



8011-01p

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[SEC File No. 270-472, OMB Control No. 3235-0531]

This document is scheduled to be published in the Federal Register on 01/08/2021 and available online at [federalregister.gov/d/2021-00144](https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2021-00144), and on [govinfo.gov](https://www.govinfo.gov)

Proposed Collection; Comment Request
Upon Written Request Copies Available From:
Securities and Exchange Commission
Office of FOIA Services
100 F Street, NE
Washington, DC 20549-2736

Extension: Rule 0-1

Notice is hereby given that, pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), the Securities and Exchange Commission (“Commission”) plans to submit to the Office of Management and Budget a request for extension of the previous approved collection of information discussed below.

The Investment Company Act of 1940 (the “Act”)¹ establishes a comprehensive framework for regulating the organization and operation of investment companies (“funds”). A principal objective of the Act is to protect fund investors by addressing the conflicts of interest that exist between funds and their investment advisers and other affiliated persons. The Act places significant responsibility on the fund board of directors in overseeing the operations of the fund and policing the relevant conflicts of interest.²

In one of its first releases, the Commission exercised its rulemaking authority pursuant to sections 38(a) and 40(b) of the Act by adopting rule 0-1 (17 CFR 270.0-1).³ Rule 0-1, as subsequently amended on numerous occasions, provides definitions for the terms used by the Commission in the rules and regulations it has adopted pursuant to the Act. The rule also contains a number of rules of construction for terms that are defined either in the Act itself or

¹ 15 U.S.C. 80a.

² For example, fund directors must approve investment advisory and distribution contracts. *See* 15 U.S.C. 80a-15(a), (b), and (c).

³ Investment Company Act Release No. 4 (Oct. 29, 1940) (5 FR 4316 (Oct. 31, 1940)). Note that rule 0-1 was originally adopted as rule N-1.

elsewhere in the Commission's rules and regulations. Finally, rule 0-1 defines terms that serve as conditions to the availability of certain of the Commission's exemptive rules. More specifically, the term "independent legal counsel," as defined in rule 0-1, sets out conditions that funds must meet in order to rely on any of ten exemptive rules ("exemptive rules") under the Act.⁴

The Commission amended rule 0-1 to include the definition of the term "independent legal counsel" in 2001.⁵ This amendment was designed to enhance the effectiveness of fund boards of directors and to better enable investors to assess the independence of those directors. The Commission also amended the exemptive rules to require that any person who serves as legal counsel to the independent directors of any fund that relies on any of the exemptive rules must be an "independent legal counsel." This requirement was added because independent directors can better perform the responsibilities assigned to them under the Act and the rules if they have the assistance of truly independent legal counsel.

If the board's counsel has represented the fund's investment adviser, principal underwriter, administrator (collectively, "management organizations") or their "control persons"⁶ during the past two years, rule 0-1 requires that the board's independent directors make a determination about the adequacy of the counsel's independence. A majority of the board's independent directors are required to reasonably determine, in the exercise of their judgment, that the counsel's prior or current representation of the management organizations or their control persons was sufficiently limited to conclude that it is unlikely to adversely affect the

⁴ The relevant exemptive rules are: rule 10f-3 (17 CFR 270.10f-3), rule 12b-1 (17 CFR 270.12b-1), rule 15a-4(b)(2) (17 CFR 270.15a-4(b)(2)), rule 17a-7 (17 CFR 270.17a-7), rule 17a-8 (17 CFR 270.17a-8), rule 17d-1(d)(7) (17 CFR 270.17d-1(d)(7)), rule 17e-1(c) (17 CFR 270.17e-1(c)), rule 17g-1 (17 CFR 270.17g-1), rule 18f-3 (17 CFR 270.18f-3), and rule 23c-3 (17 CFR 270.23c-3).

⁵ See Role of Independent Directors of Investment Companies, Investment Company Act Release No. 24816 (Jan. 2, 2001) (66 FR 3735 (Jan. 16, 2001)).

⁶ A "control person" is any person – other than a fund – directly or indirectly controlling, controlled by, or under common control, with any of the fund's management organizations. See 17 CFR 270.01(a)(6)(iv)(B).

counsel's professional judgment and legal representation. Rule 0-1 also requires that a record for the basis of this determination is made in the minutes of the directors' meeting. In addition, the independent directors must have obtained an undertaking from the counsel to provide them with the information necessary to make their determination and to update promptly that information when the person begins to represent a management organization or control person, or when he or she materially increases his or her representation. Generally, the independent directors must re-evaluate their determination no less frequently than annually.

Any fund that relies on one of the exemptive rules must comply with the requirements in the definition of "independent legal counsel" under rule 0-1. We assume that approximately 3035 funds rely on at least one of the exemptive rules annually.⁷ We further assume that the independent directors of approximately one-third (1,010) of those funds would need to make the required determination in order for their counsel to meet the definition of independent legal counsel.⁸ We estimate that each of these 1,010

funds would be required to spend, on average, 0.75 hours annually to comply with the recordkeeping requirement associated with this determination, for a total annual burden of approximately 758 hours. Based on this estimate, the total annual cost for all funds' compliance with this rule is approximately \$175,523. To calculate this total annual cost, the Commission staff assumed that approximately two-thirds of the total annual hour burden (505 hours) would be incurred by a compliance manager with an average hourly wage rate of \$312 per hour,⁹ and

⁷ Based on statistics compiled by Commission staff, we estimate that there are approximately 3373 funds that could rely on one or more of the exemptive rules (this figure reflects the three-year average of open-end and closed-end funds (3,329) and business development companies (104)). Of those funds, we assume that approximately 90 percent (3,035) actually rely on at least one exemptive rules annually.

⁸ We assume that the independent directors of the remaining two-thirds of those funds will choose not to have counsel, or will rely on counsel who has not recently represented the fund's management organizations or control persons. In both circumstances, it would not be necessary for the fund's independent directors to make a determination about their counsel's independence.

⁹ The estimated hourly wages used in this PRA analysis were derived from the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association's Reports on Management and Professional Earnings in the Securities Industry (2013) (modified to account for an 1800-hour work year and multiplied by 5.35 to account for bonuses, firm size, employee benefits and overhead) (adjusted for inflation),

one-third of the annual hour burden (253 hours) would be incurred by compliance clerk with an average hourly wage rate of \$71 per hour.¹⁰

These burden hour estimates are based upon the Commission staff's experience and discussions with the fund industry. The estimates of average burden hours are made solely for the purposes of the Paperwork Reduction Act. These estimates are not derived from a comprehensive or even a representative survey or study of the costs of Commission rules.

Written comments are invited on: (a) whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Commission, including whether the information has practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Commission's estimate of the burdens of the collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burdens of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Consideration will be given to comments and suggestions submitted in writing within 60 days of this publication.

Please direct your written comments to David Bottom, Director/Chief Information Officer, Securities and Exchange Commission, C/O Cynthia Roscoe, 100 F Street, NE, Washington, DC 20549; or send an email to: PRA_Mailbox@sec.gov.

Dated: January 5, 2021.

J. Matthew DeLesDernier,
Assistant Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2021-00144 Filed: 1/7/2021 8:45 am; Publication Date: 1/8/2021]

and Office Salaries in the Securities Industry (2013) (modified to account for an 1800-hour work year and multiplied by 2.93 to account for bonuses, firm size, employee benefits and overhead) (adjusted for inflation).

¹⁰ (505 x \$312/hour) + (253 x \$71/hour) = \$175,523.