

§ 7264. Code of ethics for senior financial officers**(a) Code of ethics disclosure**

The Commission shall issue rules to require each issuer, together with periodic reports required pursuant to section 78m(a) or 78o(d) of this title, to disclose whether or not, and if not, the reason therefor, such issuer has adopted a code of ethics for senior financial officers, applicable to its principal financial officer and comptroller or principal accounting officer, or persons performing similar functions.

(b) Changes in codes of ethics

The Commission shall revise its regulations concerning matters requiring prompt disclosure on Form 8-K (or any successor thereto) to require the immediate disclosure, by means of the filing of such form, dissemination by the Internet or by other electronic means, by any issuer of any change in or waiver of the code of ethics for senior financial officers.

(c) Definition

In this section, the term “code of ethics” means such standards as are reasonably necessary to promote—

- (1) honest and ethical conduct, including the ethical handling of actual or apparent conflicts of interest between personal and professional relationships;
- (2) full, fair, accurate, timely, and understandable disclosure in the periodic reports required to be filed by the issuer; and
- (3) compliance with applicable governmental rules and regulations.

(d) Deadline for rulemaking

The Commission shall—

- (1) propose rules to implement this section, not later than 90 days after July 30, 2002; and
- (2) issue final rules to implement this section, not later than 180 days after July 30, 2002.

(Pub. L. 107-204, title IV, § 406, July 30, 2002, 116 Stat. 789.)

§ 7265. Disclosure of audit committee financial expert**(a) Rules defining “financial expert”**

The Commission shall issue rules, as necessary or appropriate in the public interest and consistent with the protection of investors, to require each issuer, together with periodic reports required pursuant to sections 78m(a) and 78o(d) of this title, to disclose whether or not, and if not, the reasons therefor, the audit committee of that issuer is comprised of at least 1 member who is a financial expert, as such term is defined by the Commission.

(b) Considerations

In defining the term “financial expert” for purposes of subsection (a) of this section, the Commission shall consider whether a person has, through education and experience as a public accountant or auditor or a principal financial officer, comptroller, or principal accounting officer of an issuer, or from a position involving the performance of similar functions—

- (1) an understanding of generally accepted accounting principles and financial statements;

(2) experience in—

(A) the preparation or auditing of financial statements of generally comparable issuers; and

(B) the application of such principles in connection with the accounting for estimates, accruals, and reserves;

(3) experience with internal accounting controls; and

(4) an understanding of audit committee functions.

(c) Deadline for rulemaking

The Commission shall—

(1) propose rules to implement this section, not later than 90 days after July 30, 2002; and

(2) issue final rules to implement this section, not later than 180 days after July 30, 2002.

(Pub. L. 107-204, title IV, § 407, July 30, 2002, 116 Stat. 790.)

§ 7266. Enhanced review of periodic disclosures by issuers**(a) Regular and systematic review**

The Commission shall review disclosures made by issuers reporting under section 78m(a) of this title (including reports filed on Form 10-K), and which have a class of securities listed on a national securities exchange or traded on an automated quotation facility of a national securities association, on a regular and systematic basis for the protection of investors. Such review shall include a review of an issuer’s financial statement.

(b) Review criteria

For purposes of scheduling the reviews required by subsection (a) of this section, the Commission shall consider, among other factors—

- (1) issuers that have issued material restatements of financial results;
- (2) issuers that experience significant volatility in their stock price as compared to other issuers;
- (3) issuers with the largest market capitalization;
- (4) emerging companies with disparities in price to earning ratios;
- (5) issuers whose operations significantly affect any material sector of the economy; and
- (6) any other factors that the Commission may consider relevant.

(c) Minimum review period

In no event shall an issuer required to file reports under section 78m(a) or 78o(d) of this title be reviewed under this section less frequently than once every 3 years.

(Pub. L. 107-204, title IV, § 408, July 30, 2002, 116 Stat. 790.)

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