

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION  
(Release No. 34-51502; File No. SR-Amex-2005-009)

April 7, 2005

Self-Regulatory Organizations; Order Approving Proposed Rule Change by the American Stock Exchange LLC to Require Members to Complete Systems Training and to Include Violations of This Requirement in Its Minor Rule Violation Plan

On February 1, 2005, the American Stock Exchange LLC (“Amex” or “Exchange”) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (“Commission”), 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> a proposed rule change to adopt new Amex Rule 51 to require its members to complete training in such systems as the Exchange may require and to amend its Minor Rule Violation Plan (“Plan”) to allow the Exchange to issue minor fines for non-compliance with this rule. The proposed rule change was published for comment in the Federal Register on March 8, 2005.<sup>3</sup> The Commission received no comments regarding the proposal.

The Commission finds that the proposed rule change is consistent with the requirements of the Act and the rules and regulations thereunder applicable to a national securities exchange.<sup>4</sup> In particular, the Commission believes that the proposal is consistent with Section 6(b)(5) of the Act,<sup>5</sup> because a rule that is reasonably designed to require Exchange members to complete necessary systems training should protect investors and the public interest. The Commission

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

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

<sup>3</sup> See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 51294 (March 2, 2005), 70 FR 11282.

<sup>4</sup> In approving this proposed rule change, the Commission notes that it has considered the proposed rule’s impact on efficiency, competition, and capital formation. See 15 U.S.C. 78c(f).

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

also believes that handling violations of Amex Rule 51 pursuant to the Exchange's Plan is consistent with Sections 6(b)(1) and 6(b)(6) of the Act<sup>6</sup> which require that the rules of an exchange enforce compliance with, and provide appropriate discipline for, violations of Commission and Exchange rules. In addition, because existing Amex Rule 590 provides procedural rights to a person fined under the Plan to contest the fine and permits a hearing on the matter, the Commission believes the Plan, as amended by this proposal, provides a fair procedure for the disciplining of members and persons associated with members, consistent with Sections 6(b)(7) and 6(d)(1) of the Act.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, the Commission finds that the proposal is consistent with the public interest, the protection of investors, or otherwise in furtherance of the purposes of the Act, as required by Rule 19d-1(c)(2) under the Act<sup>8</sup> which governs minor rule violation plans. The Commission believes that the change to Amex's Plan will strengthen its ability to carry out its oversight and enforcement responsibilities as a self-regulatory organization in cases where full disciplinary proceedings are unsuitable in view of the minor nature of the particular violation.

In approving this proposed rule change, the Commission in no way minimizes the importance of compliance with Amex rules and all other rules subject to the imposition of fines under the Exchange's Plan. The Commission believes that the violation of any self-regulatory organization's rules, as well as Commission rules, is a serious matter. However, the Exchange's Plan provides a reasonable means of addressing rule violations that do not rise to the level of requiring formal disciplinary proceedings, while providing greater flexibility in handling certain

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<sup>6</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78f(b)(1) and 78f(b)(6).

<sup>7</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78f(b)(7) and 78f(d)(1).

<sup>8</sup> 17 CFR 240.19d-1(c)(2).

violations. The Commission expects that Amex will continue to conduct surveillance with due diligence and make a determination based on its findings, on a case-by-case basis, whether a fine of more or less than the recommended amount is appropriate for a violation under the Plan or whether a violation requires formal disciplinary action.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED, pursuant to Section 19(b)(2) of the Act<sup>9</sup> and Rule 19d-1(c)(2) under the Act,<sup>10</sup> that the proposed rule change (SR-Amex-2005-009) be, and hereby is, approved and declared effective.

For the Commission, by the Division of Market Regulation, pursuant to delegated authority.<sup>11</sup>

Margaret H. McFarland  
Deputy Secretary

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<sup>9</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(2).

<sup>10</sup> 17 CFR 240.19d-1(c)(2).

<sup>11</sup> 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12); 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(44).