purposes only of accelerating the operative date of this proposal, the Commission has considered the proposed rule's impact on efficiency, competition, and capital formation. 15 U.S.C. 78c(f).

<sup>14</sup> 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).

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

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

NASD filed Amendment No. 1 to the proposed rule change.<sup>3</sup> 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 is proposing to amend NASD Rule 10308 of the NASD Code of Arbitration Procedure ("Code") to reduce the time allotted the parties for chairperson selection. Below is the text of the proposed rule change. Proposed new language is in *italics*; proposed deletions are in brackets.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### **10308. Selection of Arbitrators**

\* \* \* \* \*

(c) Striking, Ranking, and Appointing Arbitrators on Lists

\* \* \* \* \*

#### **(5) Selecting a Chairperson for the Panel**

The parties shall have [15] 7 days from the date the Director sends notice of the names of the arbitrators to select a chairperson. *If the parties notify Dispute Resolution staff prior to the expiration of the original deadline that they need more time in which to reach agreement, Dispute Resolution staff will extend the time to select a chairperson for an additional 8 days.* If the parties cannot agree *within the allotted time*, the Director shall appoint a chairperson from the panel as follows:

(Remainder of rule unchanged.)

\* \* \* \* \*

### **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 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**

NASD Dispute Resolution proposes to reduce the time allotted for chairperson

selection in Rule 10308(c)(5) of the Code from 15 days to 7 days after the Director of Arbitration sends notice of the arbitrators to the parties.

#### **1. Purpose**

Rule 10308 sets forth the procedures for how arbitrators and chairpersons are selected for an arbitration panel. First, the arbitrators are selected for the panel and then, from this list, the parties must select a chairperson within a 15-day timeframe. Currently, Rule 10308(c)(5) states, in relevant part, that "the parties shall have 15 days from the date the Director sends notice of the names of the arbitrators to select a chairperson." NASD proposes to reduce the chairperson selection period from 15 days to 7 days.<sup>4</sup> NASD believes the 15-day waiting period causes unnecessary delay in the selection process since Dispute Resolution staff estimates that parties fail to agree on a chairperson in nearly 80 percent of the cases. If the parties notify staff that they are negotiating to select a chairperson, but are unable to conclude the process within the allotted timeframe, staff will grant extensions to facilitate the negotiations.

NASD monitors continuously the claim filing process to determine how it can be improved and streamlined. In light of the failure of the parties to agree on a chairperson in nearly 80 percent of the cases and the delay caused by the 15-day waiting period, NASD believes that the claim filing process would become more efficient if the time required to select a chairperson were reduced. NASD believes that this proposal should provide sufficient time for the parties to reach agreement on a chairperson, if they wish to, and will allow the Initial Prehearing Conference to be scheduled more expeditiously. Further, the proposed rule change would expedite the processing of arbitrations by reducing the turnaround time for chairperson selection.

#### **2. 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 the Association'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 reducing the time it takes to select a chairperson will help streamline the arbitration process and ultimately make the process more efficient.

#### **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. 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-2004-039 on the subject line.

#### **Paper Comments:**

- Send paper comments in triplicate to Jonathan G. Katz, Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 450 Fifth Street, NW., Washington, DC 20549-0609.

All submissions should refer to File Number SR-NASD-2004-039. This file number should be included on the subject line if e-mail is used. To help the Commission process and review your

<sup>3</sup> See letter from Mignon McLemore, Counsel, NASD, to Katherine England, Assistant Director, Division of Market Regulation, Commission, dated May 12, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> In cases where parties must respond to Dispute Resolution by mail, the computer system that tracks the parties' responses adds two days to the response deadline to account for mailing time, and calculates the date their response is due. Parties then receive a letter specifying the date their response is due, based on system calculations.

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, 450 Fifth Street, NW., Washington, DC 20549. Copies of such filing also 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 File Number SR-NASD-2004-039 and should be submitted on or before July 9, 2004.

For the Commission, by the Division of Market Regulation, pursuant to delegated authority.<sup>5</sup>

**Margaret H. McFarland,**  
*Deputy Secretary.*

[FR Doc. 04-13842 Filed 6-17-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8010-01-P

## SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-49841; File No. SR-OCC-2003-11]

### Self-Regulatory Organizations; The Options Clearing Corporation; Order Approving a Proposed Rule Change Relating to Clearing Member Trade Assignment Processing

June 9, 2004.

On October 14, 2003, pursuant to Section 19(b)(1) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934<sup>1</sup> ("Act"), The Options Clearing Corporation ("OCC") filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("Commission") a proposed rule change (File No. SR-OCC-2003-11) and on February 18, 2004, amended the proposed rule change. Notice of the proposal was published in the **Federal Register** on

March 18, 2004.<sup>2</sup> The Commission received one comment letter.<sup>3</sup> For the reasons discussed below, the Commission is approving the proposed rule change.

#### I. Description

The proposed rule change will amend OCC's By-Laws and Rules to expand its clearing member trade assignment ("CTMA") processing procedures, to increase OCC's initial and minimum net capital requirements, and to increase OCC's minimum clearing fund requirement for execution-only clearing members.

#### A. Background

CMTA processing permits one clearing member ("carrying clearing member") to authorize another clearing member ("executing clearing member") to direct that its exchange transactions be transferred to an account of the carrying clearing member for clearance and settlement.<sup>4</sup> Generally, the executing clearing member executes the transaction itself or guarantees the broker that executed the transaction and directs the transaction to be cleared into an account of the carrying clearing member through the options exchanges' systems for reporting matching trade information to OCC. A carrying clearing member does not have the ability to approve or reject such a direction before the transaction is entered into the exchanges' systems for reporting to OCC.

The matching trade information submitted by an exchange for a transaction that has been executed pursuant to a CMTA arrangement will identify both the carrying and executing clearing members by their assigned clearing numbers. OCC permits an executing clearing member to transfer transactions effected only on the exchange(s) designated by the carrying clearing member in a CMTA authorization filed with OCC. Accordingly, before a transaction is transferred to an account of the carrying clearing member for clearance, OCC's system confirms that (i) there is a valid CMTA arrangement between the carrying and executing clearing members and (ii) the exchange transaction was effected on a designated exchange. The carrying clearing member

is then responsible for settling the trade and maintaining the resulting position. If their arrangement permits, a carrying clearing member may transfer the position back to the executing clearing member through OCC's systems to correct the execution member's good-faith error in identifying the carrying clearing member in the submitted trade information.<sup>5</sup>

OCC's CMTA facility supports two distinct types of business. First, clearing members that execute transactions for correspondent brokers use the process to transfer transactions to the correspondent brokers' clearing firms. Second, firms that execute trades for institutional and other customers with prime brokerage arrangements use the process to transfer the trades to the prime broker clearing member.

#### B. CMTA Rule Changes

The new OCC Rule 403 will require clearing members that are parties to a CMTA arrangement to register and provide certain details of their arrangement with OCC. Such registration will be effective when the clearing members provide matching information regarding their arrangement. Rule 403 will also establish certain actions for OCC's system to verify that a valid CMTA registration exists. Transactions that fail these checks will be transferred to a designated account or, if such designation has not been made, to the customers' account or segregated futures account of the executing clearing member, as applicable. A carrying clearing member is responsible for each transaction transferred to its account pursuant to a CMTA arrangement subject to its right to return the resulting position for certain specified reasons (as explained below). Notwithstanding that right, the carrying clearing member is responsible to effect premium or margin settlement, as applicable, on the business day after the trade was executed for any positions carried in its accounts after nightly processing.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> This commonly occurs if the executing clearing member has transposed digits of a carrying clearing member's clearing number causing the transaction to clear in an account of a wrong clearing member (assuming a valid CMTA arrangement exists between the executing and misidentified carrying clearing member).

<sup>6</sup> Certain exchanges submit matching trade information on a real time or intermittent basis during a trading day. OCC immediately processes such submissions and makes updated position information available for clearing member review throughout the day. For transactions effected on such exchanges, clearing members may be able to effect a return before OCC closes its window for the submission of returns, in which case the executing

Continued

<sup>5</sup> 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).

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

<sup>2</sup> Securities Exchange Act Release No. 49378 (Mar. 9, 2004), 69 FR 12190 (Mar. 15, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Letter from John Berton and Georgia Bullitt, Ad Hoc CMTA Committee of the Securities Industry Association, March, 22, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> The CMTA facility was developed to permit carrying clearing members to clear and settle transactions effected on an exchange where they are either not a member or do not maintain a presence for trade execution.