

Office of Hearing Officers Docket Portal

FINRA Adopts Amendments to Require Use of a Portal in Proceedings Before the Office of Hearing Officers

Effective Date: October 7, 2025

Summary

FINRA has developed a secure electronic portal to replace email as the primary method for the filing and service of documents in Office of Hearing Officers (OHO) proceedings. These amendments modernize service and filing processes in a manner that will protect investors and the public interest by promoting efficiency while preserving fair process in OHO proceedings. The amendments become effective on October 7, 2025.

Questions concerning this *Notice* should be directed to:

- ▶ Ilana Herscovitz Reid, Associate General Counsel, Office of General Counsel, by [email](#) or (202) 728-8268;
- ▶ Maureen Delaney, Senior Vice President and Chief Hearing Officer, OHO, by [email](#) or (202) 728-8153; or
- ▶ Carla Carloni, Vice President and Deputy Chief Hearing Officer, OHO, by [email](#) or (202) 728-8019.

Background & Discussion

OHO serves as FINRA's adjudicatory forum for disciplinary proceedings and expedited proceedings, including hearings for temporary and permanent cease and desist orders. Since 2020, FINRA has permitted email service and filing in OHO proceedings.¹ Those changes reduced FINRA's reliance on paper documents in favor of more efficient electronic formats.

September 17, 2025

Notice Type

- ▶ Rule Amendment

Suggested Routing

- ▶ Compliance
- ▶ Legal
- ▶ Registered Representatives
- ▶ Senior Management

Key Topics

- ▶ Code of Procedure
- ▶ National Adjudicatory Council
- ▶ Office of Hearing Officers

Referenced Rules & Notices

- ▶ FINRA Rule 9000 Series
- ▶ Regulatory Notice 22-16

To further improve efficiency in OHO proceedings, FINRA developed a secure web-based system that is accessible by parties and their representatives in proceedings before OHO (OHO Docket Portal).² Invited participants are permitted to access the secure web-based system to submit documents, serve other parties (with exceptions, as described below), and view their case information and documents. When a party submits pleadings or documents through the OHO Docket Portal, the party accomplishes both filing with OHO as well as service on the other parties.

The OHO Docket Portal will allow parties to view and retrieve all filings at a single location in chronological order, easily verify receipt of documents submitted, and provide a calendar of deadlines and key dates. FINRA will provide step-by-step instructions and training videos for filing new cases and using the OHO Docket Portal. FINRA also intends to periodically update and enhance the OHO Docket Portal.

FINRA has amended its rules to require documents in OHO proceedings to be served and filed through the OHO Docket Portal.³ The amendments will also require that persons representing themselves or others provide an email address at the time they make any filing or otherwise appear before OHO.⁴ This will support the transition to the OHO Docket Portal because an email address is necessary to register with the OHO Docket Portal.

The amendments provide for reasonable accommodations to the extent an applicant, respondent or other party lacks the ability to use or access technology needed to file, serve or accept service through the OHO Docket Portal. The process for requesting an alternative method of service or filing will be posted to FINRA's website, as well as explained in the Notice of Complaint.⁵ If a party shows good cause, the Hearing Officer, Hearing Panel or Extended Hearing Panel will order that filing or service occur by another method rather than the OHO Docket Portal.

There are two exceptions to the requirement to use the OHO Docket Portal. The first exception is for complaints. FINRA rules do not permit FINRA to serve a complaint on a respondent electronically. Under the amended rules, FINRA will file a complaint through the OHO Docket Portal but will not serve the complaint through the OHO Docket Portal. The only permissible methods for FINRA to serve a complaint are by personal service, mail or courier. The second exception is for service of papers in default cases. In default cases, where the respondent failed to answer the complaint, failed to appear at an initial pre-hearing conference, or failed to appear at a hearing, the respondent may not have registered with the OHO Docket Portal or otherwise have access to it. Thus, service of papers in default cases must continue to be by personal service, mail or courier.

Effective Date

The amendments will become effective on October 7, 2025.⁶

Endnotes

- 1 FINRA adopted temporary amendments regarding email service and filing during the period in which the COVID-19 pandemic impacted FINRA's operations. *See, e.g.,* Securities Exchange Act Release No. 88917 (May 20, 2020), 85 FR 31832 (May 27, 2020) (Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of File No. SR-FINRA-2020-015); Securities Exchange Release No. 95281 (July 14, 2022), 87 FR 43335 (July 20, 2022) (Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of File No. SR-FINRA-2022-018). In June 2022, the Commission approved a proposed rule change to make the temporary amendments permanent, with some modifications. *See* Securities Exchange Act Release No. 95147 (June 23, 2022), 87 FR 38803 (June 29, 2022) (Order Approving File No. SR-FINRA-2022-009). Those amendments became effective on August 22, 2022, on which date the temporary amendments expired. *See [Regulatory Notice 22-16](#)* (July 2022).
- 2 FINRA has developed the OHO Docket Portal for use in OHO proceedings only. It does not support service or filing of documents in National Adjudicatory Council (NAC) proceedings. The OHO Docket Portal does not impact how documents are served or filed in NAC proceedings.
- 3 For a complete description of the amendments, *see* Securities Exchange Act Release No. 103685 (August 12, 2025), 90 FR 39440 (August 15, 2025) (Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of File No. SR-FINRA-2025-013).
- 4 *See* Rule 9141 (Appearance and Practice; Notice of Appearance). FINRA notes that Rule 9141's requirements apply when appearing before any Adjudicator as defined in Rule 9120(a).
- 5 When the Department of Enforcement serves a complaint on a respondent, the Notice of Complaint tells the respondent how to file the answer and other documents with OHO.
- 6 *See* Securities Exchange Act Release No. 103685 (August 12, 2025), 90 FR 39440 (August 15, 2025) (Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of File No. SR-FINRA-2025-013).