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BUREAU OF CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION

12 CFR Part 1007 and 1008

[Docket No. CFPB-2011-0023]

RIN 3170-AA06

S.A.F.E. Mortgage Licensing Act (Regulations G & H)

AGENCY: Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection.

ACTION: Interim final rule with request for public comment.

SUMMARY: Title X of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (Dodd-Frank Act) transferred rulemaking authority for a number of consumer financial protection laws from seven Federal agencies to the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection (Bureau) as of July 21, 2011. The Bureau is in the process of republishing the regulations implementing those laws with technical and conforming changes to reflect the transfer of authority and certain other changes made by the Dodd-Frank Act. In light of the transfer to the Bureau of the rulemaking authority of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, the Comptroller of the Currency, the National Credit Union Administration, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development for the Secure and Fair Enforcement for Mortgage Licensing Act (S.A.F.E. Act), the Bureau is publishing for public comment an interim final rule establishing a new Regulation G (S.A.F.E. Mortgage Licensing Act – Federal Registration of Residential Mortgage Loan Originators) and a new Regulation H (S.A.F.E. Mortgage Licensing Act – State Compliance and Bureau Registration System). This interim final rule also covers employees of institutions regulated by the Farm

Credit Administration. This interim final rule does not impose any new substantive obligations on persons subject to the existing S.A.F.E. Act regulations.

DATES: This interim final rule is effective on December 30, 2011. Comments must be received on or before [INSERT DATE THAT IS 60 DAYS FROM THE DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*].

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments, identified by Docket No. CFPB-2011-0023 or RIN 3170-AA06, by any of the following methods:

- *Electronic:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- *Mail:* Monica Jackson, Office of the Executive Secretary, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, 1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. (Attn: 1801 L Street), Washington, D.C. 20220.
- *Hand Delivery/Courier in Lieu of Mail:* Monica Jackson, Office of the Executive Secretary, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, 1700 G Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

All submissions must include the agency name and docket number or Regulatory Information Number (RIN) for this rulemaking. In general, all comments received will be posted without change to <http://www.regulations.gov>. In addition, comments will be available for public inspection and copying at 1700 G Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006, on official business days between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Eastern Time. You can make an appointment to inspect the documents by telephoning (202) 435-7275.

All comments, including attachments and other supporting materials, will become part of the public record and subject to public disclosure. Sensitive personal information, such as

account numbers or social security numbers, should not be included. Comments will not be edited to remove any identifying or contact information.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mitchell E. Hochberg or Joseph Devlin, Office of Regulations, at (202) 435-7700.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

The Secure and Fair Enforcement for Mortgage Licensing Act of 2008 (S.A.F.E. Act) provides for the licensing and/or registration of mortgage loan originators. The S.A.F.E. Act requires employees of depository institutions, employees of subsidiaries that are owned and controlled by a depository institution and regulated by a Federal banking agency, or employees of institutions regulated by the Farm Credit Administration who act as residential mortgage loan originators to register with the Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System and Registry, obtain a unique identifier, and maintain this registration. The S.A.F.E. Act further requires states to adopt minimum standards for licensing residential mortgage loan originators.

Historically, the Federal registration requirements of the S.A.F.E. Act have been implemented through a coordinated rulemaking of the Federal banking agencies and the Farm Credit Administration with authority over Federal registration requirements under the S.A.F.E. Act (collectively, the Federal registry agencies).¹ Further, prior to July 21, 2011, the S.A.F.E. Act charged the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) with evaluation of states' compliance with the S.A.F.E. Act and with establishing and maintaining a licensing and

¹ 75 FR 44656 (July 28, 2010). The rules were promulgated by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (12 CFR Part 34); the Federal Reserve System (12 CFR Parts 208 and 211); the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (12 CFR Part 365); the Office of Thrift Supervision (12 CFR Part 563); the Farm Credit Administration (12 CFR Part 610); and the National Credit Union Administration (12 CFR Parts 741 and 761).

registration system for a state or territory that does not have a system in place for licensing loan originators that meets the requirements of the S.A.F.E. Act.

The Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (Dodd-Frank Act)² amended a number of consumer financial protection laws, including the S.A.F.E. Act. In addition to minor amendments, the Dodd-Frank Act transferred rulemaking authority for the S.A.F.E. Act from the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, the Comptroller of the Currency, the National Credit Union Administration, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development to the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection (Bureau), effective July 21, 2011.³ *See* sections 1061 and 1100 of the Dodd-Frank Act. The Dodd-Frank Act also granted the Bureau rulemaking authority pursuant to the S.A.F.E. Act with respect to employees of institutions regulated by the Farm Credit Administration. *See* section 1100 of the Dodd-Frank Act. Pursuant to the Dodd-Frank Act and the S.A.F.E. Act, as amended, the Bureau is publishing for public comment an interim final rule establishing a new Regulation G, S.A.F.E. Mortgage Licensing Act – Federal Registration Of Residential Mortgage Loan Originators, 12 CFR Part 1007, implementing the Federal registration requirements of the S.A.F.E. Act and a new Regulation H, S.A.F.E. Mortgage Licensing Act – State Compliance and Bureau Registration System, 12 CFR Part 1008, implementing the requirements with respect to states’ compliance with the S.A.F.E. Act and the maintenance of a licensing and registration system for a state or territory that does not have a system in place for licensing loan originators that meets the requirements of the S.A.F.E. Act.

² Pub. L. 111–203, 124 Stat. 1376 (2010).

³ Dodd-Frank section 1029 generally excludes from this transfer of authority, subject to certain exceptions, any rulemaking authority over a motor vehicle dealer that is predominantly engaged in the sale and servicing of motor vehicles, the leasing and servicing of motor vehicles, or both.

II. Summary of the Interim Final Rule

A. General

The interim final rule substantially duplicates the Federal registry agencies' largely identical coordinated rules as the Bureau's new Regulation G, 12 CFR Part 1007, making only certain non-substantive, technical, formatting, and stylistic changes. The interim final rule also substantially duplicates HUD's rule as the Bureau's new Regulation H, 12 CFR Part 1008. To minimize any potential confusion, the Bureau is preserving the past numbering systems of the Federal registry agencies and HUD, other than the new part numbers and, with respect to Regulation G, the enumeration of the individual definitions in section 1007.102. While this interim final rule generally incorporates and consolidates the largely identical rules of the Federal registry agencies and HUD, the rule has been edited as necessary to reflect nomenclature and other technical amendments required by the Dodd-Frank Act. Notably, this interim final rule does not impose any new substantive obligations on regulated entities. Regulated entities and their employees that were registered with the Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System and Registry and had obtained unique identifiers pursuant to the regulations of the Federal registry agencies as of the effective date of this Regulation G will be considered by the Bureau to have registered pursuant to the new Regulation G.

B. Specific Changes

The new Regulation G consolidates the regulations of the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (12 CFR Part 34); the Federal Reserve System (12 CFR Parts 208 and 211); the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (12 CFR Part 365); the Office of Thrift Supervision (12 CFR Part 563); the Farm Credit Administration (12 CFR Part 610); and the National Credit Union Administration (12 CFR Parts 741 and 761) pursuant to the conforming changes in section

1100 of the Dodd-Frank Act. Further, the new Regulation H has been changed to effect technical, non-substantive changes to HUD's existing regulatory text of 24 CFR Part 3400.

For both Regulations G and H, references to the respective banking agencies and HUD have been replaced with references to the Bureau in the new regulations. Conforming edits have been made to internal cross-references. Conforming edits have also been made to reflect the scope of the Bureau's authority pursuant to the requirements of the S.A.F.E. Act, as amended by the Dodd-Frank Act. For example, references to the Federal registry agencies and HUD and their respective administrative structures have been replaced with references to the Bureau and its administrative structure. Conforming edits have been made to internal cross-references and addresses. Historical references that are no longer applicable, and references to effective dates that have passed, have been removed.

III. Legal Authority

A. Rulemaking Authority

The Bureau is issuing this interim final rule pursuant to its authority under the S.A.F.E. Act and the Dodd-Frank Act.⁴ Effective July 21, 2011, section 1061 of the Dodd-Frank Act transferred to the Bureau the “consumer financial protection functions” previously vested in certain other Federal agencies. The term “consumer financial protection function” is defined to include “all authority to prescribe rules or issue orders or guidelines pursuant to any Federal consumer financial law, including performing appropriate functions to promulgate and review such rules, orders, and guidelines.”⁵ The S.A.F.E. Act is a “Federal consumer financial law.”⁶

⁴ In addition, the Bureau also relies on section 1402 of the Dodd-Frank Act, which amends the Truth in Lending Act (TILA) to provide the Bureau with specific rulemaking authority over mortgage originator qualifications, among other things. The Bureau also has authority to make adjustments and exceptions with respect to consumer credit transactions pursuant to TILA rulemaking authority. *See* 15 USC 1604(a), 1639b.

⁵ Pub. L. 111-203, section 1061(a)(1). Effective on the designated transfer date, July 21, 2011, the Bureau was also granted “all powers and duties” vested in certain other Federal agencies, relating to the consumer financial protection functions, on the day before the designated transfer date. Until this and other interim final rules take

Additionally, section 1061 transferred to the Bureau all of the HUD Secretary's consumer protection functions relating to the S.A.F.E. Act, which includes rulemaking authority. The Dodd-Frank Act also granted the Bureau rulemaking authority pursuant to the S.A.F.E. Act with respect to employees of institutions regulated by the Farm Credit Administration.⁷ Accordingly, effective July 21, 2011, the Bureau has rulemaking authority for the S.A.F.E. Act.⁸

The S.A.F.E. Act, as amended, authorizes the Bureau to “develop and maintain a system for registering employees of a depository institution, employees of a subsidiary that is owned and controlled by a depository institution and regulated by a Federal banking agency, or employees of an institution regulated by the Farm Credit Administration, as registered loan originators with the Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System and Registry.”⁹ The S.A.F.E. Act also authorizes the Bureau to make such de minimis exceptions to the registration requirements as may be appropriate.¹⁰ Further, under the S.A.F.E. Act, if the Bureau determines that a state's loan origination licensing system does not meet the minimum requirements of the S.A.F.E. Act, the Bureau is charged with establishing and implementing a system for all loan originators in that state. Additionally, if at any time the Bureau determines that the nationwide mortgage licensing system and registry is failing to meet the S.A.F.E. Act's requirements, the Bureau is charged with establishing and maintaining a licensing and registry database for loan originators.¹¹

Regulations G and H are issued in accordance with these authorities.

effect with respect to the functions transferred pursuant to section 1061, existing regulations for which rulemaking authority transferred to the Bureau continue to govern persons covered by this rule. *See* 76 FR 43569 (July 21, 2011).

⁶ Pub. L. 111-203, section 1002(14) (defining “Federal consumer financial law” to include the “enumerated consumer laws”); *id.* Section 1002(12) (defining “enumerated consumer laws” to include the S.A.F.E. Act).

⁷ Pub. L. 111-203, section 1100.

⁸ Section 1066 of the Dodd-Frank Act grants the Secretary of the Treasury interim authority to perform certain functions of the Bureau. Pursuant to that authority, Treasury is publishing this interim final rule on behalf of the Bureau.

⁹ Pub. L. 111-203, section 1100(5)(A).

¹⁰ 12 U.S.C. 5106(c).

¹¹ 12 U.S.C. 5107-5108.

B. Authority To Issue an Interim Final Rule Without Prior Notice and Comment

The Administrative Procedure Act (APA)¹² generally requires public notice and an opportunity to comment before promulgation of regulations.¹³ The APA provides exceptions to notice-and-comment procedures, however, where an agency for good cause finds that such procedures are impracticable, unnecessary, or contrary to the public interest or when a rulemaking relates to agency organization, procedure, and practice.¹⁴ The Bureau finds that there is good cause to conclude that providing notice and opportunity for comment would be unnecessary and contrary to the public interest under these circumstances. In addition, substantially all the changes made by this interim final rule, which were necessitated by the Dodd-Frank Act's transfer of S.A.F.E. Act authority to the Bureau, relate to agency organization, procedure, and practice and are thus exempt from the APA's notice-and-comment requirements.

The Bureau's good cause findings are based on the following considerations. As an initial matter, the Federal registry agencies and HUD's existing regulations were a result of notice-and-comment rulemaking to the extent required. Moreover, the interim final rule published today does not impose any new, substantive obligations on regulated entities. Rather, the interim final rule makes only non-substantive, technical changes to the existing text of the regulations, such as renumbering, changing internal cross-references, replacing appropriate nomenclature to reflect the transfer of authority to the bureau, and updating to reflect the expiration of certain deadlines. Given the technical nature of these changes, and the fact that the interim final rule does not impose any additional substantive requirements on covered entities, an opportunity for prior public comment is unnecessary. In addition, recodifying the Federal registry agencies' and HUD's regulations to reflect the transfer of authority to the Bureau will

¹² 5 U.S.C. 551 *et seq.*

¹³ 5 U.S.C. 553(b), (c).

¹⁴ 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B).

help facilitate compliance with the S.A.F.E. Act and its implementing regulations, and the new regulations will help reduce uncertainty regarding the applicable regulatory framework. Using notice-and-comment procedures would delay this process and thus be contrary to the public interest.

The APA generally requires that rules be published not less than 30 days before their effective dates. *See* 5 U.S.C. 553(d). As with the notice and comment requirement, however, the APA allows an exception when “otherwise provided by the agency for good cause found and published with the rule.” 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3). The Bureau finds that there is good cause for providing less than 30 days notice here. A delayed effective date would harm consumers and regulated entities by needlessly perpetuating discrepancies between the amended statutory text and the implementing regulation, thereby hindering compliance and prolonging uncertainty regarding the applicable regulatory framework.¹⁵

In addition, delaying the effective date of the interim final rule for 30 days would provide no practical benefit to regulated entities in this context and in fact could operate to their detriment. As discussed above, the interim final rule published today does not impose any new, substantive obligations on regulated entities. Instead, the rule makes only non-substantive, technical changes to the existing text of the regulation. Thus, regulated entities that are already in compliance with the existing rules will not need to modify business practices as a result of this rule.

¹⁵ This interim final rule is one of 14 companion rulemakings that together restate and recodify the implementing regulations under 14 existing consumer financial laws (part III.C, below, lists the 14 laws involved). In the interest of proper coordination of this overall regulatory framework, which includes numerous cross-references among some of the regulations, the Bureau is establishing the same effective date of December 30, 2011 for those rules published on or before that date and making those published thereafter (if any) effective immediately.

C. Section 1022(b)(2) of the Dodd-Frank Act

In developing the interim final rule, the Bureau has conducted an analysis of potential benefits, costs, and impacts.¹⁶ The Bureau believes that the interim final rule will benefit consumers and covered persons by updating and recodifying in Regulations G and H the Federal registry agencies' and HUD's S.A.F.E. Act regulations to reflect the transfer of authority to the Bureau and certain other changes mandated by the Dodd-Frank Act. This will help facilitate compliance with the S.A.F.E. Act and its implementing regulations and help reduce any uncertainty regarding the applicable regulatory framework. The interim final rule will not impose any new substantive obligations on consumers or covered persons and is not expected to have any impact on consumers' access to consumer financial products and services.

Although not required by the interim final rule, covered entities may incur some costs in updating compliance manuals and related materials to reflect the new numbering and other technical changes reflected in the new Regulations G and H. The Bureau has worked to reduce any such burden by preserving the existing numbering to the extent possible and believes that such costs will likely be minimal. These changes could be handled in the short term by providing a short, standalone summary alerting users to the changes and in the long term could be combined with other updates at the covered entities' convenience. The Bureau intends to continue investigating the possible costs to affected entities of updating manuals and related

¹⁶ Section 1022(b)(2)(A) of the Dodd-Frank Act addresses the consideration of the potential benefits and costs of regulation to consumers and covered persons, including the potential reduction of access by consumers to consumer financial products or services; the impact on depository institutions and credit unions with \$10 billion or less in total assets as described in section 1026 of the Dodd-Frank Act; and the impact on consumers in rural areas. Section 1022(b)(2)(B) requires that the Bureau "consult with the appropriate prudential regulators or other Federal agencies prior to proposing a rule and during the comment process regarding consistency with prudential, market, or systemic objectives administered by such agencies." The manner and extent to which these provisions apply to interim final rules and to costs, benefits, and impacts that are compelled by statutory changes rather than discretionary Bureau action is unclear. Nevertheless, to inform this rulemaking more fully, the Bureau performed the described analyses and consultations.

materials to reflect these changes and solicits comments on this and other issues discussed in this section.

The interim final rule will have no unique impact on depository institutions or credit unions with \$10 billion or less in assets described in section 1026(a) of the Dodd-Frank Act. Also, the interim final rule will have no unique impact on rural consumers.

In undertaking the process of updating and recodifying in Regulations G and H the Federal registry agencies' and HUD's S.A.F.E. Act regulations, as well as regulations implementing thirteen other existing consumer financial laws,¹⁷ the Bureau consulted the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, the National Credit Union Administration, the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, the Federal Trade Commission, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, including with respect to consistency with any prudential, market, or systemic objectives that may be administered by such agencies.¹⁸ The Bureau also consulted the Farm Credit Administration regarding the recodification of Regulation G and consulted with the Office of Management and Budget for technical assistance. The Bureau expects to have further consultations with the appropriate Federal agencies during the comment period.

¹⁷ The fourteen laws implemented by this and its companion rulemakings are: the Consumer Leasing Act, the Electronic Fund Transfer Act (except with respect to section 920 of that Act), the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, the Fair Credit Reporting Act (except with respect to sections 615(e) and 628 of that act), the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, Subsections (b) through (f) of section 43 of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act, sections 502 through 509 of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (except for section 505 as it applies to section 501(b)), the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act, the S.A.F.E. Mortgage Licensing Act, the Truth in Lending Act, the Truth in Savings Act, section 626 of the Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009, and the Interstate Land Sales Full Disclosure Act.

¹⁸ In light of the technical but voluminous nature of this recodification project, the Bureau focused the consultation process on a representative sample of the recodified regulations, while making information on the other regulations available. The Bureau expects to conduct differently its future consultations regarding substantive rulemakings.

IV. Request for Comment

Although notice and comment rulemaking procedures are not required, the Bureau invites comments on this notice. Commenters are specifically encouraged to identify any technical issues raised by the rule. The Bureau is also seeking comment in response to a notice published at 76 FR 75825 (Dec. 5, 2011) concerning its efforts to identify priorities for streamlining regulations that it has inherited from other Federal agencies to address provisions that are outdated, unduly burdensome, or unnecessary.

V. Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA), as amended by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996, requires each agency to consider the potential impact of its regulations on small entities, including small businesses, small governmental units, and small not-for-profit organizations.¹⁹ The RFA generally requires an agency to conduct an initial regulatory flexibility analysis (IRFA) and a final regulatory flexibility analysis (FRFA) of any rule subject to notice-and-comment rulemaking requirements, unless the agency certifies that the rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.²⁰ The Bureau also is subject to certain additional procedures under the RFA involving the convening of a panel to consult with small business representatives prior to proposing a rule for which an IRFA is required.²¹

The IRFA and FRFA requirements described above apply only where a notice of proposed rulemaking is required,²² and the panel requirement applies only when a rulemaking

¹⁹ 5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*

²⁰ 5 U.S.C. 603, 604.

²¹ 5 U.S.C. 609.

²² 5 U.S.C. 603(a), 604(a); 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B).

requires an IRFA.²³ As discussed above in part III, a notice of proposed rulemaking is not required for this rulemaking.

In addition, as discussed above, this interim final rule has only a minor impact on entities subject to Regulations G and H. The rule imposes no new, substantive obligations on covered entities. Accordingly, the undersigned certifies that this interim final rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

VI. Paperwork Reduction Act

The Bureau may not conduct or sponsor, and a respondent is not required to respond to, an information collection unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. Regulation G contains information collection requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA), which have been previously approved by OMB, and the ongoing PRA burden for which is unchanged by this rule. There are no new information collection requirements in this interim final rule. The Bureau's OMB control number for this information collection is 3170-0005.

List of Subjects in 12 CFR Parts 1007 and 1008

Accounting, Administrative practice and procedure, Advertising, Agriculture, Bank deposit insurance, Banks, Banking, Confidential business information, Conflict of interests, Consumer protection, Credit unions, Crime, Currency, Exports, Foreign banking, Grant programs—housing and community development, Holding companies, Insurance, Investments, Loan programs—housing and community development, Licensing, Mortgages, National banks, Penalties, Registration, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Rural areas, Savings associations, Securities, Surety bonds.

²³ 5 U.S.C. 609(b).

Authority and Issuance

For the reasons set forth above, the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection adds Parts 1007 and 1008 to Chapter X in Title 12 of the Code of Federal Regulations to read as follows:

PART 1007—S.A.F.E. MORTGAGE LICENSING ACT – FEDERAL REGISTRATION OF RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE LOAN ORIGINATORS (REGULATION G)

Sec.

1007.101 Authority, purpose, and scope of this part.

1007.102 Definitions applicable to this part.

1007.103 Registration of mortgage loan originators.

1007.104 Policies and procedures.

1007.105 Use of Unique Identifier.

APPENDIX A TO PART 1007—EXAMPLES OF MORTGAGE LOAN ORIGINATOR ACTIVITIES

AUTHORITY: 12 U.S.C. 5101-5116; 15 U.S.C. 1604(a), 1639b; Pub. L. 111-203, 124 Stat. 1376.

§ 1007.101 Authority, purpose, and scope.

(a) *Authority.* This part, known as Regulation G, is issued by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection pursuant to the Secure and Fair Enforcement for Mortgage Licensing Act of 2008, title V of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 (S.A.F.E. Act) (Pub. L. 110–289, 122 Stat. 2654, 12 U.S.C. 5101 *et seq.*), 12 U.S.C. 5512, 5581, 15 U.S.C. 1604(a), 1639b.

(b) *Purpose.* This part implements the S.A.F.E. Act’s Federal registration requirement for mortgage loan originators. The S.A.F.E. Act provides that the objectives of this registration include aggregating and improving the flow of information to and between regulators; providing increased accountability and tracking of mortgage loan originators; enhancing consumer protections; supporting anti-fraud measures; and providing consumers with easily accessible

information at no charge regarding the employment history of, and publicly adjudicated disciplinary and enforcement actions against, mortgage loan originators.

(c) *Scope.* (1) *In general.* This part applies to:

(i) National banks, Federal branches and agencies of foreign banks, their operating subsidiaries (collectively referred to in this part as national banks), and their employees who act as mortgage loan originators;

(ii) Member banks of the Federal Reserve System; their respective subsidiaries that are not functionally regulated within the meaning of section 5(c)(5) of the Bank Holding Company Act, as amended (12 U.S.C. 1844(c)(5)); branches and agencies of foreign banks; commercial lending companies owned or controlled by foreign banks (collectively referred to in this part as member banks); and their employees who act as mortgage loan originators;

(iii) Insured state nonmember banks (including state-licensed insured branches of foreign banks), their subsidiaries (except brokers, dealers, persons providing insurance, investment companies, and investment advisers) (collectively referred to in this part as insured state nonmember banks), and employees of such banks or subsidiaries who act as mortgage loan originators;

(iv) Savings associations, their operating subsidiaries (collectively referred to in this part as savings associations), and their employees who act as mortgage loan originators;

(v) Farm Credit System lending institutions that actually originate residential mortgage loans pursuant to sections 1.9(3), 1.11 or 2.4(a) and (b) of the Farm Credit Act of 1971 (collectively referred to in this part as Farm Credit System institutions), and their employees who act as mortgage loan originators; and

(vi) Any federally insured credit union and its employees, including volunteers, who act as mortgage loan originators. This part also applies to non-federally insured credit unions and their employees, including volunteers, who act as mortgage loan originators, subject to the conditions in paragraph (c)(3) of this section.

(2) *De minimis exception.* (i) This part and the requirements of 12 U.S.C. 5103(a)(1)(A) and (2) of the S.A.F.E. Act do not apply to any employee of a national bank, member bank, insured state nonmember bank, savings association, Farm Credit System institution, or credit union who has never been registered or licensed through the Registry as a mortgage loan originator if during the past 12 months the employee acted as a mortgage loan originator for 5 or fewer residential mortgage loans.

(ii) Prior to engaging in mortgage loan origination activity that exceeds the exception limit in paragraph (c)(2)(i) of this section, an employee must register with the Registry pursuant to this part.

(iii) *Evasion.* National banks, member banks, insured state nonmember banks, savings associations, Farm Credit System institutions, and credit unions are prohibited from engaging in any act or practice to evade the limits of the *de minimis* exception set forth in paragraph (c)(2)(i) of this section.

(3) *For non-federally insured credit unions.* A non-federally insured credit union in a state identified on the National Credit Union Administration's website (NCUA.gov) as one where the appropriate state supervisory authority has executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the National Credit Union Administration may register under this rule provided that any Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System and Registry listing of the non-federally insured credit union and its employees contains a clear and conspicuous statement that the non-federally

insured credit union is not insured by the National Credit Union Share Insurance Fund, and the state supervisory authority where the non-federally insured credit union is located maintains an agreement with the National Credit Union Administration for this registration process and oversight. If the state supervisory authority where the non-federally insured credit union is located fails to maintain such an agreement, the non-federally insured credit union and its employees in that state may not register or maintain registration under the Federal system. They instead must use the appropriate state licensing and registration system, or if the state does not have such a system, the licensing and registration system established by the Bureau for mortgage loan originators and their employees.

§ 1007.102 Definitions.

For purposes of this part, the following definitions apply:

Administrative or clerical tasks means the receipt, collection, and distribution of information common for the processing or underwriting of a loan in the residential mortgage industry and communication with a consumer to obtain information necessary for the processing or underwriting of a residential mortgage loan.

Annual renewal period means November 1 through December 31 of each year.

Bureau means the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection.

Covered financial institution means any national bank, member bank, insured state nonmember bank, savings association, Farm Credit System institution, or federally insured credit union as any such term is defined in § 1007.101(c)(1). Covered financial institution also includes a non-federally insured credit union that registers subject to the conditions of § 1007.101(c)(3).

Mortgage loan originator means

(1) An individual who:

(i) Takes a residential mortgage loan application; and

(ii) Offers or negotiates terms of a residential mortgage loan for compensation or gain.

(2)(i) The term *mortgage loan originator* does not include:

(A) An individual who performs purely administrative or clerical tasks on behalf of an individual who is described as a mortgage loan originator in this section;

(B) An individual who only performs real estate brokerage activities (as defined in 12 U.S.C. 5102(4)(D)) and is licensed or registered as a real estate broker in accordance with applicable state law, unless the individual is compensated by a lender, a mortgage broker, or other mortgage loan originator or by any agent of such lender, mortgage broker, or other mortgage loan originator, and meets the definition of mortgage loan originator in this section; or

(C) An individual or entity solely involved in extensions of credit related to timeshare plans, as that term is defined in 11 U.S.C. 101(53D).

(ii) Examples of activities that would, and would not, result in an employee meeting the definition of mortgage loan originator are provided in Appendix A to this part.

Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System and Registry or Registry means the system developed and maintained by the Conference of State Bank Supervisors and the American Association of Residential Mortgage Regulators for the state licensing and registration of state-licensed mortgage loan originators and the registration of mortgage loan originators pursuant to 12 U.S.C. 5107.

Registered mortgage loan originator or registrant means any individual who:

(1) Meets the definition of mortgage loan originator and is an employee of a covered financial institution; and

(2) Is registered pursuant to this part with, and maintains a unique identifier through, the Registry.

Residential mortgage loan means any loan primarily for personal, family, or household use that is secured by a mortgage, deed of trust, or other equivalent consensual security interest on a dwelling (as defined in section 103(v) of the Truth in Lending Act, 15 U.S.C. 1602(v)) or residential real estate upon which is constructed or intended to be constructed a dwelling, and includes refinancings, reverse mortgages, home equity lines of credit and other first and additional lien loans that meet the qualifications listed in this definition. This definition does not amend or supersede 12 CFR 613.3030(c) with respect to Farm Credit System institutions.

Unique identifier means a number or other identifier that:

- (1) Permanently identifies a registered mortgage loan originator;
- (2) Is assigned by protocols established by the Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System and Registry and the Bureau to facilitate:
 - (i) Electronic tracking of mortgage loan originators; and
 - (ii) Uniform identification of, and public access to, the employment history of and the publicly adjudicated disciplinary and enforcement actions against mortgage loan originators; and
- (3) Must not be used for purposes other than those set forth under the S.A.F.E. Act.

§ 1007.103 Registration of mortgage loan originators.

(a) *Registration requirement.* (1) *Employee registration.* Each employee of a covered financial institution who acts as a mortgage loan originator must register with the Registry, obtain a unique identifier, and maintain this registration in accordance with the requirements of this part. Any such employee who is not in compliance with the registration and unique identifier requirements set forth in this part is in violation of the S.A.F.E. Act and this part.

(2) *Covered financial institution requirement.* (i) *In general.* A covered financial institution that employs one or more individuals who act as a residential mortgage loan originator must require each such employee to register with the Registry, maintain this registration, and obtain a unique identifier in accordance with the requirements of this part.

(ii) *Prohibition.* A covered financial institution must not permit an employee who is subject to the registration requirements of this part to act as a mortgage loan originator for the covered financial institution unless such employee is registered with the Registry pursuant to this part.

(3) [Reserved]

(4) *Employees previously registered or licensed through the Registry—(i) In general.* If an employee of a covered financial institution was registered or licensed through, and obtained a unique identifier from, the Registry and has maintained this registration or license before the employee becomes subject to this part at the current covered financial institution, then the registration requirements of the S.A.F.E. Act and this part are deemed to be met, provided that:

(A) The employment information in paragraphs (d)(1)(i)(C) and (d)(1)(ii) of this section is updated and the requirements of paragraph (d)(2) of this section are met;

(B) New fingerprints of the employee are submitted to the Registry for a background check, as required by paragraph (d)(1)(ix) of this section, unless the employee has fingerprints on file with the Registry that are less than 3 years old;

(C) The covered financial institution information required in paragraphs (e)(1)(i) (to the extent the covered financial institution has not previously met these requirements) and (e)(2)(i) of this section is submitted to the Registry; and

(D) The registration is maintained pursuant to paragraphs (b) and (e)(1)(ii) of this section, as of the date that the employee becomes subject to this part.

(ii) *Rule for certain acquisitions, mergers, or reorganizations.* When registered or licensed mortgage loan originators become covered financial institution employees as a result of an acquisition, consolidation, merger, or reorganization, only the requirements of paragraphs (a)(4)(i)(A), (C), and (D) of this section must be met, and these requirements must be met within 60 days from the effective date of the acquisition, merger, or reorganization.

(b) *Maintaining registration.* (1) A mortgage loan originator who is registered with the Registry pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section must:

(i) Except as provided in paragraph (b)(3) of this section, renew the registration during the annual renewal period, confirming the responses set forth in paragraphs (d)(1)(i) through (viii) of this section remain accurate and complete, and updating this information, as appropriate; and

(ii) Update the registration within 30 days of any of the following events:

(A) A change in the name of the registrant;

(B) The registrant ceases to be an employee of the covered financial institution; or

(C) The information required under paragraphs (d)(1)(iii) through (viii) of this section becomes inaccurate, incomplete, or out-of-date.

(2) A registered mortgage loan originator must maintain his or her registration, unless the individual is no longer engaged in the activity of a mortgage loan originator.

(3) The annual registration renewal requirement set forth in paragraph (b)(1) of this section does not apply to a registered mortgage loan originator who has completed his or her

registration with the Registry pursuant to paragraph (a)(1) of this section less than 6 months prior to the end of the annual renewal period.

(c) *Effective dates.* (1) *Registration.* A registration pursuant to paragraph (a)(1) of this section is effective on the date the Registry transmits notification to the registrant that the registrant is registered.

(2) *Renewals or updates.* A renewal or update pursuant to paragraph (b) of this section is effective on the date the Registry transmits notification to the registrant that the registration has been renewed or updated.

(d) *Required employee information.* (1) *In general.* For purposes of the registration required by this section, a covered financial institution must require each employee who is a mortgage loan originator to submit to the Registry, or must submit on behalf of the employee, the following categories of information, to the extent this information is collected by the Registry:

(i) Identifying information, including the employee's:

(A) Name and any other names used;

(B) Home address and contact information;

(C) Principal business location address and business contact information;

(D) Social security number;

(E) Gender; and

(F) Date and place of birth;

(ii) Financial services-related employment history for the 10 years prior to the date of registration or renewal, including the date the employee became an employee of the covered financial institution;

(iii) Convictions of any criminal offense involving dishonesty, breach of trust, or money laundering against the employee or organizations controlled by the employee, or agreements to enter into a pretrial diversion or similar program in connection with the prosecution for such offense(s);

(iv) Civil judicial actions against the employee in connection with financial services-related activities, dismissals with settlements, or judicial findings that the employee violated financial services-related statutes or regulations, except for actions dismissed without a settlement agreement;

(v) Actions or orders by a state or Federal regulatory agency or foreign financial regulatory authority that:

(A) Found the employee to have made a false statement or omission or been dishonest, unfair or unethical; to have been involved in a violation of a financial services-related regulation or statute; or to have been a cause of a financial services-related business having its authorization to do business denied, suspended, revoked, or restricted;

(B) Are entered against the employee in connection with a financial services-related activity;

(C) Denied, suspended, or revoked the employee's registration or license to engage in a financial services-related activity; disciplined the employee or otherwise by order prevented the employee from associating with a financial services-related business or restricted the employee's activities; or

(D) Barred the employee from association with an entity or its officers regulated by the agency or authority or from engaging in a financial services-related business;

(vi) Final orders issued by a state or Federal regulatory agency or foreign financial regulatory authority based on violations of any law or regulation that prohibits fraudulent, manipulative, or deceptive conduct;

(vii) Revocation or suspension of the employee's authorization to act as an attorney, accountant, or state or Federal contractor;

(viii) Customer-initiated financial services-related arbitration or civil action against the employee that required action, including settlements, or which resulted in a judgment; and

(ix) Fingerprints of the employee, in digital form if practicable, and any appropriate identifying information for submission to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and any governmental agency or entity authorized to receive such information in connection with a state and national criminal history background check; however, fingerprints provided to the Registry that are less than 3 years old may be used to satisfy this requirement.

(2) *Employee authorizations and attestation.* An employee registering as a mortgage loan originator or renewing or updating his or her registration under this part, and not the employing covered financial institution or other employees of the covered financial institution, must:

(i) Authorize the Registry and the employing institution to obtain information related to sanctions or findings in any administrative, civil, or criminal action, to which the employee is a party, made by any governmental jurisdiction;

(ii) Attest to the correctness of all information required by paragraph (d) of this section, whether submitted by the employee or on behalf of the employee by the employing covered financial institution; and

(iii) Authorize the Registry to make available to the public information required by paragraphs (d)(1)(i)(A) and (C), and (d)(1)(ii) through (viii) of this section.

(3) *Submission of information.* A covered financial institution may identify one or more employees of the covered financial institution who may submit the information required by paragraph (d)(1) of this section to the Registry on behalf of the covered financial institution's employees provided that this individual, and any employee delegated such authority, does not act as a mortgage loan originator, consistent with paragraph (e)(1)(i)(F) of this section. In addition, a covered financial institution may submit to the Registry some or all of the information required by paragraphs (d)(1) and (e)(2) of this section for multiple employees in bulk through batch processing in a format to be specified by the Registry, to the extent such batch processing is made available by the Registry.

(e) *Required covered financial institution information.* A covered financial institution must submit the following categories of information to the Registry:

(1) *Covered financial institution record.* (i) In connection with the registration of one or more mortgage loan originators:

(A) Name, main office address, and business contact information;

(B) Internal Revenue Service Employer Tax Identification Number (EIN);

(C) Research Statistics Supervision and Discount (RSSD) number, as issued by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System;

(D) Identification of its primary Federal regulator;

(E) Name(s) and contact information of the individual(s) with authority to act as the covered financial institution's primary point of contact for the Registry;

(F) Name(s) and contact information of the individual(s) with authority to enter the information required by paragraphs (d)(1) and (e) of this section to the Registry and who may delegate this authority to other individuals. For the purpose of providing information required by paragraph (e) of this section, this individual and their delegates must not act as mortgage loan originators unless the covered financial institution has 10 or fewer full time or equivalent employees and is not a subsidiary; and

(G) If a subsidiary of a national bank, member bank, savings association, or insured state nonmember bank, indication that it is a subsidiary and the RSSD number of the parent institution; if an operating subsidiary of an agricultural credit association, indication that it is a subsidiary, and the RSSD number of the parent agricultural credit association.

(ii) *Attestation.* The individual(s) identified in paragraphs (e)(1)(i)(E) and (F) of this section must comply with Registry protocols to verify their identity and must attest that they have the authority to enter data on behalf of the covered financial institution, that the information provided to the Registry pursuant to this paragraph (e) is correct, and that the covered financial institution will keep the information required by this paragraph (e) current and will file accurate supplementary information on a timely basis.

(iii) A covered financial institution must update the information required by this paragraph (e) of this section within 30 days of the date that this information becomes inaccurate.

(iv) A covered financial institution must renew the information required by paragraph (e) of this section on an annual basis.

(2) *Employee information.* In connection with the registration of each employee who acts as a mortgage loan originator:

(i) After the information required by paragraph (d) of this section has been submitted to the Registry, confirmation that it employs the registrant; and

(ii) Within 30 days of the date the registrant ceases to be an employee of the covered financial institution, notification that it no longer employs the registrant and the date the registrant ceased being an employee.

§ 1007.104 Policies and procedures.

A covered financial institution that employs one or more mortgage loan originators must adopt and follow written policies and procedures designed to assure compliance with this part. These policies and procedures must be appropriate to the nature, size, complexity, and scope of the mortgage lending activities of the covered financial institution, and apply only to those employees acting within the scope of their employment at the covered financial institution. At a minimum, these policies and procedures must:

(a) Establish a process for identifying which employees of the covered financial institution are required to be registered mortgage loan originators;

(b) Require that all employees of the covered financial institution who are mortgage loan originators be informed of the registration requirements of the S.A.F.E. Act and this part and be instructed on how to comply with such requirements and procedures;

(c) Establish procedures to comply with the unique identifier requirements in § 1007.105;

(d) Establish reasonable procedures for confirming the adequacy and accuracy of employee registrations, including updates and renewals, by comparisons with its own records;

(e) Establish reasonable procedures and tracking systems for monitoring compliance with registration and renewal requirements and procedures;

(f) Provide for independent testing for compliance with this part to be conducted at least annually by covered financial institution personnel or by an outside party;

(g) Provide for appropriate action in the case of any employee who fails to comply with the registration requirements of the S.A.F.E. Act, this part, or the covered financial institution's related policies and procedures, including prohibiting such employees from acting as mortgage loan originators or other appropriate disciplinary actions;

(h) Establish a process for reviewing employee criminal history background reports received pursuant to this part, taking appropriate action consistent with applicable Federal law, including section 19 of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1829), section 206 of the Federal Credit Union Act (12 U.S.C. 1786(i)), and section 5.65(d) of the Farm Credit Act of 1971, as amended (12 U.S.C. 2277a-14(d)), and implementing regulations with respect to these reports, and maintaining records of these reports and actions taken with respect to applicable employees; and

(i) Establish procedures designed to ensure that any third party with which the covered financial institution has arrangements related to mortgage loan origination has policies and procedures to comply with the S.A.F.E. Act, including appropriate licensing and/or registration of individuals acting as mortgage loan originators.

§ 1007.105 Use of unique identifier.

(a) The covered financial institution shall make the unique identifier(s) of its registered mortgage loan originator(s) available to consumers in a manner and method practicable to the institution.

(b) A registered mortgage loan originator shall provide his or her unique identifier to a consumer:

- (1) Upon request;
- (2) Before acting as a mortgage loan originator; and
- (3) Through the originator's initial written communication with a consumer, if any, whether on paper or electronically.

Appendix A to Part 1007—Examples of Mortgage Loan Originator Activities

This appendix provides examples to aid in the understanding of activities that would cause an employee of a covered financial institution to fall within or outside the definition of mortgage loan originator. The examples in this Appendix are not all-inclusive. They illustrate only the issue described and do not illustrate any other issues that may arise under this part. For purposes of the examples below, the term “loan” refers to a residential mortgage loan.

(a) *Taking a loan application.* The following examples illustrate when an employee takes, or does not take, a loan application.

(1) Taking an application includes: receiving information provided in connection with a request for a loan to be used to determine whether the consumer qualifies for a loan, even if the employee:

(i) Has received the consumer's information indirectly in order to make an offer or negotiate a loan;

(ii) Is not responsible for verifying information;

(iii) Is inputting information into an online application or other automated system on behalf of the consumer; or

(iv) Is not engaged in approval of the loan, including determining whether the consumer qualifies for the loan.

(2) Taking an application does not include any of the following activities performed solely or in combination:

(i) Contacting a consumer to verify the information in the loan application by obtaining documentation, such as tax returns or payroll receipts;

(ii) Receiving a loan application through the mail and forwarding it, without review, to loan approval personnel;

(iii) Assisting a consumer who is filling out an application by clarifying what type of information is necessary for the application or otherwise explaining the qualifications or criteria necessary to obtain a loan product;

(iv) Describing the steps that a consumer would need to take to provide information to be used to determine whether the consumer qualifies for a loan or otherwise explaining the loan application process;

(v) In response to an inquiry regarding a prequalified offer that a consumer has received from a covered financial institution, collecting only basic identifying information about the consumer and forwarding the consumer to a mortgage loan originator; or

(vi) Receiving information in connection with a modification to the terms of an existing loan to a borrower as part of the covered financial institution's loss mitigation efforts when the borrower is reasonably likely to default.

(b) *Offering or negotiating terms of a loan.* The following examples are designed to illustrate when an employee offers or negotiates terms of a loan, and conversely, what does not constitute offering or negotiating terms of a loan.

(1) Offering or negotiating the terms of a loan includes:

(i) Presenting a loan offer to a consumer for acceptance, either verbally or in writing, including, but not limited to, providing a disclosure of the loan terms after application under the Truth in Lending Act, even if:

(A) Further verification of information is necessary;

(B) The offer is conditional;

(C) Other individuals must complete the loan process; or

(D) Only the rate approved by the covered financial institution's loan approval mechanism function for a specific loan product is communicated without authority to negotiate the rate.

(ii) Responding to a consumer's request for a lower rate or lower points on a pending loan application by presenting to the consumer a revised loan offer, either verbally or in writing, that includes a lower interest rate or lower points than the original offer.

(2) Offering or negotiating terms of a loan does not include solely or in combination:

(i) Providing general explanations or descriptions in response to consumer queries regarding qualification for a specific loan product, such as explaining loan terminology (*e.g.*, debt-to-income ratio); lending policies (*e.g.*, the loan-to-value ratio policy of the covered financial institution); or product-related services;

(ii) In response to a consumer's request, informing a consumer of the loan rates that are publicly available, such as on the covered financial institution's website, for specific types of loan products without communicating to the consumer whether qualifications are met for that loan product;

(iii) Collecting information about a consumer in order to provide the consumer with information on loan products for which the consumer generally may qualify, without presenting a specific loan offer to the consumer for acceptance, either verbally or in writing;

(iv) Arranging the loan closing or other aspects of the loan process, including communicating with a consumer about those arrangements, provided that communication with the consumer only verifies loan terms already offered or negotiated;

(v) Providing a consumer with information unrelated to loan terms, such as the best days of the month for scheduling loan closings at the covered financial institution;

(vi) Making an underwriting decision about whether the consumer qualifies for a loan;

(vii) Explaining or describing the steps or process that a consumer would need to take in order to obtain a loan offer, including qualifications or criteria that would need to be met without providing guidance specific to that consumer's circumstances; or

(viii) Communicating on behalf of a mortgage loan originator that a written offer, including disclosures provided pursuant to the Truth in Lending Act, has been sent to a consumer without providing any details of that offer.

(c) *Offering or negotiating a loan for compensation or gain.* The following examples illustrate when an employee does or does not offer or negotiate terms of a loan "for compensation or gain."

(1) Offering or negotiating terms of a loan for compensation or gain includes engaging in any of the activities in paragraph (b)(1) of this appendix in the course of carrying out employment duties, even if the employee does not receive a referral fee or commission or other special compensation for the loan.

(2) Offering or negotiating terms of a loan for compensation or gain does not include engaging in a seller-financed transaction for the employee's personal property that does not involve the covered financial institution.

PART 1008—S.A.F.E. MORTGAGE LICENSING ACT – STATE COMPLIANCE AND BUREAU REGISTRATION SYSTEM (REGULATION H)

Sec.

1008.1 Purpose.

1008.3 Confidentiality of information.

Subpart A—General

1008.20 Scope of this subpart.

1008.23 Definitions.

Subpart B—Determination of State Compliance with the S.A.F.E. Act

1008.101 Scope of this subpart.

1008.103 Individuals required to be licensed by states.

1008.105 Minimum loan originator license requirements.

1008.107 Minimum annual license renewal requirements.

1008.109 Effective date of state requirements imposed on individuals.

1008.111 Other minimum requirements for state licensing systems.

1008.113 Performance standards.

1008.115 Determination of noncompliance.

Subpart C—Bureau's Loan Originator Licensing System and Bureau's Nationwide Mortgage Licensing and Registry System

1008.201 Scope of this subpart.

1008.203 Bureau's establishment of loan originator licensing system.

1008.205 Bureau's establishment of nationwide mortgage licensing system and registry.

Subpart D—Minimum Requirements for Administration of the NMLSR

1008.301 Scope of this subpart.

1008.303 Financial reporting.

1008.305 Data security.

1008.307 Fees.

1008.309 Absence of liability for good-faith administration.

Subpart E—Enforcement of Bureau Licensing System

1008.401 Bureau's authority to examine loan originator records.

1008.403 [Reserved].

1008.405 [Reserved].

APPENDIX A TO PART 1008—EXAMPLES OF MORTGAGE LOAN ORIGINATOR ACTIVITIES

APPENDIX B TO PART 1008—ENGAGING IN THE BUSINESS OF A LOAN ORIGINATOR: COMMERCIAL
CONTEXT AND HABITUALNESS

APPENDIX C TO PART 1008—INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS AND LOAN PROCESSOR AND
UNDERWRITER ACTIVITIES THAT REQUIRE A STATE MORTGAGE LOAN ORIGINATOR LICENSE

APPENDIX D TO PART 1008—ATTORNEYS: CIRCUMSTANCES THAT REQUIRE A STATE MORTGAGE
LOAN ORIGINATOR LICENSE

AUTHORITY: 12 U.S.C. 5101-5116; Pub. L. 111-203, 124 Stat. 1376.

§ 1008.1 Purpose.

(a) *Authority.* This part, known as Regulation H, is issued by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection to implement the Secure and Fair Enforcement for Mortgage Licensing Act

of 2008, title V of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 (S.A.F.E. Act) (Pub. L. 110–289, 122 Stat. 2654, 12 U.S.C. 5101 *et seq.*).

(b) *Purpose.* The purpose of this part is to enhance consumer protection and reduce fraud by directing states to adopt minimum uniform standards for the licensing and registration of residential mortgage loan originators and to participate in a nationwide mortgage licensing system and registry database of residential mortgage loan originators. Under the S.A.F.E. Act, if the Bureau determines that a state’s loan origination licensing system does not meet the minimum requirements of the S.A.F.E. Act, the Bureau is charged with establishing and implementing a system for all loan originators in that state. Additionally, if at any time the Bureau determines that the nationwide mortgage licensing system and registry is failing to meet the S.A.F.E. Act’s requirements, the Bureau is charged with establishing and maintaining a licensing and registry database for loan originators.

(c) *Organization.* The regulation is divided into subparts and appendices as follows:

(1) Subpart A establishes the definitions applicable to this part.

(2) Subpart B provides the minimum standards that a state must meet in licensing loan originators, including standards for whom a state must require to be licensed, and sets forth the Bureau’s procedure for determining a state’s compliance with the minimum standards.

(3) Subpart C provides the requirements that the Bureau will apply in any state that the Bureau determines has not established a licensing and registration system in compliance with the minimum standards of the S.A.F.E. Act.

(4) Subpart D provides minimum requirements for the administration of the Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System and Registry.

(5) Subpart E clarifies the Bureau's enforcement authority in states in which it operates a state licensing system.

(6) Appendices A through D set forth examples to aid in the understanding and application of the regulations.

§ 1008.3 Confidentiality of information.

(a) Except as otherwise provided in this part, any requirement under Federal or state law regarding the privacy or confidentiality of any information or material provided to the Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System and Registry or a system established by the Director under this part, and any privilege arising under Federal or state law (including the rules of any Federal or state court) with respect to such information or material, shall continue to apply to such information or material after the information or material has been disclosed to the system. Such information and material may be shared with all state and Federal regulatory officials with mortgage industry oversight authority without the loss of privilege or the loss of confidentiality protections provided by Federal and state laws.

(b) Information or material that is subject to a privilege or confidentiality under paragraph (a) of this section shall not be subject to:

(1) Disclosure under any Federal or state law governing the disclosure to the public of information held by an officer or an agency of the Federal Government or the respective state; or

(2) Subpoena or discovery, or admission into evidence, in any private civil action or administrative process, unless with respect to any privilege held by the Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System and Registry or by the Director with respect to such information or material,

the person to whom such information or material pertains, waives, in whole or in part, in the discretion of such person, that privilege.

(c) Any state law, including any state open record law, relating to the disclosure of confidential supervisory information or any information or material described in paragraph (a) of this section that is inconsistent with paragraph (a), shall be superseded by the requirements of such provision to the extent that state law provides less confidentiality or a weaker privilege.

(d) This section shall not apply with respect to the information or material relating to the employment history of, and any publicly adjudicated disciplinary and enforcement action against, any loan originator that is included in the Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System and Registry for access by the public.

Subpart A—General

§ 1008.20 Scope of this subpart.

This subpart provides the definitions applicable to this part, and other general requirements applicable to this part.

§ 1008.23 Definitions.

Terms that are defined in the S.A.F.E. Act and used in this part have the same meaning as in the S.A.F.E. Act, unless otherwise provided in this section.

Administrative or clerical tasks means the receipt, collection, and distribution of information common for the processing or underwriting of a loan in the mortgage industry and communication with a consumer to obtain information necessary for the processing or underwriting of a residential mortgage loan.

American Association of Residential Mortgage Regulators (AARMR) is the national association of executives and employees of the various states who are charged with the

responsibility for administration and regulation of residential mortgage lending, servicing, and brokering, and dedicated to the goals described at www.aarmr.org.

Application means a request, in any form, for an offer (or a response to a solicitation of an offer) of residential mortgage loan terms, and the information about the borrower or prospective borrower that is customary or necessary in a decision on whether to make such an offer.

Bureau means the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection.

Clerical or support duties:

(1) Include:

(i) The receipt, collection, distribution, and analysis of information common for the processing or underwriting of a residential mortgage loan; and

(ii) Communicating with a consumer to obtain the information necessary for the processing or underwriting of a loan, to the extent that such communication does not include offering or negotiating loan rates or terms, or counseling consumers about residential mortgage loan rates or terms; and

(2) Does not include:

(i) Taking a residential mortgage loan application; or

(ii) Offering or negotiating terms of a residential mortgage loan.

Conference of State Bank Supervisors (CSBS) is the national organization composed of state bank supervisors dedicated to maintaining the state banking system and state regulation of financial services in accordance with the CSBS statement of principles described at www.csbs.org.

Director means the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection.

Employee means an individual:

(1) Whose manner and means of performance of work are subject to the right of control of, or are controlled by, a person, and

(2) Whose compensation for Federal income tax purposes is reported, or required to be reported, on a W-2 form issued by the controlling person.

Farm Credit Administration means the independent Federal agency, authorized by the Farm Credit Act of 1971, that examines and regulates the Farm Credit System.

For compensation or gain. See § 1008.103(c)(2)(ii).

Independent contractor means an individual who performs his or her duties other than at the direction of and subject to the supervision and instruction of an individual who is licensed and registered in accordance with § 1008.103(a), or is not required to be licensed, in accordance with § 1008.103(e)(5), (6), or (7).

Loan originator. See § 1008.103.

Loan processor or underwriter, for purposes of this part, means an individual who, with respect to the origination of a residential mortgage loan, performs clerical or support duties at the direction of and subject to the supervision and instruction of:

(1) A state-licensed loan originator; or

(2) A registered loan originator.

Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System and Registry or NMLSR means the mortgage licensing system developed and maintained by the Conference of State Bank Supervisors and the American Association of Residential Mortgage Regulators for the licensing and registration of loan originators and the registration of registered loan originators or any system established by the Director, as provided in subpart D of this part.

Nontraditional mortgage product means any mortgage product other than a 30-year fixed-rate mortgage.

Origination of a residential mortgage loan, for purposes of the definition of *loan processor or underwriter*, means all residential mortgage loan-related activities from the taking of a residential mortgage loan application through the completion of all required loan closing documents and funding of the residential mortgage loan.

Real estate brokerage activities mean any activity that involves offering or providing real estate brokerage services to the public including—

(1) Acting as a real estate agent or real estate broker for a buyer, seller, lessor, or lessee of real property;

(2) Bringing together parties interested in the sale, purchase, lease, rental, or exchange of real property;

(3) Negotiating, on behalf of any party, any portion of a contract relating to the sale, purchase, lease, rental, or exchange of real property (other than in connection with providing financing with respect to any such transaction);

(4) Engaging in any activity for which a person engaged in the activity is required to be registered as a real estate agent or real estate broker under any applicable law; and

(5) Offering to engage in any activity, or act in any capacity, described in paragraphs (1), (2), (3), or (4) of this definition.

Residential mortgage loan means any loan primarily for personal, family, or household use that is secured by a mortgage, deed of trust, or other equivalent consensual security interest on a dwelling (as defined in section 103(w) of the Truth in Lending Act) or residential real estate upon which is constructed or intended to be constructed a dwelling (as so defined).

State means any state of the United States, the District of Columbia, any territory of the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Unique identifier means a number or other identifier that:

(1) Permanently identifies a loan originator;

(2) Is assigned by protocols established by the Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System and Registry and the Bureau to facilitate electronic tracking of loan originators and uniform identification of, and public access to, the employment history of and the publicly adjudicated disciplinary and enforcement actions against loan originators; and

(3) Shall not be used for purposes other than those set forth under the S.A.F.E. Act.

Subpart B—Determination of State Compliance with the S.A.F.E. Act

§ 1008.101 Scope of this subpart.

This subpart describes the minimum standards of the S.A.F.E. Act that apply to a state's licensing and registering of loan originators. This subpart also provides the procedures that the Bureau follows to determine that a state does not have in place a system for licensing and registering mortgage loan originators that complies with the minimum standards. Upon making such a determination, the Bureau will impose the requirements and exercise the enforcement authorities described in subparts C and E of this part.

§ 1008.103 Individuals required to be licensed by states.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (e) of this section, in order to operate a S.A.F.E.-compliant program, a state must prohibit an individual from engaging in the business of a loan

originator with respect to any dwelling or residential real estate in the state, unless the individual first:

(1) Registers as a loan originator through and obtains a unique identifier from the NMLSR, and

(2) Obtains and maintains a valid loan originator license from the state.

(b) An individual engages in the business of a loan originator if the individual, in a commercial context and habitually or repeatedly:

(1)(i) Takes a residential mortgage loan application; and

(ii) Offers or negotiates terms of a residential mortgage loan for compensation or gain; or

(2) Represents to the public, through advertising or other means of communicating or providing information (including the use of business cards, stationery, brochures, signs, rate lists, or other promotional items), that such individual can or will perform the activities described in paragraph (b)(1) of this section.

(c)(1) An individual “takes a residential mortgage loan application” if the individual receives a residential mortgage loan application for the purpose of facilitating a decision whether to extend an offer of residential mortgage loan terms to a borrower or prospective borrower (or to accept the terms offered by a borrower or prospective borrower in response to a solicitation), whether the application is received directly or indirectly from the borrower or prospective borrower.

(2) An individual “offers or negotiates terms of a residential mortgage loan for compensation or gain” if the individual:

(i)(A) Presents for consideration by a borrower or prospective borrower particular residential mortgage loan terms;

(B) Communicates directly or indirectly with a borrower, or prospective borrower for the purpose of reaching a mutual understanding about prospective residential mortgage loan terms; or

(C) Recommends, refers, or steers a borrower or prospective borrower to a particular lender or set of residential mortgage loan terms, in accordance with a duty to or incentive from any person other than the borrower or prospective borrower; and

(ii) Receives or expects to receive payment of money or anything of value in connection with the activities described in paragraph (c)(2)(i) of this section or as a result of any residential mortgage loan terms entered into as a result of such activities.

(d)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (e) of this section, a state must prohibit an individual who is an independent contractor from engaging in residential mortgage loan origination activities as a loan processor or underwriter with respect to any dwelling or residential real estate in the state, unless the individual first:

(i) Registers as a loan originator through and obtains a unique identifier from the NMLSR, and

(ii) Obtains and maintains a valid loan originator license from the state.

(2) An individual “engage[s] in residential mortgage loan origination activities as a loan processor or underwriter” if, with respect to a residential mortgage loan application, the individual performs clerical or support duties.

(e) A state is not required to impose the prohibitions required under paragraphs (a) and (d) of this section on the following individuals:

(1) An individual who performs only real estate brokerage activities and is licensed or registered in accordance with applicable state law, unless the individual is compensated directly

or indirectly by a lender, mortgage broker, or other loan originator or by an agent of such lender, mortgage broker, or other loan originator;

(2) An individual who is involved only in extensions of credit relating to timeshare plans, as that term is defined in 11 U.S.C. 101(53D);

(3) An individual who performs only clerical or support duties and:

(i) Who does so at the direction of and subject to the supervision and instruction of an individual who:

(A) Is licensed and registered in accordance with paragraph (a) of this section, or

(B) Is not required to be licensed in accordance with paragraph (e)(5); or

(ii) Who performs such duties solely with respect to transactions for which the individual who acts as a loan originator is not required to be licensed, in accordance with paragraph (e)(2), (6), or (7) of this section;

(4) An individual who performs only purely administrative or clerical tasks on behalf of a loan originator;

(5) An individual who is lawfully registered with, and maintains a unique identifier through, the Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System and Registry, and who is an employee of a covered financial institution, as that term is defined in 12 CFR Part 1007.

(6)(i) An individual who is an employee of a Federal , state, or local government agency or housing finance agency and who acts as a loan originator only pursuant to his or her official duties as an employee of the Federal , state, or local government agency or housing finance agency.

(ii) For purposes of this paragraph (e)(6), the term employee has the meaning provided in paragraph (1) of the definition of employee in § 1008.23 and excludes the meaning provided in paragraph (2) of the definition.

(iii) For purposes of this paragraph (e)(6), the term housing finance agency means any authority:

(A) That is chartered by a state to help meet the affordable housing needs of the residents of the state;

(B) That is supervised directly or indirectly by the state government;

(C) That is subject to audit and review by the state in which it operates; and

(D) Whose activities make it eligible to be a member of the National Council of State Housing Agencies.

(7)(i) An employee of a bona fide nonprofit organization who acts as a loan originator only with respect to his or her work duties to the bona fide nonprofit organization, and who acts as a loan originator only with respect to residential mortgage loans with terms that are favorable to the borrower.

(ii) For an organization to be considered a bona fide nonprofit organization under this paragraph, a state supervisory authority that opts not to require licensing of the employee must determine, under criteria and pursuant to processes established by the state, that the organization:

(A) Has the status of a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

(B) Promotes affordable housing or provides homeownership education, or similar services;

(C) Conducts its activities in a manner that serves public or charitable purposes, rather than commercial purposes;

(D) Receives funding and revenue and charges fees in a manner that does not incentivize it or its employees to act other than in the best interests of its clients;

(E) Compensates its employees in a manner that does not incentivize employees to act other than in the best interests of its clients;

(F) Provides or identifies for the borrower residential mortgage loans with terms favorable to the borrower and comparable to mortgage loans and housing assistance provided under government housing assistance programs; and

(G) Meets other standards that the state determines are appropriate.

(iii) A state must periodically examine the books and activities of an organization it determines is a bona fide nonprofit organization and revoke its status as a bona fide nonprofit organization if it does not continue to meet the criteria under paragraph (e)(7)(ii) of this section;

(iv) For residential mortgage loans to have terms that are favorable to the borrower, a state must determine that the terms are consistent with loan origination in a public or charitable context, rather than a commercial context.

(f) A state must require an individual licensed in accordance with paragraphs (a) or (d) of this section to renew the loan originator license no less often than annually.

§ 1008.105 Minimum loan originator license requirements.

For an individual to be eligible for a loan originator license required under § 1008.103(a) and (d), a state must require and find, at a minimum, that an individual:

(a) Has never had a loan originator license revoked in any governmental jurisdiction, except that a formally vacated revocation shall not be deemed a revocation;

(b)(1) Has never been convicted of, or pled guilty or *nolo contendere* to, a felony in a domestic, foreign, or military court:

(i) During the 7-year period preceding the date of the application for licensing; or

(ii) At any time preceding such date of application, if such felony involved an act of fraud, dishonesty, a breach of trust, or money laundering.

(2) For purposes of this paragraph (b):

(i) Expunged convictions and pardoned convictions do not, in themselves, affect the eligibility of the individual; and

(ii) Whether a particular crime is classified as a felony is determined by the law of the jurisdiction in which an individual is convicted.

(c) Has demonstrated financial responsibility, character, and general fitness, such as to command the confidence of the community and to warrant a determination that the loan originator will operate honestly, fairly, and efficiently, under reasonable standards established by the individual state.

(d) Completed at least 20 hours of pre-licensing education that has been reviewed and approved by the Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System and Registry. The pre-licensing education completed by the individual must include at least:

(1) 3 hours of Federal law and regulations;

(2) 3 hours of ethics, which must include instruction on fraud, consumer protection, and fair lending issues; and

(3) 2 hours of training on lending standards for the nontraditional mortgage product marketplace.

(e)(1) Achieved a test score of not less than 75 percent correct answers on a written test developed by the NMLSR in accordance with 12 U.S.C. 5105(d).

(2) To satisfy the requirement under paragraph (e)(1) of this section, an individual may take a test three consecutive times, with each retest occurring at least 30 days after the preceding test. If an individual fails three consecutive tests, the individual must wait at least 6 months before taking the test again.

(3) If a formerly state-licensed loan originator fails to maintain a valid license for 5 years or longer, not taking into account any time during which such individual is a registered loan originator, the individual must retake the test and achieve a test score of not less than 75 percent correct answers.

(f) Be covered by either a net worth or surety bond requirement, or pays into a state fund, as required by the state loan originator supervisory authority.

(g) Has submitted to the NMLSR fingerprints for submission to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and to any government agency for a state and national criminal history background check; and

(h) Has submitted to the NMLSR personal history and experience, which must include authorization for the NMLSR to obtain:

(1) Information related to any administrative, civil, or criminal findings by any governmental jurisdiction; and

(2) An independent credit report.

§ 1008.107 Minimum annual license renewal requirements.

(a) For an individual to be eligible to renew a loan originator license as required under § 1008.103(f), a state must require the individual:

(1) To continue to meet the minimum standards for license issuance provided in § 1008.105; and

(2) To satisfy annual continuing education requirements, which must include at least 8 hours of education approved by the NMLSR. The 8 hours of annual continuing education must include at least:

(i) 3 hours of Federal law and regulations;

(ii) 2 hours of ethics (including instruction on fraud, consumer protection, and fair lending issues); and

(iii) 2 hours of training related to lending standards for the nontraditional mortgage product marketplace.

(b) A state must provide that a state-licensed loan originator may only receive credit for a continuing education course in the year in which the course is taken, and that a state-licensed loan originator may not apply credits for education courses taken in one year to meet the continuing education requirements of subsequent years. A state must provide that an individual may not meet the annual requirements for continuing education by taking an approved course more than one time in the same year or in successive years.

(c) An individual who is an instructor of an approved continuing education course may receive credit for the individual's own annual continuing education requirement at the rate of 2 hours credit for every one hour taught.

§ 1008.109 Effective date of state requirements imposed on individuals.

(a) Except as provided in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section, a state must provide that the effective date for requirements it imposes in accordance with §§ 1008.103, 1008.105, and 1008.107 is no later than August 29, 2011.

(b) For an individual who was permitted to perform residential mortgage loan originations under state legislation or regulations enacted or promulgated prior to the state's enactment or promulgation of a licensing system that complies with this subpart, a state may delay the effective date for requirements it imposes in accordance with §§ 1008.103, 1008.105, and 1008.107 to no later than August 29, 2011. For purposes of this paragraph (b), an individual was permitted to perform residential mortgage loan originations only if prior state law required the individual to be licensed, authorized, registered, or otherwise granted a form of affirmative and revocable government permission for individuals as a condition of performing residential mortgage loan originations.

(c) The Bureau may approve a later effective date only upon a state's demonstration that substantial numbers of loan originators (or of a class of loan originators) who require a state license face unusual hardship, through no fault of their own or of the state government, in complying with the standards required by the S.A.F.E. Act and in obtaining state licenses within one year.

§ 1008.111 Other minimum requirements for state licensing systems.

(a) *General.* A state must maintain a loan originator licensing, supervisory, and oversight authority (supervisory authority) that provides effective supervision and enforcement, in accordance with the minimum standards provided in this section and in § 1008.113.

(b) *Authorities.* A supervisory authority must have the legal authority and mechanisms:

(1) To examine any books, papers, records, or other data of any loan originator operating in the state;

(2) To summon any loan originator operating in the state, or any person having possession, custody, or care of the reports and records relating to such a loan originator, to

appear before the supervisory authority at a time and place named in the summons and to produce such books, papers, records, or other data, and to give testimony, under oath, as may be relevant or material to an investigation of such loan originator for compliance with the requirements of the S.A.F.E. Act;

(3) To administer oaths and affirmations and examine and take and preserve testimony under oath as to any matter in respect to the affairs of any such loan originator;

(4) To enter an order requiring any individual or person that is, was, or would be a cause of a violation of the S.A.F.E. Act as implemented by the state, due to an act or omission the person knew or should have known would contribute to such violation, to cease and desist from committing or causing such violation and any future violation of the same requirement;

(5) To suspend, terminate, and refuse renewal of a loan originator license for violation of state or Federal law; and

(6) To impose civil money penalties for individuals acting as loan originators, or representing themselves to the public as loan originators, in the state without a valid license or registration.

(c) A supervisory authority must have established processes in place to verify that individuals subject to the requirement described in § 1008.103(a)(1) and (d)(1) are registered with the NMLSR.

(d) The supervisory authority must be required under state law to regularly report violations of such law, as well as enforcement actions and other relevant information, to the NMLSR.

(e) The supervisory authority must have a process in place for challenging information contained in the NMLSR.

(f) The supervisory authority must require a loan originator to ensure that all residential mortgage loans that close as a result of the loan originator engaging in activities described in § 1008.103(b)(1) are included in reports of condition submitted to the NMLSR. Such reports of condition shall be in such form, shall contain such information, and shall be submitted with such frequency and by such dates as the NMLSR may reasonably require.

§ 1008.113 Performance standards.

(a) For the Bureau to determine that a state is providing effective supervision and enforcement, a supervisory authority must meet the following performance standards:

(1) The supervisory authority must participate in the NMLSR;

(2) The supervisory authority must approve or deny loan originator license applications and must renew or refuse to renew existing loan originator licenses for violations of state or Federal law;

(3) The supervisory authority must discipline loan originator licensees with appropriate enforcement actions, such as license suspensions or revocations, cease-and-desist orders, civil money penalties, and consumer refunds for violations of state or Federal law;

(4) The supervisory authority must examine or investigate loan originator licensees in a systematic manner based on identified risk factors or on a periodic schedule.

(b) A supervisory authority that is accredited under the Conference of State Bank Supervisors-American Association of Residential Mortgage Regulators Mortgage Accreditation Program will be presumed by the Bureau to be compliant with the requirements of this section.

§ 1008.115 Determination of noncompliance.

(a) *Evidence of compliance.* Any time a state enacts legislation that affects its compliance with the S.A.F.E. Act, it must notify the Bureau. Upon request from the Bureau, a

state must provide evidence that it is in compliance with the requirements of the S.A.F.E. Act and this part, including citations to applicable state law and regulations; descriptions of processes followed by the state's supervisory authority; and data concerning examination, investigation, and enforcement actions.

(b) *Initial determination of noncompliance.* If the Bureau makes an initial determination that a state is not in compliance with the S.A.F.E. Act, the Bureau will notify the state and will publish, in the *Federal Register*, a notice providing the Bureau's initial determination and presenting the opportunity for public comment for a period of no less than 30 days. This public comment period will allow the residents of the state and other interested members of the public to comment on the Bureau's initial determination.

(c) *Final determination of noncompliance.* In making a final determination of noncompliance, the Bureau will review additional information that may be offered by a state and the comments submitted during the public comment period described in paragraph (b) of this section. If the Bureau makes a final determination that a state does not have in place by law or regulation a system that complies with the minimum requirements of the S.A.F.E. Act, as described in this part, the Bureau will publish that final determination in the *Federal Register*.

(d) *Good-faith effort to comply.* If the Bureau makes the final determination described in paragraph (c) of this section, but the Bureau finds that the state is making a good-faith effort to meet the requirements of 12 U.S.C. 5104, 5105, 5107(d), and this subpart, the Bureau may grant the state a period of not more than 24 months to comply with these requirements. If an extension is granted to the state in accordance with this paragraph (d), then the Bureau will provide an additional initial and final determination process before it determines that the state is not in compliance and is subject to subparts C and E of this part.

(e) *Effective date of subparts C and E.* The provisions of subparts C and E of this part will become effective with respect to a state for which a final determination of noncompliance has been made upon:

(1) The effective date of the Bureau’s final determination with respect to the state, pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section, unless an extension had been granted to the state in accordance with paragraph (d) of this section; or

(2) If an extension had been granted to the state in accordance with paragraph (d) of this section, the effective date of the Bureau’s subsequent final determination with respect to the state following the expiration of the period of time granted pursuant to paragraph (d) of this section.

Subpart C—The Bureau’s Loan Originator Licensing System and Nationwide Mortgage Licensing and Registry System

§ 1008.201 Scope of this subpart.

The S.A.F.E. Act provides the Bureau with “backup authority” to establish a loan originator licensing system for any state that is determined by the Bureau not to be in compliance with the minimum standards of the S.A.F.E. Act. The provisions of this subpart become applicable to individuals in a state as provided in § 1008.115(e). The S.A.F.E. Act also authorizes the Bureau to establish and maintain a nationwide mortgage licensing system and registry if the Bureau determines that the NMLSR is failing to meet the purposes and requirements of the S.A.F.E. Act for a comprehensive licensing, supervisory, and tracking system for loan originators.

§ 1008.203 The Bureau’s establishment of loan originator licensing system.

If the Bureau determines, in accordance with § 1008.115(e), that a state has not established a licensing and registration system in compliance with the minimum standards of the

S.A.F.E. Act, the Bureau shall apply to individuals in that state the minimum standards of the S.A.F.E. Act, as specified in subpart B, which provides the minimum requirements that a state must meet to be in compliance with the S.A.F.E. Act, and as may be further specified in this part.

§ 1008.205 The Bureau’s establishment of nationwide mortgage licensing system and registry.

If the Bureau determines that the NMLSR established by CSBS and AARMR does not meet the minimum requirements of subpart D of this part, the Bureau will establish and maintain a nationwide mortgage licensing system and registry.

Subpart D—Minimum Requirements for Administration of the NMLSR

§ 1008.301 Scope of this subpart.

This subpart establishes minimum requirements that apply to administration of the NMLSR by the Conference of State Bank Supervisors or by the Bureau. The NMLSR must accomplish the following objectives:

- (a) Provide uniform license applications and reporting requirements for state-licensed loan originators.
- (b) Provide a comprehensive licensing and supervisory database.
- (c) Aggregate and improve the flow of information to and between regulators.
- (d) Provide increased accountability and tracking of loan originators.
- (e) Streamline the licensing process and reduce the regulatory burden.
- (f) Enhance consumer protections and support anti-fraud measures.
- (g) Provide consumers with easily accessible information, offered at no charge, utilizing electronic media, including the Internet, regarding the employment history of, and publicly adjudicated disciplinary and enforcement actions against, loan originators.

(h) Establish a means by which residential mortgage loan originators would, to the greatest extent possible, be required to act in the best interests of the consumer.

(i) Facilitate responsible behavior in the mortgage marketplace and provide comprehensive training and examination requirements related to mortgage lending.

(j) Facilitate the collection and disbursement of consumer complaints on behalf of state and Federal mortgage regulators.

§ 1008.303 Financial reporting.

To the extent that CSBS maintains the NMLSR, CSBS must annually provide to the Bureau, and the Bureau will annually collect and make available to the public, NMLSR financial statements, audited in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) promulgated by the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board, and other data. These financial statements and other data shall include, but not be limited to, the level and categories of funds received in relation to the NMLSR and how such funds are spent, including the aggregate total of funds paid for system development and improvements, the aggregate total of salaries and bonuses paid, the aggregate total of other administrative costs, and detail on other money spent, including money and interest paid to reimburse system investors or lenders, and a report of each state's activity with respect to the NMLSR, including the number of licensees, the state's financial commitment to the system, and the fees collected by the state through the NMLSR.

§ 1008.305 Data security.

(a) To the extent that CSBS, AARMR, or their successors maintain the NMLSR, CSBS, AARMR, and their successors, as applicable, must complete a background check on their employees, contractors, or other persons who have access to loan originators' Social Security Numbers, fingerprints, or any credit reports collected by the system.

(b) To the extent that CSBS, AARMR, or their successors maintain the NMLSR, CSBS, AARMR, and their successors as applicable, must keep and adhere to an appropriate information security and privacy policy. If the NMLSR forms a reasonable belief that a security breach has occurred, it shall notify affected parties, as soon as practicable, including the Bureau, any loan originator or registrant whose data may have been compromised, and the employer of the loan originator or registrant, if such employer is also licensed through the system.

§ 1008.307 Fees.

CSBS, AARMR, or the Bureau, as applicable, may charge reasonable fees to cover the costs of maintaining and providing access to information from the Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System and Registry. Fees shall not be charged to consumers for access to such system and registry. If the Bureau determines to charge fees, the fees to be charged shall be issued by notice with the opportunity for comment prior to any fees being charged.

§ 1008.309 Absence of liability for good-faith administration.

The Bureau or any organization serving as the administrator of the Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System and Registry or a system established by the Bureau under 12 U.S.C. 5108 and in accordance with subpart C, or any officer or employee of the Bureau or the Bureau's designee, shall not be subject to any civil action or proceeding for monetary damages by reason of the good-faith action or omission of any officer or employee of any such entity, while acting within the scope of office or employment, relating to the collection, furnishing, or dissemination of information concerning persons who are loan originators or are applying for licensing or registration as loan originators.

Subpart E—Enforcement of the Bureau's Licensing System.

§ 1008.401 The Bureau's authority to examine loan originator records.

(a) *Summons authority.* The Bureau may:

(1) Examine any books, papers, records, or other data of any loan originator operating in any state which is subject to a licensing system established by the Bureau under subpart C of this part; and

(2) Summon any loan originator referred to in paragraph (a)(1) of this section or any person having possession, custody, or care of the reports and records relating to such loan originator, to appear before the Bureau at a time and place named in the summons and to produce such books, papers, records, or other data, and to give testimony, under oath, as may be relevant or material to an investigation of such loan originator for compliance with the requirements of the S.A.F.E. Act.

(b) *Examination authority.* (1) *In general.* If the Bureau establishes a licensing system under 12 U.S.C. 5107 and in accordance with subpart C of this part for any state, the Bureau shall appoint examiners for the purposes of ensuring the appropriate administration of the Bureau's licensing system.

(2) *Power to examine.* Any examiner appointed under paragraph (b)(1) of this section shall have power, on behalf of the Bureau, to make any examination of any loan originator operating in any state which is subject to a licensing system established by the Bureau under 12 U.S.C. 5107 and in accordance with subpart C of this part, whenever the Bureau determines that an examination of any loan originator is necessary to determine the compliance by the originator with minimum requirements of the S.A.F.E. Act.

(3) *Report of examination.* Each Bureau examiner appointed under paragraph (b)(1) of this section shall make a full and detailed report to the Bureau of examination of any loan originator examined under this section.

(4) *Administration of oaths and affirmations; evidence.* In connection with examinations of loan originators operating in any state which is subject to a licensing system established by the Bureau under 12 U.S.C. 5107, and in accordance with subpart C of this part, or with other types of investigations to determine compliance with applicable law and regulations, the Bureau and the examiners appointed by the Bureau may administer oaths and affirmations and examine and take and preserve testimony under oath as to any matter in respect to the affairs of any such loan originator.

(5) *Assessments.* The cost of conducting any examination of any loan originator operating in any state which is subject to a licensing system established by the Bureau under 12 U.S.C 5107 and in accordance with subpart C of this part shall be assessed by the Bureau against the loan originator to meet the Director's expenses in carrying out such examination.

§ 1008.403 [Reserved].

§ 1008.405 [Reserved].

Appendix A to Part 1008—Examples of Mortgage Loan Originator Activities

This Appendix provides examples to aid in the understanding of activities that would cause an individual to fall within or outside the definition of a mortgage loan originator under Part 1008. The examples in this Appendix are not all-inclusive. They illustrate only the issue described and do not illustrate any other issues that may arise. For purposes of the examples below, the term “loan” refers to a residential mortgage loan as defined in § 1008.23 of this part.

(a) *Taking a Loan Application.* Taking a residential mortgage loan application within the meaning of § 1008.103(c)(1) means receipt by an individual, for the purpose of facilitating a decision whether to extend an offer of loan terms to a borrower or prospective borrower, of an application as defined in § 1008.23 (a request in any form for an offer, or a response to a

solicitation of an offer, of residential mortgage loan terms, and the information about the borrower or prospective borrower that is customary or necessary in a decision whether to make such an offer).

(1) The following are examples to illustrate when an individual takes, or does not take, a loan application:

(i) An individual “takes a residential mortgage loan application” even if the individual:

(A) Has received the borrower or prospective borrower’s request or information *indirectly*. Section 1008.103(c)(1) provides that an individual takes an application, whether he or she receives it “directly or indirectly” from the borrower or prospective borrower. This means that an individual who offers or negotiates residential mortgage loan terms for compensation or gain cannot avoid licensing requirements simply by having another person physically receive the application from the prospective borrower and then pass the application to the individual;

(B) Is not responsible for verifying information. The fact that an individual who takes application information from a borrower or prospective borrower is not responsible for verifying that information—for example, the individual is a mortgage broker who collects and sends that information to a lender—does not mean that the individual is not taking an application;

(C) Only inputs the information into an online application or other automated system; or

(D) Is not involved in approval of the loan, including determining whether the consumer qualifies for the loan. Similar to an individual who is not responsible for verification, an individual can still “take a residential mortgage loan application” even if he or she is not ultimately responsible for approving the loan. A mortgage broker, for example, can take a residential mortgage loan application even though it is passed on to a lender for a decision on whether the borrower qualifies for the loan and for the ultimate loan approval.

(ii) An individual does not take a loan application merely because the individual performs any of the following actions:

(A) Receives a loan application through the mail and forwards it, without review, to loan approval personnel. The Bureau interprets the term “takes a residential mortgage loan application” to exclude an individual whose only role with respect to the application is physically handling a completed application form or transmitting a completed form to a lender on behalf of a borrower or prospective borrower. This interpretation is consistent with the definition of “loan originator” in section 1503(3) of the S.A.F.E. Act.

(B) Assists a borrower or prospective borrower who is filling out an application by explaining the contents of the application and where particular borrower information is to be provided on the application;

(C) Generally describes for a borrower or prospective borrower the loan application process without a discussion of particular loan products; or

(D) In response to an inquiry regarding a prequalified offer that a borrower or prospective borrower has received from a lender, collects only basic identifying information about the borrower or prospective borrower on behalf of that lender.

(b) *Offering or Negotiating Terms of a Loan.* The following examples are designed to illustrate when an individual offers or negotiates terms of a loan within the meaning of § 1008.103(c)(2) and, conversely, what does not constitute offering or negotiating terms of a loan:

(1) Offering or negotiating the terms of a loan includes:

(i) Presenting for consideration by a borrower or prospective borrower particular loan terms, whether verbally, in writing, or otherwise, even if:

- (A) Further verification of information is necessary;
- (B) The offer is conditional;
- (C) Other individuals must complete the loan process;
- (D) The individual lacks authority to negotiate the interest rate or other loan terms; or
- (E) The individual lacks authority to bind the person that is the source of the prospective financing.

(ii) Communicating directly or indirectly with a borrower or prospective borrower for the purpose of reaching a mutual understanding about prospective residential mortgage loan terms, including responding to a borrower or prospective borrower's request for a different rate or different fees on a pending loan application by presenting to the borrower or prospective borrower a revised loan offer, even if a mutual understanding is not subsequently achieved.

(2) Offering or negotiating terms of a loan does not include any of the following activities:

(i) Providing general explanations or descriptions in response to consumer queries, such as explaining loan terminology (*e.g.*, debt-to-income ratio) or lending policies (*e.g.*, the loan-to-value ratio policy of the lender), or describing product-related services;

(ii) Arranging the loan closing or other aspects of the loan process, including by communicating with a borrower or prospective borrower about those arrangements, provided that any communication that includes a discussion about loan terms only verifies terms already agreed to by the borrower or prospective borrower;

(iii) Providing a borrower or prospective borrower with information unrelated to loan terms, such as the best days of the month for scheduling loan closings at the bank;

(iv) Making an underwriting decision about whether the borrower or prospective borrower qualifies for a loan;

(v) Explaining or describing the steps that a borrower or prospective borrower would need to take in order to obtain a loan offer, including providing general guidance about qualifications or criteria that would need to be met that is not specific to that borrower or prospective borrower's circumstances;

(vi) Communicating on behalf of a mortgage loan originator that a written offer has been sent to a borrower or prospective borrower without providing any details of that offer; or

(vii) Offering or negotiating loan terms solely through a third-party licensed loan originator, so long as the nonlicensed individual does not represent to the public that he or she can or will perform covered activities and does not communicate with the borrower or potential borrower. For example:

(A) A seller who provides financing to a purchaser of a dwelling owned by that seller in which the offer and negotiation of loan terms with the borrower or prospective borrower is conducted exclusively by a third-party licensed loan originator;

(B) An individual who works solely for a lender, when the individual offers loan terms exclusively to third-party licensed loan originators and not to borrowers or potential borrowers.

(c) *For Compensation or Gain.* (1) An individual acts "for compensation or gain" within the meaning of § 1008.103(c)(2)(ii) if the individual receives or expects to receive in connection with the individual's activities anything of value, including, but not limited to, payment of a salary, bonus, or commission. The concept "anything of value" is interpreted broadly and is not limited only to payments that are contingent upon the closing of a loan.

(2) An individual does not act “for compensation or gain” if the individual acts as a volunteer without receiving or expecting to receive anything of value in connection with the individual’s activities.

Appendix B to Part 1008—Engaging in the Business of a Loan Originator: Commercial Context and Habitualness

An individual who acts (or holds himself or herself out as acting) as a loan originator in a commercial context and with some degree of habitualness or repetition is considered to be “engage[d] in the business of a loan originator[.]” An individual who acts as a loan originator does so in a commercial context if the individual acts for the purpose of obtaining anything of value for himself or herself, or for an entity or individual for which the individual acts, rather than exclusively for public, charitable, or family purposes. The habitualness or repetition of the origination activities that is needed to “engage in the business of a loan originator” may be met either if the individual who acts as a loan originator does so with a degree of habitualness or repetition, or if the source of the prospective financing provides mortgage financing or performs other origination activities with a degree of habitualness or repetition. This Appendix provides examples to aid in the understanding of activities that would not constitute engaging in the business of a loan originator, such that an individual is not required to obtain and maintain a state mortgage loan originator license. The examples in this Appendix are not all-inclusive. They illustrate only the issue described and do not illustrate any other issues that may arise under part 1008. For purposes of the examples below, the term “loan” refers to a “residential mortgage loan” as defined in § 1008.23 of this part.

(a) *Not Engaged in the Business of a Mortgage Loan Originator.* The following examples illustrate when an individual generally does not “engage in the business of a loan originator”:

(1) An individual who acts as a loan originator in providing financing for the sale of that individual’s own residence, provided that the individual does not act as a loan originator or provide financing for such sales so frequently and under such circumstances that it constitutes a habitual and commercial activity.

(2) An individual who acts as a loan originator in providing financing for the sale of a property owned by that individual, provided that such individual does not engage in such activity with habitualness.

(3) A parent who acts as a loan originator in providing loan financing to his or her child.

(4) An employee of a government entity who acts as a loan originator only pursuant to his or her official duties as an employee of that government entity, if all applicable conditions in § 1008.103(e)(6) of this part are met.

(5) If all applicable conditions in § 1008.103(e)(7) of this part are met, an employee of a nonprofit organization that has been determined to be a bona fide nonprofit organization by the state supervisory authority, when the employee acts as a loan originator pursuant to his or her duties as an employee of that organization.

(6) An individual who does not act as a loan originator habitually or repeatedly, provided that the source of prospective financing does not provide mortgage financing or perform other loan origination activities habitually or repeatedly.

Appendix C to Part 1008—Independent Contractors and Loan Processor and Underwriter Activities that Require a State Mortgage Loan Originator License

The examples below are designed to aid in the understanding of loan processing or underwriting activities for which an individual is required to obtain a S.A.F.E. Act-compliant mortgage loan originator license. The examples in this Appendix are not all-inclusive. They illustrate only the issue described and do not illustrate any other issues that may arise under part 1008. For purposes of the examples below, the term “loan” refers to a residential mortgage loan as defined in § 1008.23 of this part.

(a) An individual who is a loan processor or underwriter who must obtain and maintain a state loan originator license includes:

(1) Any individual who engages in the business of a loan originator, as defined in § 1008.103 of this part;

(2) Any individual who performs clerical or support duties and who is an independent contractor, as those terms are defined in § 1008.23;

(3) Any individual who collects, receives, distributes, or analyzes information in connection with the making of a credit decision and who is an independent contractor, as that term is defined in § 1008.23; and

(4) Any individual who communicates with a consumer to obtain information necessary for making a credit decision and who is an independent contractor, as that term is defined in § 1008.23.

(b) A state is not required to impose S.A.F.E. Act licensing requirements on any individual loan processor or underwriter who, for example:

(1) Performs *only* clerical or support duties (i.e., the loan processor's or underwriter's activities do not include, e.g., offering or negotiating loan rates or terms, or counseling borrowers or prospective borrowers about loan rates or terms), and who performs those clerical or support

duties at the direction of and subject to the supervision and instruction of an individual who either: is licensed and registered in accordance with § 1008.103(a) (state licensing of loan originators); or is not required to be licensed because he or she is excluded from the licensing requirement pursuant to §§ 1008.103(e)(2) (time-share exclusion), (e)(5)(federally registered loan originator), (e)(6) (government employees exclusion), or (e)(7) (nonprofit exclusion).

(2) Performs only clerical or support duties as an employee of a mortgage lender or mortgage brokerage firm, and who performs those duties at the direction of and subject to the supervision and instruction of an individual who is employed by the same employer and who is licensed in accordance with § 1008.103(a) (state licensing of loan originators).

(3) Is an employee of a loan processing or underwriting company that provides loan processing or underwriting services to one or more mortgage lenders or mortgage brokerage firms under a contract between the loan processing or underwriting company and the mortgage lenders or mortgage brokerage firms, provided the employee performs only clerical or support duties and performs those duties only at the direction of and subject to the supervision and instruction of a licensed loan originator employee of the same loan processing and underwriting company.

(4) Is an individual who does not otherwise perform the activities of a loan originator and is not involved in the receipt, collection, distribution, or analysis of information common for the processing or underwriting of a residential mortgage loan, nor is in communication with the consumer to obtain such information.

(c) In order to conclude that an individual who performs clerical or support duties is doing so at the direction of and subject to the supervision and instruction of a loan originator who is licensed or registered in accordance with § 1008.103 (or, as applicable, an individual who

is excluded from the licensing and registration requirements under § 1008.103(e)(2), (e)(6), or (e)(7)), there must be an actual nexus between the licensed or registered loan originator's (or excluded individual's) direction, supervision, and instruction and the loan processor or underwriter's activities. This actual nexus must be more than a nominal relationship on an organizational chart. For example, there is an actual nexus when:

(1) The supervisory licensed or registered loan originator assigns, authorizes, and monitors the loan processor or underwriter employee's performance of clerical and support duties.

(2) The supervisory licensed or registered loan originator exercises traditional supervisory responsibilities, including, but not limited to, the training, mentoring, and evaluation of the loan processor or underwriter employee.

Appendix D to Part 1008—Attorneys: Circumstances that Require a State Mortgage Loan Originator License

This Appendix D clarifies the circumstances in which the S.A.F.E. Act requires a licensed attorney who engages in loan origination activities to obtain a state loan originator license and registration. This special category recognizes limited, heavily regulated activities that meet strict criteria that are different from the criteria for specific exemptions from the S.A.F.E. Act requirements and the exclusions set forth in the regulations and illustrated in other appendices of part 1008.

(a) *S.A.F.E. Act-compliant licensing required.* An individual who is a licensed attorney is required to be licensed if the individual is engaged in the business of a loan originator as defined in § 1008.103 and such loan origination activities are not all of the following:

(1) Considered by the state's court of last resort (or other state governing body responsible for regulating the practice of law) to be part of the authorized practice of law within the state;

(2) Carried out within an attorney-client relationship; and

(3) Accomplished by the attorney in compliance with all applicable laws, rules, ethics, and standards.

(b) *S.A.F.E. Act-compliant licensing not required.* A licensed attorney performing activities that come within the definition of a loan originator is not required to be licensed, provided that such activities are:

(1) Considered by the state's court of last resort (or other state governing body responsible for regulating the practice of law) to be part of the authorized practice of law within the state;

(2) Carried out within an attorney-client relationship; and

(3) Accomplished by the attorney in compliance with all applicable laws, rules, ethics, and standards.

Dated: October 24, 2011.

Alastair M. Fitzpayne,

Deputy Chief of Staff and Executive Secretary,

Department of the Treasury.

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