

independent public accountant, an accounting firm, or an office of a firm that was removed, suspended, or debarred under § 308.602 may be made in writing at any time. The application must comply with the requirements of § 303.3 of this chapter.

(b) *Procedure*. An applicant for reinstatement under this section may, in the sole discretion of the Board of Directors, be afforded a hearing. In reinstatement proceedings, the person seeking reinstatement shall bear the burden of going forward with an application and proving the grounds asserted in support of the application, and the Board of Directors may, in its sole discretion, direct that any reinstatement proceeding be limited to written submissions. The removal, suspension, or debarment shall continue until the Board of Directors, for good cause shown, has reinstated the applicant or until the suspension period has expired. The filing of an application for reinstatement will not stay the effectiveness of the removal, suspension, or debarment of an accountant or firm.

By order of the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

Dated: August 4, 2003.

Valerie J. Best,

Assistant Executive Secretary.

OFFICE OF THRIFT SUPERVISION

12 CFR Chapter V

Authority and Issuance

PART 513—PRACTICE BEFORE THE OFFICE

■ For the reasons set out in the joint preamble, part 513 of chapter V of title 12 of the Code of Federal Regulations is amended as follows:

■ 1. The authority citation for part 513 is revised to read as follows:

Authority: 12 U.S.C. 1462a, 1463, 1464, 1467a, 1813, 1831m, and 15 U.S.C. 78.

■ 2. Add § 513.8 to read as follows:

§ 513.8 Removal, suspension, or debarment of independent public accountants and accounting firms performing audit services.

(a) *Scope*. This subpart, which implements section 36(g)(4) of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (FDIA) (12 U.S.C. 1831m(g)(4)), provides rules and procedures for the removal, suspension, or debarment of independent public accountants and their accounting firms from performing independent audit and attestation services required by section 36 of the FDIA (12 U.S.C. 1831m) for insured

savings associations and savings and loan holding companies.

(b) *Definitions*. As used in this section, the following terms have the meaning given below unless the context requires otherwise:

(1) *Accounting firm*. The term *accounting firm* means a corporation, proprietorship, partnership, or other business firm providing audit services.

(2) *Audit services*. The term *audit services* means any service required to be performed by an independent public accountant by section 36 of the FDIA Act and 12 CFR part 363, including attestation services. Audit services include any service performed with respect to a savings and loan holding company of a savings association that is used to satisfy requirements imposed by section 36 or part 363 on that savings association.

(3) *Independent public accountant*. The term *independent public accountant* means any individual who performs or participates in providing audit services.

(c) *Removal, suspension, or debarment of independent public accountants*. The Office may remove, suspend, or debar an independent public accountant from performing audit services for savings associations that are subject to section 36 of the FDIA if, after service of a notice of intention and opportunity for hearing in the matter, the Office finds that the independent public accountant:

(1) Lacks the requisite qualifications to perform audit services;

(2) Has knowingly or recklessly engaged in conduct that results in a violation of applicable professional standards, including those standards and conflicts of interest provisions applicable to independent public accountants through the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, Pub. L. 107–204, 116 Stat. 745 (2002) (Sarbanes-Oxley Act), and developed by the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board and the Securities and Exchange Commission;

(3) Has engaged in negligent conduct in the form of: (i) A single instance of highly unreasonable conduct that results in a violation of applicable professional standards in circumstances in which an independent public accountant knows, or should know, that heightened scrutiny is warranted; or

(ii) Repeated instances of unreasonable conduct, each resulting in a violation of applicable professional standards, that indicate a lack of competence to perform audit services;

(4) Has knowingly or recklessly given false or misleading information or knowingly or recklessly participated in any way in the giving of false or

misleading information to the Office or any officer or employee of the Office;

(5) Has engaged in, or aided and abetted, a material and knowing or reckless violation of any provision of the Federal banking or securities laws or the rules and regulations thereunder, or any other law;

(6) Has been removed, suspended, or debarred from practice before any federal or state agency regulating the banking, insurance, or securities industries, other than by action listed in paragraph (j) of this section, on grounds relevant to the provision of audit services; or

(7) Is suspended or debarred for cause from practice as an accountant by any duly constituted licensing authority of any state, possession, commonwealth, or the District of Columbia.

(d) *Removal, suspension or debarment of an accounting firm*. If the Office determines that there is good cause for the removal, suspension, or debarment of a member or employee of an accounting firm under paragraph (c) of this section, the Office also may remove, suspend, or debar such firm or one or more offices of such firm. In considering whether to remove, suspend, or debar an accounting firm or office thereof, and the term of any sanction against an accounting firm under this section, the Office may consider, for example:

(1) The gravity, scope, or repetition of the act or failure to act that constitutes good cause for the removal, suspension, or debarment;

(2) The adequacy of, and adherence to, applicable policies, practices, or procedures for the accounting firm's conduct of its business and the performance of audit services;

(3) The selection, training, supervision, and conduct of members or employees of the accounting firm involved in the performance of audit services;

(4) The extent to which managing partners or senior officers of the accounting firm have participated, directly or indirectly through oversight or review, in the act or failure to act; and

(5) The extent to which the accounting firm has, since the occurrence of the act or failure to act, implemented corrective internal controls to prevent its recurrence.

(e) *Remedies*. The remedies provided in this section are in addition to any other remedies the Office may have under any other applicable provisions of law, rule, or regulation.

(f) *Proceedings to remove, suspend, or debar*. (1) The Office may initiate a proceeding to remove, suspend, or debar