Securities and Exchange Commission, 100 F Street NE., Washington, DC 20549–1090.

All submissions should refer to File Number SR–NYSEArca–2012–12. This file number should be included on the subject line if email 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 Web site (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 Web site viewing and printing in the Commission’s Public Reference Room, 100 F Street NE., Washington, DC 20549, on official business days between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Copies of the filing also will be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of the Exchange. 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–NYSEArca–2012–12 and should be submitted on or before March 8, 2012.

For the Commission, by the Division of Trading and Markets, pursuant to delegated authority.9

Kevin M. O’Neill,
Deputy Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2012–3613 Filed 2–15–12; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 8011–01–P

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION


Self-Regulatory Organizations; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of Proposed Rule Change by NASDAQ Stock Market LLC Relating to Fidelity Bonds


Pursuant to Section 19(b)(1) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (“Act”),1 and Rule 19b–42 thereunder, notice is hereby given that on January 31, 2012, The NASDAQ Stock Market LLC (“NASDAQ” or “Exchange”) 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 NASDAQ. The Commission is publishing this notice to solicit comments on the proposed rule change from interested persons.

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

The NASDAQ Stock Market LLC proposes to amend NASDAQ Rule 3020 to reflect recent changes to a corresponding rule of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (“FINRA”).


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

In its filing with the Commission, the Exchange included statements concerning the purpose of, and basis for, the proposed rule change. The text of these statements may be examined at the places specified in Item IV below.

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

1. Purpose

Many of NASDAQ’s rules are based on rules of FINRA (formerly the National Association of Securities Dealers (“NASD”). Beginning in 2008, FINRA embarked on an extended process of moving rules formerly designated as “NASD Rules” into a consolidated FINRA rulebook. In most cases, FINRA has renumbered these rules, and in some cases has substantively amended them. Accordingly, NASDAQ also has initiated a process of modifying its rulebook to ensure that NASDAQ rules corresponding to FINRA/NASD rules continue to mirror them as closely as practicable.

This proposed rule change concerns NASDAQ Rule 3020 entitled “Fidelity Bonds,” which follows and incorporates by reference former NASD Rule 3020.2 FINRA recently amended its rules to adopt former NASD Rule 3020, relating to Fidelity Bonds, with certain changes, into the consolidated FINRA rulebook as FINRA Rule 4360.3 NASDAQ Rule 3020 provides that “[a] member designated to Nasdaq for oversight pursuant to Rule 17d–1 shall comply with NASD Rule 3020 as if such Rule were part of Nasdaq’s Rules.” The Exchange proposes to amend this text to reference new FINRA Rule 4360, which replaced NASD Rule 3020.

NASDAQ Rule 3020(a) generally provides that each member required to join the Securities Investor Protection Corporation (“SIPC”) that has employees and that is not a member in good standing of one of the enumerated national securities exchanges must maintain fidelity bond coverage. FINRA Rule 4360 requires each member that is required to join SIPC to maintain blanket fidelity bond coverage with specified amounts of coverage based on the member’s net capital requirement, with certain exceptions. NASD Rule 3020(a)(1) requires members to maintain a blanket fidelity bond in a form substantially similar to the standard form of Brokers Blanket Bond promulgated by the Surety Association of America. New FINRA Rule 4360 requires members to maintain fidelity bond coverage that provides for loss coverage without an aggregate limit of liability. Also, pursuant to FINRA Rule 4360, a member’s fidelity bond must provide against loss and have Insuring Agreements covering at least the following: Fidelity, on premises, in transit, forgery and alteration, securities and counterfeit currency. The rule change modified the descriptive headings for these Insuring Agreements, in part, from NASD Rule 3020(a)(1) and NYSE Rule 319(d) to align them with the headings in the current bond forms available to broker-dealers. FINRA Rule 4360 also eliminates the specific coverage provisions in NASD Rule

2 The purpose of the fidelity bond is to protect a member against certain types of losses, including, but not limited to, those caused by the malfeasance of its officers and employees, and the effect of such losses on the member’s capital.

3 See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 63961 (February 24, 2011), 76 FR 11542 (March 2, 2011) (SR–FINRA–2010–059) (a rule change to adopt a rule of the National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc. (“NASD”) as part of the consolidation of the FINRA rulebook). This new rule took into account Incorporated NYSE Rule 319 (Fidelity Bonds) and its interpretation.


319(d)(ii)(B) and (C), and (e)(ii)(B) and (C), that permit less than 100 percent of coverage for certain Insuring Agreements (i.e., fraudulent trading and securities forgery) to require that coverage for all Insuring Agreements be equal to 100 percent of the firm’s minimum required bond coverage.5

Further, FINRA Rule 4360 requires that a member’s fidelity bond include a cancellation rider providing that the insurer will use its best efforts to promptly notify FINRA in the event the bond is cancelled, terminated or “substantially modified.” Also, the rule change adopted the definition of “substantially modified” in NYSE Rule 319 and would incorporate NYSE Rule 319.12’s standard that a firm must immediately advise FINRA in writing if its fidelity bond is cancelled, terminated or substantially modified.6 FINRA added supplementary material to FINRA Rule 4360 requiring members that do not qualify for a bond with per loss coverage without an aggregate limit of liability to secure alternative coverage.

Specifically, a member that does not qualify for blanket fidelity bond coverage as required by FINRA Rule 4360(a)(3) is required to maintain substantially similar fidelity bond coverage in compliance with all other provisions of the rule, provided that the member maintains written correspondence from two insurance providers stating that the member does not qualify for the coverage required by FINRA Rule 4360(a)(3).

FINRA Rule 4360 requires each member to maintain, at a minimum, fidelity bond coverage for any person associated with the member, except directors or trustees of a member who are not performing acts within the scope of the usual duties of an officer or employee. As further detailed below, the rule change eliminated the exemption in NASD Rule 3020 for sole stockholders and sole proprietors. The rule change also increased the minimum required fidelity bond coverage for members, while continuing to base the coverage on a member’s net capital requirement. To that end, FINRA Rule 4360 required a member with a net capital requirement that is less than $250,000 to maintain minimum coverage of the greater of 120 percent of the firm’s required net capital under Exchange Act Rule 15c3–1 or $100,000. The increase to $100,000 modifies the present minimum requirement of $25,000.

Under the new FINRA Rule 4360, members with a net capital requirement of at least $250,000 must use a table in the rule to determine their minimum fidelity bond coverage requirement. The table is a modified version of the tables in NASD Rule 3020(a)(3) and NYSE Rule 319(o)(i). The identical NASD and NYSE requirements that have a minimum net capital requirement that exceeds $1 million are retained in the new Rule; however, the rule adopts the higher requirements in NYSE Rule 319(o)(i) for a member with a net capital requirement of at least $250,000, but less than $1 million. Under the new rule, the entire amount of a member’s minimum required coverage must be available for covered losses and may not be eroded by the costs an insurer may incur if it chooses to defend a claim. Specifically, any defense costs for covered losses must be in addition to a member’s minimum coverage requirements. A member may include defense costs as part of its fidelity bond coverage, but only to the extent that it does not reduce a member’s minimum required coverage under the rule.

Under prior NASD Rule 3020(b), a deductible provision may be included in a member’s bond of up to $5,000 or 10% of the member’s minimum insurance requirement, whichever is greater. If a member desires to maintain coverage in excess of the minimum insurance requirement, then a deductible provision may be included in the bond of up to $5,000 or 10% of the amount of blanket coverage provided in the bond purchased, whichever is greater. The excess of any such deductible amount over the maximum permissible deductible amount based on the member’s minimum required coverage must be deducted from the member’s net worth in the calculation of the member’s net capital for purposes of Exchange Act Rule 15c3–1. Where the member is a subsidiary of another member, the excess may be deducted from the parent’s rather than the subsidiary’s net worth, but only if the parent guarantees the subsidiary’s net capital in writing.7

FINRA Rule 4360 provides for an allowable deductible amount of up to 25% of the fidelity bond coverage purchased by a member. Any deductible amount elected by the firm that is greater than 10% of the coverage purchased by the member8 would be deducted from the member’s net worth in the calculation of its net capital for purposes of Exchange Act Rule 15c3–1.9

Like the NASD and NYSE rules, if the member is a subsidiary of another FINRA member, this amount may be deducted from the parent’s rather than the subsidiary’s net worth, but only if the parent guarantees the subsidiary’s net capital in writing.

Consistent with NASD Rule 3020(c) and NYSE Rule 319.10, FINRA Rule 4360 requires a member (including a firm that signs a multi-year insurance policy), annually as of the yearly anniversary date of the issuance of the fidelity bond, to review the adequacy of its fidelity bond coverage and make any required adjustments to its coverage, as set forth in the rule. Under FINRA Rule 4360, a member’s highest net capital requirement during the preceding 12-month period, based on the applicable method of computing net capital (dollar minimum, aggregate indebtedness or alternative standard), is used as the basis for determining the member’s minimum required fidelity bond coverage for the succeeding 12-month period. The “preceding 12-month period” includes the 12-month period that ends 60 days before the yearly anniversary date of a member’s fidelity bond. This would give a firm time to determine its required fidelity bond coverage by the anniversary date of the bond.

Further, FINRA Rule 4360 allows a member that has only been in business for one year and elected the aggregate indebtedness ratio for calculating its net capital requirement to use, solely for the purpose of determining the adequacy of its fidelity bond coverage for its second year, the 15 to 1 ratio of aggregate indebtedness to net capital in lieu of the 8 to 1 ratio (required for broker-dealers

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5 Members may elect to carry additional, optional insuring agreements not required by FINRA Rule 4360 for an amount less than 100 percent of the minimum required bond coverage.

6 NYSE Rule 319 defines the term “substantially modified” as any change in the type or amount of fidelity bonding coverage, or in the exclusions to which the bond is subject, or any other change in the bond such that it no longer complies with the requirements of the rule.

7 Under NYSE Rule 319(b), each member organization may self-insure to the extent of $10,000 or 10% of its minimum insurance requirement as fixed by the NYSE, whichever is greater, for each type of coverage required by the rule. Self-insurance in amounts exceeding the above maximum may be permitted by the NYSE provided the member or member organization certifies to the satisfaction of the NYSE that it is unable to obtain greater bonding coverage, and agrees to reduce its self-insurance so as to comply with the above stated limits as soon as possible, and appropriate charges to capital are made pursuant to Exchange Act Rule 15c3–1. This provision also contains identical language to the NASD rule regarding net worth deductions for subsidiaries.

8 FINRA notes that a member may elect, subject to availability, a deductible of less than 10 percent of the coverage purchased.

9 NASD Rule 3020 bases the deduction from net worth for an excess deductible on a firm’s minimum required coverage, while FINRA Rule 4360 would base such deduction from net worth on coverage purchased by the member.
in their first year of business] to calculate its net capital requirement. Notwithstanding the above, such member would not be permitted to carry less minimum fidelity bond coverage in its second year than it carried in its first year.

Based in part on NASD Rule 3020(a), FINRA Rule 4360 exempts from the fidelity bond requirements members in good standing with a national securities exchange that maintain a fidelity bond subject to the requirements of such exchange that are equal to or greater than the requirements set forth in Rule 4360. Additionally, consistent with NYSE Rule Interpretation 319/01, FINRA Rule 4360 continues to exempt from the fidelity bond requirements any firm that acts solely as a Designated Market Maker (“DMM”),10 floor broker or registered floor trader and does not conduct business with the public.

FINRA Rule 4360 does not maintain the exemption in NASD Rule 3020(e) for a one-person firm.11 Historically, a sole proprietor or sole stockholder member was excluded from the fidelity bond requirements based upon the assumption that such firms were one-person shops and, therefore, could not obtain coverage for their own acts. FINRA has determined that sole proprietors and sole stockholder firms can and often do acquire fidelity bond coverage, even though it is currently not required, since all claims (irrespective of firm size) are likely to be paid or denied on a facts-and-circumstances basis. Also, certain coverage areas of the fidelity bond benefit a one-person shop (e.g., those covering customer property lost in transit).

2. Statutory Basis

The Exchange believes that its proposal is consistent with Section 6(b) of the Act12 in general, and furthers the objectives of Section 6(b)(5) of the Act13 in particular, in that it is designed to promote just and equitable principles of trade, to remove impediments to and perfect the mechanism of a free and open market and a national market system, and, in general to protect investors and the public interest, by updating and clarifying the requirements governing fidelity bonds. The Exchange believes that the proposed requirements of Rule 4360, including, but not limited to, requiring each member that is required to join SIPC to maintain blanket fidelity bond coverage, increasing the minimum requirement fidelity bond coverage and maintaining a fidelity bond that provides, for per loss coverage without an aggregate limit of liability promotes investor protection by protecting firms from unforeseen losses. The proposed amendments will conform NASDAQ Rule 3020 to recent changes made to a corresponding FINRA rule, to promote application of consistent regulatory standards.

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

The Exchange does not believe that the proposed rule change will impose any burden on competition not necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Act.

C. Self-Regulatory Organization’s Statement on Comments on the Proposed Rule Change Received From Members, Participants, or Others

No written comments were either solicited or 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 after the date of filing, the Exchange may designate, it has become effective pursuant to 19(b)(3)(A) of the Act14 and Rule 19b–4(f)(6)15 thereunder.

The Exchange has requested that the Commission waive the 30-day operative delay. The Commission believes that waiver of the operative delay is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest because the proposed rule change presents no novel issues, and NASDAQ members are currently subject to FINRA Rule 4360. Therefore, the Commission designates the proposal operative upon filing.16

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.

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 email to rule-comments@sec.gov. Please include File Number SR–NASDAQ–2012–021 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–NASDAQ–2012–021. This file number should be included on the subject line if email 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 Web site (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 Web site viewing and printing in the Commission’s Public Reference Room, 100 F Street NE., Washington, DC 20549, on official business days between the hours of 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. The public may also obtain a copy of such filings from the Public Reference Section, SEC, 100 F Street NE., Washington, DC 20549–0001.
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34–66376; File No. SR–NYSEAmex–2012–05]

Self-Regulatory Organizations; NYSE Amex LLC; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of Proposed Rule Change Amending an Existing Rebate Relating to Qualified Contingent Cross Orders That Are Entered and Executed Through the Exchange Systems


Pursuant to Section 19(b)(1) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (“Act”), and Rule 19b–4 thereunder, notice is hereby given that on January 30, 2012, NYSE Amex LLC (the “Exchange” or “NYSE Amex”) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (“Commission”) the proposed rule change as described in Items I, II, and III below, which Items have been prepared by the self-regulatory organization. The Commission is publishing this notice to solicit comments on the proposed rule change from interested persons.

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

The Exchange proposes to amend an existing rebate relating to Qualified Contingent Cross (“QCC”) orders that are entered and executed through the Exchange systems. The text of the proposed rule change is available at the Exchange, the Commission’s Public Reference Room, and www.nyse.com.

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

In its filing with the Commission, the self-regulatory organization 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 those statements may be examined at the places specified in Item IV below. The Exchange has prepared summaries, set forth in sections A, B, and C below, of the most significant parts of such statements.

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

1. Purpose

The purpose of the proposal is to increase a rebate for Floor Brokers who enter QCC orders that subsequently execute. The Exchange intends to increase the existing rebate of $0.03 per executed contract to $0.07 per executed contract.

2. Statutory Basis

The Exchange believes that the proposed rule change is consistent with the provisions of Section 6(b)(5) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (the “Act”), in general, and Section 6(b)(4)(B) of the Act, in particular, in that it is designed to provide for the equitable allocation of reasonable dues, fees, and other charges among its members and other persons using its facilities.

3. Financial Impact

The Exchange expects that the increased rebate offered to executing Floor Brokers will allow them to price their services at a level that will enable them to attract QCC order flow from participants who would otherwise utilize an existing front-end order entry mechanism offered by the Exchange’s competitors or floor brokers on other exchanges, instead of incurring the cost in time and money to develop their own internal systems to be able to deliver QCC orders directly to the Exchange systems. To the extent that Floor Brokers are able to attract these QCC orders, they will gain important information that will allow them to solicit the parties to the QCC orders for participation in other trades, which will in turn benefit all other Exchange participants through the additional liquidity and price discovery that may occur as a result. The proposed change is also a competitive response to recent pricing changes at competing exchanges. The proposed change will be operative on February 1, 2012.

4. Effect on Competition

The Exchange notes that the terms of a QCC order are negotiated and agreed to prior to being brought to an exchange for possible execution. In bringing a QCC order to the Exchange for execution, permit holders have two primary means of doing so. They can configure their systems to deliver the QCC order to the Exchange matching engines for validation and execution. Alternatively they can utilize the services of another ATP Holder acting as a Floor Broker. In turn, the Floor Broker who is in receipt of such an order can enter the order through an Exchange-provided system to be delivered to the Exchange matching engine for validation and potential execution. The Exchange does not offer a front-end for order entry, unlike some of the competing exchanges. The Exchange expects that the increased rebate offered to executing Floor Brokers will allow them to price their services at a level that will enable them to attract QCC order flow from participants who would otherwise utilize an existing front-end order entry mechanism offered by the Exchange’s competitors or floor brokers on other exchanges, instead of incurring the cost in time and money to develop their own internal systems to be able to deliver QCC orders directly to the Exchange systems. To the extent that Floor Brokers are able to attract these QCC orders, they will gain important information that will allow them to solicit the parties to the QCC orders for participation in other trades, which will in turn benefit all other Exchange participants through the additional liquidity and price discovery that may occur as a result. The proposed change is also a competitive response to recent pricing changes at competing exchanges. The proposed change will be operative on February 1, 2012.

B. Self-Regulatory Organization’s Statement of the Reasonableness of, and Relation to, the Purpose of, and Statutory Basis for, the Proposed Rule Change

The Exchange believes that the proposed rule change is consistent with the provisions of Section 6(b)(5) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (the “Act”), in general, and Section 6(b)(4)(B) of the Act, in particular, in that it is designed to provide for the equitable allocation of reasonable dues, fees, and other charges among its members and other persons using its facilities.

C. Proposed Rule to Be Amended

The Exchange proposes to amend an existing rebate relating to Qualified Contingent Cross (“QCC”) orders that are entered and executed through the Exchange systems. The text of the proposed rule change is available at the Exchange, the Commission’s Public Reference Room, and www.nyse.com.

D. Agreement to Substitute Text of Proposed Rule

The Exchange has prepared summaries, set forth in sections A, B, and C below, of the most significant parts of such statements.