

(2) Such requests shall be in writing and supported by documentation that the requested action is justified by:

(i) Reversal of the conviction or civil judgment upon which the suspension and/or exclusion was based;

(ii) Newly discovered material evidence;

(iii) Bona fide change in ownership or management;

(iv) Elimination of other causes for which the suspension and/or exclusion was imposed; or

(v) Other reasons the FDIC Ethics Counselor deems appropriate.

(3) A request for reconsideration based on the reversal of the conviction or civil judgment may be filed at any time.

(4) Requests for reconsideration based on other grounds may only be filed during the period commencing 60 days after the Ethics Counselor's decision imposing the suspension and/or exclusion. Only one such request may be filed in any twelve month period.

(5) The Ethics Counselor's decision on a request for reconsideration is subject to the review procedure set forth in paragraph (a) of this section.

PART 368—GOVERNMENT SECURITIES SALES PRACTICES

Sec.

368.1 Scope.

368.2 Definitions.

368.3 Business conduct.

368.4 Recommendations to customers.

368.5 Customer information.

368.100 Obligations concerning institutional customers.

AUTHORITY: 15 U.S.C. 78o-5.

SOURCE: 62 FR 13287, Mar. 19, 1997, unless otherwise noted.

§ 368.1 Scope.

This part is applicable to state non-member banks and insured state branches of foreign banks that have filed notice as, or are required to file notice as, government securities brokers or dealers pursuant to section 15C of the Securities Exchange Act (15 U.S.C. 78o-5) and Department of the Treasury rules under section 15C (17 CFR 400.1(d) and part 401).

§ 368.2 Definitions.

(a) *Bank that is a government securities broker or dealer* means a state non-member bank or an insured state branch of a foreign bank that has filed notice, or is required to file notice, as a government securities broker or dealer pursuant to section 15C of the Securities Exchange Act (15 U.S.C. 78o-5) and Department of the Treasury rules under section 15C (17 CFR 400.1(d) and part 401).

(b) *Customer* does not include a broker or dealer or a government securities broker or dealer.

(c) *Government security* has the same meaning as this term has in section 3(a)(42) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (15 U.S.C. 78c(a)(42)).

(d) *Non-institutional customer* means any customer other than:

(1) A bank, savings association, insurance company, or registered investment company;

(2) An investment adviser registered under section 203 of the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80b-3); or

(3) Any entity (whether a natural person, corporation, partnership, trust, or otherwise) with total assets of at least \$50 million.

§ 368.3 Business conduct.

A bank that is a government securities broker or dealer shall observe high standards of commercial honor and just and equitable principles of trade in the conduct of its business as a government securities broker or dealer.

§ 368.4 Recommendations to customers.

In recommending to a customer the purchase, sale or exchange of a government security, a bank that is a government securities broker or dealer shall have reasonable grounds for believing that the recommendation is suitable for the customer upon the basis of the facts, if any, disclosed by the customer as to the customer's other security holdings and as to the customer's financial situation and needs.

§ 368.5 Customer information.

Prior to the execution of a transaction recommended to a non-institutional customer, a bank that is a government securities broker or dealer

shall make reasonable efforts to obtain information concerning:

- (a) The customer's financial status;
- (b) The customer's tax status;
- (c) The customer's investment objectives; and
- (d) Such other information used or considered to be reasonable by such bank in making recommendations to the customer.

§ 368.100 Obligations concerning institutional customers.

(a) As a result of broadened authority provided by the Government Securities Act Amendments of 1993 (15 U.S.C. 78o-3 and 78o-5), the FDIC is adopting sales practice rules for the government securities market, a market with a particularly broad institutional component. Accordingly, the FDIC believes it is appropriate to provide further guidance to banks on their suitability obligations when making recommendations to institutional customers.

(b) The FDIC's suitability rule (§368.4) is fundamental to fair dealing and is intended to promote ethical sales practices and high standards of professional conduct. Banks' responsibilities include having a reasonable basis for recommending a particular security or strategy, as well as having reasonable grounds for believing the recommendation is suitable for the customer to whom it is made. Banks are expected to meet the same high standards of competence, professionalism, and good faith regardless of the financial circumstances of the customer.

(c) In recommending to a customer the purchase, sale, or exchange of any government security, the bank shall have reasonable grounds for believing that the recommendation is suitable for the customer upon the basis of the facts, if any, disclosed by the customer as to the customer's other security holdings and financial situation and needs.

(d) The interpretation in this section concerns only the manner in which a bank determines that a recommendation is suitable for a particular institutional customer. The manner in which a bank fulfills this suitability obligation will vary, depending on the nature of the customer and the specific trans-

action. Accordingly, the interpretation in this section deals only with guidance regarding how a bank may fulfill customer-specific suitability obligations under §368.4.¹

(e) While it is difficult to define in advance the scope of a bank's suitability obligation with respect to a specific institutional customer transaction recommended by a bank, the FDIC has identified certain factors that may be relevant when considering compliance with §368.4. These factors are not intended to be requirements or the only factors to be considered but are offered merely as guidance in determining the scope of a bank's suitability obligations.

(f) The two most important considerations in determining the scope of a bank's suitability obligations in making recommendations to an institutional customer are the customer's capability to evaluate investment risk independently and the extent to which the customer is exercising independent judgement in evaluating a bank's recommendation. A bank must determine, based on the information available to it, the customer's capability to evaluate investment risk. In some cases, the bank may conclude that the customer is not capable of making independent investment decisions in general. In other cases, the institutional customer may have general capability, but may not be able to understand a particular type of instrument or its risk. This is more likely to arise with relatively new types of instruments, or those with significantly different risk or volatility characteristics than other investments generally made by the institution. If a customer is either generally not capable of evaluating investment risk or lacks sufficient capability to evaluate the particular product, the scope of a bank's customer-specific obligations under §368.4 would not be diminished by the fact that the bank was

¹The interpretation in this section does not address the obligation related to suitability that requires that a bank have " * * * a 'reasonable basis' to believe that the recommendation could be suitable for at least some customers." *In the Matter of the Application of F.J. Kaufman and Company of Virginia and Frederick J. Kaufman, Jr.*, 50 SEC 164 (1989).