

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
(Release No. 34-63966; File No. SR-FINRA-2011-009)

February 25, 2011

Self-Regulatory Organizations; Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc.; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of Proposed Rule Change to Eliminate Duplicative Filings Under FINRA Rule 9610(a)

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 February 22, 2011, Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc. (“FINRA”) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (“SEC” or “Commission”) the proposed rule change as described in Items I and II below, which items have been prepared by FINRA. FINRA has designated the proposed rule change as constituting a “non-controversial” rule change under paragraph (f)(6) of Rule 19b-4 under the Act,³ which renders the proposal effective upon receipt of this filing by the Commission. The Commission is publishing this notice to solicit comments on the proposed rule change from interested parties.

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

FINRA is filing the proposed rule change to amend FINRA Rule 9610 (Application) to delete the requirement that members provide a copy of an application for exemptive relief to FINRA’s Office of General Counsel (“OGC”).

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

² 17 CFR 240.19b-4.

³ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

The text of the proposed rule change is available on FINRA's Web site at <http://www.finra.org>, at the principal office of FINRA and at the Commission's Public Reference Room.

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

In its filing with the Commission, FINRA 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. FINRA 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

The FINRA Rule 9600 Series sets forth procedures for members seeking exemptive relief from certain enumerated rules. Currently, Rule 9610(a) requires members to file a written application for exemptive relief with the FINRA department or staff responsible for making a decision on the application, and it also requires members to provide a copy of that application to OGC. OGC receives a significant number of copies of exemptive relief applications, the processing of which uses valuable staff resources. Additionally, in the event of an appeal, the FINRA department or staff that decided the member's application for exemptive relief provides a copy of that application to OGC. FINRA is proposing to delete the requirement that members provide a copy of the application for exemptive relief to OGC. FINRA believes that the proposed change will make the process of seeking exemptive relief more efficient by eliminating duplicative filings and providing members with a single point of contact, and it also will save

staff resources. Moreover, with respect to those matters that are appealed, OGC will continue to receive a copy of the member's application for exemptive relief from the FINRA department or staff that decided the application.

FINRA is not proposing any changes to FINRA Rule 9630 (Appeal), which will continue to require members to file, in the event of an appeal, a written notice of appeal with OGC and provide a copy of the notice of appeal to the FINRA department or staff that decided the application for exemptive relief.

FINRA has filed the proposed rule change for immediate effectiveness and has requested that the SEC waive the requirement that the proposed rule change not become operative for 30 days after the date of the filing, such that FINRA can implement the proposed rule change immediately.

2. Statutory Basis

FINRA believes that the proposed rule change is consistent with the provisions of Section 15A(b)(6) of the Act,⁴ which requires, among other things, that FINRA 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. FINRA believes the proposed rule change enhances the efficiency of the exemptive relief process by eliminating duplicative filings and providing members with a single point of contact.

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

FINRA 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.

⁴ 15 U.S.C. 78q-3(b)(6).

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

Because the foregoing proposed rule change does not: (i) significantly affect the protection of investors or the public interest; (ii) impose any significant burden on competition; and (iii) become operative for 30 days from the date on which it was filed, or such shorter time as the Commission may designate, it has become effective pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A) of the Act⁵ and Rule 19b-4(f)(6) thereunder.⁶

FINRA has asked the Commission to waive the 30-day operative delay set forth in Rule 19b-4(f)(6). The Commission believes that the proposal is intended to promote efficiency by eliminating duplicative filings and providing members with a single point of contact. The Commission sees no benefit to delaying the implementation of these changes, and therefore believes it is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest to waive the 30-day operative delay. The Commission hereby grants such waiver.⁷

At any time within 60 days of the filing of the proposed rule change, the Commission summarily may temporarily suspend 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. If the Commission takes such action, the

⁵ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A).

⁶ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

⁷ For purposes only of waiving the 30-day operative delay, the Commission has considered the proposed rule change's impact on efficiency, competition, and capital formation. 15 U.S.C. 78c(f).

Commission shall institute proceedings to determine whether the proposed rule should be approved or 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 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. Please include File Number SR-FINRA-2011-009 on the subject line.

Paper comments:

- Send paper comments in triplicate to Elizabeth M. Murphy, Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 100 F Street, NE, Washington, DC 20549-1090.

All submissions should refer to File Number SR-FINRA-2011-009. 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 website (<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 website viewing and printing in the Commission's Public Reference Room on official business days between the

hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Copies of such filing also will be available for inspection and copying at the principal offices of FINRA. 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-FINRA-2011-009, and should be submitted on or before [insert date 21 days from publication in the Federal Register].

For the Commission, by the Division of Trading and Markets, pursuant to delegated authority.⁸

Cathy H. Ahn
Deputy Secretary

⁸ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).