

Information Memo



New York
Stock Exchange, Inc.

Member Firm Regulation

20 Broad Street
New York, NY 10005

Number 87- 38
October 28 , 1987

TO: Members and Member Organizations

ATTENTION: Chief Executive, Financial and Operations
Officers/Partners

SUBJECT: Changes to SEC Rule 15c3-3 for Securities Subject
to Hold in Custody Repurchase Agreements and Reserve
Formula

The Securities and Exchange Commission has adopted amendments to Rule 15c3-3 (Customer Protection - Reserves and Custody of Securities) for broker-dealers who retain custody of securities that are subject to repurchase agreements ("hold in custody repurchase agreements"). ^{1/} Also, unrelated to these changes, the Commission is correcting an error in the Code of Federal Regulations, relating to the wording of Item 9 of the Formula for Determination of Reserve Requirements in Rule 15c3-3a. A copy of Release No. 34-24778 is attached for your convenience.

^{1/} Subsequent to the original proposal by the Commission (Release No. 34-23602, dated September 4, 1986, attached to and detailed in Information Memo Number 86-35), Congress enacted the Government Securities Act of 1986, which authorized the Department of Treasury ("Treasury") to adopt financial responsibility rules for all brokers and dealers of U. S. Government securities, including those firms currently registered with the Commission. In June 1987, the Commission repropoed amendments to the rule in Release No. 34-24554, which was based on the temporary rules established by the Treasury.

The effective date of the amendments is January 31, 1988. However, between July 25, 1987 and January 31, 1988, registered broker-dealers must comply with applicable provisions of the Treasury rule, which was adopted July 24, 1987.

The amendments adopted by the Commission include the following:

(1) SEC Rule 15c3-3 (Possession or Control of Securities and Disclosures)

Broker-dealers that retain custody of securities that are subject to repurchase agreement between the broker-dealer and a counterparty shall:

- (A) Obtain the repurchase agreement in writing.
- (B) Confirm in writing the specific securities that are the subject of a repurchase transaction pursuant to such agreement at the end of the trading day in which the transaction is initiated and at the end of any other day during which other securities are substituted if the substitution results in a change to issuer, maturity date, par amount or coupon rate as specified in the previous confirmation.
- (C) Advise the counterparty to the repurchase agreement that the Securities Investor Protection Corporation has taken the position that the provisions of the Securities Investor Protection Act of 1970 do not protect the counterparty with respect to the repurchase agreement. 2/
- (D) Maintain possession or control of securities that are the subject of the agreement. 3/

A broker or dealer shall not be in violation of the requirement to maintain possession or control pursuant to paragraph (b)(4)(i)(D) during the trading day if:

2/ "The United States District Court for the District of New Jersey decided in *Cohen V ARMY MORAL SUPPORT FUND* (in re: Bevill, Bresler and Schulman), Adv. Proc. No. 85-21-3 (slip op.) (D.N.J. Oct. 23, 1986), that repo transactions were purchases and sales rather than secured loans. The practical effect of this decision was to extend coverage under the Securities Investor Protection Act to repo participants within that jurisdiction. A final order in that case, however, has not yet been entered and, therefore, no appeal has been possible from the Court's determination".

3/ For purposes of this paragraph, securities are in the broker's or dealer's control only if they are in the control of the broker or dealer within the meaning of SS 240.15c3-3(c)(1), (c)(3), (c)(5) or (c)(6).

- (A) In the written repurchase agreement, the counterparty grants the broker-dealer the right to substitute other securities for those subject to the agreement; and
- (B) The provisions in the written repurchase agreement governing the right, if any, to substitute is immediately preceded by the disclosure statement, included in the SEC release (attached), which must be prominently displayed.

The confirmation issued shall specify the issuer, maturity date, coupon rate, par amount and market value of the security. It shall also identify a CUSIP or mortgage-backed security pool number, as appropriate, except that a CUSIP or a pool number is not required on the confirmation if it is identified on internal records of the broker or dealer that designate the specific security of the counterparty. The market value of any security that is the subject of the repurchase transaction shall be the most recently available bid price plus accrued interest.

The foregoing shall not apply to a repurchase agreement between the broker-dealer and another broker-dealer (including a government securities broker-dealer), a registered municipal securities dealer, or a general partner or director or principal officer of the broker-dealer or any person to the extent that his claim is explicitly subordinated to the claims of creditors of the broker or dealer.

(2) Reserve Formula Credit

Note the Commission's view that if the broker or dealer enters into a hold in custody repurchase agreement with a retail customer who has a preexisting free credit balance with the broker-dealer, the liability of the broker-dealer will ordinarily be considered to be a free credit balance for purposes of Rule 15c3-3. Customers that conduct their business with the broker-dealer on a delivery versus payment basis would not be considered retail customers for purposes of this interpretation.

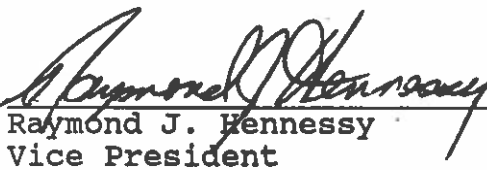
(3) SEC Rule 15c3-3a Exhibit A (Formula for Determination of Reserve Requirements)

Item #9 is corrected to read as follows:

- 4 -

Market value of securities which are in transfer in excess of 40 calendar days and have not been confirmed to be in transfer by the transfer agent or the issuer during the 40 days.

Questions regarding these amendments should be directed to your finance coordinator.


Raymond J. Hennessy
Vice President

Attachment

9346J

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

17 CFR Part 240

[Release No. 34-24778; File No. S7-21-86]

Customer Protection Rule

AGENCY: Securities and Exchange Commission.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Securities and Exchange Commission ("Commission") is adopting amendments to its customer protection rule under the Securities Exchange Act ("Act") in connection with repurchase agreements where the broker-dealer agrees to retain custody of the securities that are subject to those agreements ("hold in custody repurchase agreements"). The amendments to the rule will require registered broker-dealers to obtain repurchase agreements in writing, to make specific disclosures regarding certain risks associated with hold in custody repurchase transactions and to disclose that the Securities Investor Protection Corporation ("SIPC") has taken the position that coverage under the Securities Investor Protection Act of 1970 is not available to repurchase agreement participants. The amendments further require registered broker-dealers to maintain possession or control of securities subject to hold in custody repurchase agreements, except that possession or control during the trading day is not required if certain conditions are met.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 31, 1988.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael A. Macchiaroli, (202) 272-2904, Julio A. Mojica, (202) 272-2372, or Michael P. Jamroz, (202) 272-2398, Division of Market Regulation, 450 5th Street NW., Washington, DC 20549.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In September of 1986, the Commission proposed amendments to its financial responsibility rules relating to repurchase and reverse repurchase agreements. Those proposed amendments were in response to the failures of several government securities dealers which caused substantial harm to public investors through fraudulent

practices.¹ The proposal included amendments to the Commission's net capital rule, securities count and recordkeeping rules and customer protection rule, Securities Exchange Act Rule 15c-3. Subsequently, Congress enacted the Government Securities Act of 1986 ("GSA"), which authorized the Department of the Treasury ("Treasury") to adopt financial responsibility and customer protection rules for all brokers and dealers of U.S. government securities, including those firms currently registered with the Commission. The Treasury has since adopted rules that, in large part, incorporate existing Commission financial responsibility rules. The Treasury's customer protection rule requires compliance with Rule 15c3-3, but modified the provisions that were proposed in the September Release. In Securities Exchange Act Release No. 24554 ("the June Release"), the Commission proposed for comment amendments to Rule 15c3-3 that would substantially conform to the Treasury's temporary customer protection rule. Today, the Commission adopts those amendments with certain modifications to conform to the Treasury's customer protection rule as adopted in final form on July 24, 1987.²

Unrelated to these changes, the Commission is deleting the word "last" from the wording of Item 9 of the Formula for Determination of Reserve Requirements in Rule 15c3-3a to correct an error in the Code of Federal Regulations.

I. Discussion

The proposed amendments to Rule 15c3-3 announced in September were made in response to, among other things, fraudulent practices of both unregistered and registered government securities broker-dealers involving repurchase agreements where the broker-dealers retained possession of the securities underlying the repurchase agreements ("hold in custody repo"). In a repurchase agreement ("repo"), the broker-dealer sells securities and agrees to repurchase the same or similar securities at a later date. In a hold in custody repo, the broker-dealer receives the funds from the sale of the securities but retains control of the securities. Some of the failed broker-dealers allegedly used those securities in their business although they had been sold to the repo counterparties. Those counterparties will be exposed to loss if

coverage under the Securities Investor Protection Act of 1970 ("SIPA") is not available.³ The position of the Securities Investor Protection Corporation is that persons engaging in repurchase and reverse repurchase agreements are not customers of the broker-dealer within the meaning of SIPA and are therefore not covered under SIPA.⁴

The amendments to Rule 15c3-3 proposed in September would have required broker-dealers that enter into hold in custody repos to: (i) Disclose the rights and liabilities of the parties to hold in custody repos including a statement that SIPC has taken the position that SIPA coverage is not available to repo counterparties; (ii) disclose to the counterparty which securities are being held on his behalf under the hold in custody repo; and (iii) maintain possession and control of those securities free of lien, except for clearing liens imposed during the trading day for hold in custody repos exceeding \$1 million.

Subsequent to the Commission's original proposal, the Treasury, pursuant to authority recently granted to it under the GSA, adopted temporary financial responsibility rules for all brokers and dealers in U.S. government securities in May of 1987. The Treasury's temporary customer protection rule altered the requirements proposed by the Commission. In essence, the Treasury's temporary regulation included the Commission's amendments to Rule 15c3-3 except that: (i) The Treasury rule required broker-dealers to obtain written hold in custody repurchase agreements and to make specific disclosures in those agreements regarding the broker-dealer's use of securities obtained pursuant to hold in custody repos during the trading day; and (ii) the Treasury rule did not require intra-day possession or control of securities that were subject to hold in custody repos of under \$1 million on any day on which the broker-dealer obtained the specific prior consent of

³ Under section 9(a) of SIPA, advances for customer claims are limited to \$100,000 for cash claims and \$500,000 for claims for securities. To the extent the claims of repo counterparties exceed those limits, those counterparties will be exposed to loss even if SIPC coverage is extended.

⁴ The United States District Court for the District of New Jersey decided in *Cohen v. Army Moral Support Fund (in re Beville, Bresler and Schulman)*, Adv. Proc. No. 85-21-3 (slip op.) (D.N.J., Oct. 23, 1986), that repo transactions were purchases and sales rather than secured loans. The practical effect of this decision was to extend coverage under the Securities Investor Protection Act to repo participants within that jurisdiction. A final order in that case, however, has not yet been entered and, therefore, no appeal has been possible from the Court's determination.

¹ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 23602 (September 4, 1986), 51 FR 32658 (September 15, 1986) ("September Release").

² 52 FR 27910 (July 24, 1987).

the counterparty to substitution. The Commission's original proposal would have required registered broker-dealers to maintain continuous possession or control of securities subject to hold in custody repos under \$1 million.

In the June Release, the Commission proposed for comment alternative amendments to Rule 15c3-3 relating to the treatment of hold in custody repos. One version was the same as the Treasury's temporary rule. The other version differed from the Treasury's rule only with respect to hold in custody repos under \$1 million. The second alternative contained a continuous possession or control requirement for securities obtained under those agreements.

The Commission received one comment letter in response to its proposal.⁵ In its letter, the Public Securities Association ("PSA") objected to the required confirmation of specific securities subject to hold in custody repos and the disclosure of the market value of those securities. The PSA also opposed special restrictions on hold in custody repurchase transactions under \$1 million.

In designing its proposed amendments to the customer protection rule, the Commission intended to ameliorate, among other things, two weaknesses observed in the hold in custody repo market. One concern was the duplicative use of securities obtained by broker-dealers under hold in custody repos. The use of securities that were already subject to hold in custody repos was facilitated by the broker-dealers' failure to designate specific securities to specific repos. In confirming specific securities, this allocation will have to be performed and the double use of securities will be inhibited.

The other concern was the apparent lack of understanding of hold in custody repo counterparties of their rights and liabilities. To some extent, this misunderstanding was exacerbated by the unsettled legal status of repos. As noted above, SIPC has taken the position that repos are secured loans and not purchases and sales of securities protected under SIPA. If hold in custody repos are secured lending transactions, whether and when a perfected security interest attaches are questions of local law, the answers to which are not always clear. To the extent an interest in securities subject to a hold in custody repo exists,

counterparties may be frustrated in submitting claims against those securities because they are not told which securities they purchased under the repo. In many instances, broker-dealers confirm those transactions by submitting a confirmation to the counterparty that states that they have purchased "various" government securities. Because the counterparty never receives the securities, it may never become aware of which securities are subject to the agreement. In some cases, even the broker-dealer is not aware of which securities are subject to the agreement. As mentioned above, this may occur when the broker-dealer fails to make the designation necessary to confirm specific securities.

The amendments to Rule 15c3-3 require broker-dealers to make basic disclosures to hold in custody repo counterparties regarding their rights and liabilities under the agreement. The amendments require that the broker-dealer inform the counterparty of SIPC's position and state to the counterparty that its securities may be subject to clearing liens during the trading day.

The amendments also require the broker-dealer to disclose the identity of the specific securities that are the subject of the agreement so the counterparty will be able to pursue any legal interest it may have in those securities in the event that the broker-dealer defaults. The broker-dealer will also be required to include the market value of those securities on the confirmation so the counterparty can more easily determine if sufficient securities have been allocated to it under the agreement. The disclosure of market value is particularly important because it is evident that in some sectors of the repo market, counterparties are measuring credit exposure by comparing the amount of funds invested in the repurchase transaction to the face value of government securities involved. The disclosure of market value of the securities subject to the repo emphasizes to those counterparties that market value, not face value, is the appropriate measure for determining credit exposure.

With respect to hold in custody repo transactions under \$1 million, the Commission believes that special treatment for those transactions is not appropriate at this time. When the amendments to Rule 15c3-3 were proposed for comment in September 1986, the Commission sought to achieve its regulatory objectives with a minimum burden on the repo marketplace. The Commission learned

that, in order to maximize the efficiency of the settlement process for U.S. government securities, broker-dealers needed to be able to substitute securities subject to hold in custody repos. In order for those substitutions to be performed, broker-dealers had to combine securities subject to hold in custody repos with other government securities in their clearance accounts and submit all of those securities to clearing liens during the day. However, the Commission was also aware of instances where securities subject to hold in custody repos were misappropriated. The Commission therefore proposed that broker-dealers obtain possession and control of securities that were the subject of hold in custody repo agreements exceeding \$1 million at the end of each trading day. Because the Commission was concerned that smaller investors might not fully appreciate the risks involved with hold in custody repo transactions, the Commission proposed that small hold in custody repo transactions be subject to a continuous possession or control requirement.

When the Commission repropose its amendments in the alternative in June 1987, the amendments included significant modifications to the Commission's original proposal that were included in the recently adopted Treasury's temporary rule. Both alternatives required that hold in custody repo agreements be written and include specific disclosures regarding SIPC coverage and the effects of consent to substitution by the counterparty. The alternatives differed in that one would have required continuous possession or control of securities subject to hold in custody repos under \$1 million while the other proposed, in a manner identical to that required under the Treasury's temporary rule, that those securities could be used by the broker-dealer provided that prior written or oral consent of the counterparty had been received on the day of use.

The release requested comment on the enforceability of an oral consent provision but, at the same time, the Commission was uncertain of whether the benefit obtained by a continuous possession or control requirement was worth the cost to the industry of treating smaller hold in custody repos differently. The Commission was aware that broker-dealers may incur a significant recordkeeping cost in identifying those transactions. Furthermore, a continuous possession or control requirement may hinder the settlement process if the broker-dealer is unable to effect substitutions. The

⁵ The Department of Treasury received 21 comment letters which the Commission considered in evaluating this proposal. The Treasury comment letters have been placed in the Commission's public files.

Commission also understands that many small hold in custody repos are entered into by large, sophisticated investors. Since hold in custody repos often represent temporary investments of available cash balances, the size of the repo is often more a function of available funds than the net worth of the investor. Finally, the Commission was concerned that the stricter segregation requirements might result in many firms refusing to effect small hold in custody repo transactions.

Some of the Commission's concerns have been addressed by modifications to its original proposal. The amendments, as adopted, require explicit disclosures regarding the risks of entering into hold in custody repos to be made in a written agreement. The counterparty will be informed of the ramifications of his consent to substitution and the exposure of his securities to clearing liens. Moreover, the Commission believes that the requirement that firms segregate hold in custody securities every night and confirm the specific securities employed in hold in custody repos should serve to protect against the double use of those securities. In light of all of the considerations, the Commission has determined that a separate standard for hold in custody repos under \$1 million is not appropriate.

The Commission remains concerned about the use of free credit balances by means of hold in custody repurchase agreements. In some instances, broker-dealers have characterized free credit balances as repurchase agreements in an apparent attempt to avoid depositing those free credit balances in the Special Reserve Bank Account for the Exclusive Benefit of Customers ("Reserve Account") under Rule 15c3-3(e).⁶ The Commission believes that the written agreement requirement will inhibit this practice and make smaller repo participants more conscious of the risks involved in the transaction. However, the Commission's view is that if the broker or dealer enters into a hold in custody repurchase agreement with a retail customer who has a preexisting

free credit balance with the broker or dealer, the liability of the broker or dealer will ordinarily be considered to be a free credit balance for purposes of Rule 15c3-3. Customers that conduct their business with the broker-dealer on a delivery versus payment basis would not be considered retail customers for purposes of this interpretation. The Commission will continue to monitor this area and may consider imposing separate restrictions on smaller hold in custody repos in the future. The Commission has selected an effective date of January 31, 1988, to coincide with the effective date of the Treasury rule adopted in final form July 24, 1987. Between July 25, 1987 and January 31, 1988 registered broker-dealers must comply with applicable provisions of the Treasury rule.

II. Summary of Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

The Commission has prepared a Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis in accordance with 5 U.S.C. section 604 regarding the amendments to Rule 15c3-3. The Analysis notes that the objective of the amendments is to further the purposes of the various financial responsibility rules, which are designed to provide safeguards with respect to the financial responsibility and related practices of brokers and dealers and to require broker-dealers to maintain such records as necessary or appropriate in the public interest or for the protection of investors. The Analysis states that the amendments would subject small broker-dealers to additional recordkeeping and disclosure requirements. The Analysis states that the Commission did not receive any comments concerning the Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis. A copy of the Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis may be obtained by contacting Michael P. Jamroz, Division of Market Regulation, Securities and Exchange Commission, Washington, DC 20549, (202) 272-2398.

III. Statutory Authority

Pursuant to the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 and, particularly, sections 15(c)(3), 17 and 23 thereof, 15 U.S.C. 78o(c)(3), 78q, and 78w, the Commission is adopting amendments to 240.15c3-3 of Title 17 of the Code of Federal Regulations in the manner set forth below.

List of Subjects in 17 CFR Part 240

Securities.

Text of Amendments

In accordance with the foregoing, 17 CFR Part 240 is amended as follows:

PART 240—GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

1. The authority citation for Part 240 continues to read as follows:

Authority: Sec. 23, 48 Stat. 901, as amended; 15 U.S.C. 78w * * *. Section 240.15c3-3 is also issued under secs. 15(c)(3) and 17(a), 15 U.S.C. 78o(c)(3) and 78q(a).

2. By adding paragraph (b)(4) to § 240.15c3-3 as follows:

§ 240.15c3-3 Customer protection reserves and custody of securities.

* * * * *

(b) * * *

(4)(i) Notwithstanding paragraph (k)(2)(i) of this section, a broker or dealer that retains custody of securities that are the subject of a repurchase agreement between the broker or dealer and a counterparty shall:

(A) Obtain the repurchase agreement in writing;

(B) Confirm in writing the specific securities that are the subject of a repurchase transaction pursuant to such agreement at the end of the trading day on which the transaction is initiated and at the end of any other day during which other securities are substituted if the substitution results in a change to issuer, maturity date, par amount or coupon rate as specified in the previous confirmation;

(C) Advise the counterparty in the repurchase agreement that the Securities Investor Protection Corporation has taken the position that the provisions of the Securities Investor Protection Act of 1970 do not protect the counterparty with respect to the repurchase agreement;

(D) Maintain possession or control of securities that are the subject of the agreement.

(ii) For purpose of this paragraph (b)(4), securities are in the broker's or dealer's control only if they are in the control of the broker or dealer within the meaning of § 240.15c3-3 (c)(1), (c)(3), (c)(5) or (c)(6) of this title.

(iii) A broker or dealer shall not be in violation of the requirement to maintain possession or control pursuant to paragraph (b)(4)(i)(D) during the trading day if:

(A) In the written repurchase agreement, the counterparty grants the broker or dealer the right to substitute other securities for those subject to the agreement; and

(B) The provision in the written repurchase agreement governing the right, if any, to substitute is immediately preceded by the following disclosure

⁶ Rule 15c3-3(e) requires broker-dealers to deposit in the Reserve Account an amount as computed on a periodic basis under the Rule 15c3-3a Formula for Determination of Reserve Requirement ("Reserve Formula"). Under the Reserve Formula, the amount of the required deposit is determined by comparing the free credit balances and other funds obtained from customers to the amount by which the broker-dealer finances customer activities through the use of its own funds. Because the Commission has not taken the position that repo participants are "customers" for purposes of Rule 15c3-3, funds obtained in a repo would not be included in the Reserve Formula unless customer securities were used in the repo.

statement, which must be prominently displayed:

Required Disclosure

The [seller] is not permitted to substitute other securities for those subject to this agreement and therefore must keep the [buyer's] securities segregated at all times, unless in this agreement the [buyer] grants the [seller] the right to substitute other securities. If the [buyer] grants the right to substitute, this means that the [buyer's] securities will likely be commingled with the [seller's] own securities during the trading day. The [buyer] is advised that, during any trading day that the [buyer's] securities are commingled with the [seller's] securities, they will be subject to liens granted by the [seller] to its clearing bank and may be used by the [seller] for deliveries on other securities transactions. Whenever the securities are commingled, the [seller's] ability to resegment substitute securities for the [buyer] will be subject to the [seller's] ability to satisfy the clearing lien or to obtain substitute securities.

(iv) A confirmation issued in accordance with paragraph (b)(4)(i)(B) of this section shall specify the issuer, maturity date, coupon rate, par amount and market value of the security and shall further identify a CUSIP or mortgage-backed security pool number, as appropriate, except that a CUSIP or a pool number is not required on the confirmation if it is identified in internal records of the broker or dealer that designate the specific security of the counterparty. For purposes of this paragraph (b)(4)(iv), the market value of any security that is the subject of the repurchase transaction shall be the most recently available bid price plus accrued interest, obtained by any reasonable and consistent methodology.

(v) This paragraph (b)(4) shall not apply to a repurchase agreement between the broker or dealer and another broker or dealer (including a government securities broker or dealer), a registered municipal securities dealer, or a general partner or director or principal officer of the broker or dealer or any person to the extent that his claim is explicitly subordinated to the claims of creditors of the broker or dealer.

3. By amending § 240.15c3-3a by revising item 9 as follows:

§ 240.15c3-3a Exhibit A—formula for determination of reserve requirement of brokers and dealers under § 240.15c3-3.

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•	•	•

9 Market value of securities which are in transfer in excess of 40 calendar days and have not been confirmed to be in transfer by

	Debits	Credits
the transfer agent or the issuer during the 40 days.		
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By the Commission.
August 6, 1987.

Jonathan G. Katz,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 87-18478 Filed 8-13-87; 8:45 am]

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