

REGULATION J.
Series of 1924
(Superseding Regulation J of 1920)

CHECK CLEARING AND COLLECTION

SECTION I. STATUTORY PROVISIONS.

Section 16 of the Federal Reserve Act authorizes the Federal Reserve Board to require each Federal Reserve Bank to exercise the functions of a clearing house for its member banks, and Section 13 of the Federal Reserve Act, as amended by the act approved June 21, 1917, authorizes each Federal Reserve Bank to receive from any nonmember bank or trust company, solely for the purposes of exchange or of collection, deposits of current funds in lawful money, national-bank notes, Federal Reserve notes, checks and drafts payable upon presentation, or maturing notes and bills, provided such nonmember bank or trust company maintains with its Federal Reserve Bank a balance sufficient to offset the items in transit held for its account by the Federal Reserve Bank.

SECTION II. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS.

In pursuance of the authority vested in it under these provisions of law, the Federal Reserve Board, desiring to afford both to the public and to the various banks of the country a direct, expeditious, and economical system of check collection and settlement of balances, has arranged to have each Federal Reserve Bank exercise the functions of a clearing house and collect checks for such of its member banks as desire to avail themselves of its privileges and for such nonmember State banks and trust companies as may maintain with the Federal Reserve Bank balances sufficient to qualify them under the provisions of section 13 to send items to Federal Reserve Banks for purposes of exchange or of collection. Such nonmember State banks and trust companies will hereinafter be referred to as nonmember clearing banks.

Each Federal Reserve Bank shall exercise the functions of a clearing house and collect checks under the general terms and conditions hereinafter set forth.

SECTION III. CHECKS RECEIVED FOR COLLECTION.

(1) Each Federal Reserve Bank will receive at par from its member banks and from nonmember clearing banks in its district, checks¹ drawn

¹A check is generally defined as a draft or order upon a bank or banking house, purporting to be drawn upon a deposit of funds, for the payment at all events of a certain sum of money to the order of a certain person therein named, or to him or his order, or to bearer, and payable on demand.

on all member and nonmember clearing banks, and checks drawn on all other non-member banks which are collectable at par in funds acceptable to the Federal Reserve Bank of the district in which such nonmember banks are located.

(2) Each Federal Reserve Bank will receive at par from other Federal Reserve Banks, and from all member and nonmember clearing banks in other Federal Reserve Districts which are authorized to route direct for the credit of their respective Federal Reserve Banks, checks drawn on all member and nonmember clearing banks of its district, and checks drawn on all other nonmember banks of its district which are collectable at par in funds acceptable to the collecting Federal Reserve Bank.

(3) No Federal Reserve Bank shall receive on deposit or for collection any check drawn on any nonmember bank which cannot be collected at par in funds acceptable to the Federal Reserve Bank of the district in which such nonmember bank is located.

SECTION IV. TIME SCHEDULE AND AVAILABILITY OF CREDITS.

(1) Each Federal Reserve Bank will publish a time schedule showing the time at which any item sent to it will be counted as reserve and become available for withdrawal or other use by the sending bank. For all checks received, the sending bank will be given immediate credit, or deferred credit, in accordance with such time schedule, and as provided below.

(2) For all such checks as are received for immediate credit in accordance with such time schedule, immediate credit, subject to final payment, will be given upon the books of the Federal Reserve Bank at full face value in the reserve account or clearing account upon day of receipt, and the proceeds will at once be counted as reserve and become available for withdrawal or other use by the sending bank.

(3) For all such checks as are received for deferred credit in accordance with such time schedule, deferred credit, subject to final payment, will be entered upon the books of the Federal Reserve Bank at full face value, but the proceeds will not be counted as reserve nor become available for withdrawal or other use by the sending bank until such time as may be specified in such time schedule, at which time credit will be transferred from the deferred account to the reserve account or clearing account subject to final payment and will then be counted as reserve and become available for withdrawal or other use by the sending bank.

SECTION V. TERMS OF COLLECTION.

The Federal Reserve Board hereby authorizes the Federal Reserve Banks to handle such checks subject to the following terms and conditions; and each member and nonmember clearing bank which sends checks to any Federal Reserve Bank for deposit or collection shall by such action be deemed (a) to authorize the Federal Reserve Banks to handle such checks subject to the following terms and conditions, (b) to warrant its own authority to give the Federal Reserve Banks such authority and (c) to agree to indemnify any Federal Reserve Bank for any loss resulting from the failure of such sending bank to have such authority.

(1) A Federal Reserve Bank will act only as agent of the bank from which it receives such checks and will assume no liability except for its own negligence and its guaranty of prior indorsements.

(2) A Federal Reserve Bank may present such checks for payment or send such checks for collection direct to the bank on which they are drawn or at which they are payable, or in its discretion may forward them to another agent with authority to present them for payment or send them for collection direct to the bank on which they are drawn or at which they are payable.

(3) A Federal Reserve Bank may in its discretion and at its option, either directly or through an agent, accept either cash or bank drafts in payment of or in remittance for such checks and shall not be held liable for any loss resulting from the acceptance of bank drafts in lieu of cash, nor for the failure of the drawee bank or any agent to remit for such checks, nor for the non-payment of any bank draft accepted in payment or as a remittance from the drawee bank or any agent.

(4) Checks received by a Federal Reserve Bank on its member or nonmember clearing banks will ordinarily be forwarded or presented direct to such banks, and such banks will be required to remit or pay therefor at par in cash or bank draft acceptable to the collecting Federal Reserve Bank, or at the option of such Federal Reserve Bank to authorize such Federal Reserve Bank to charge their reserve accounts or clearing accounts; provided, however, that any Federal Reserve Bank may reserve the right in its check collection circular to charge such items to the reserve account or clearing account of any such bank at any time when in any particular case the Federal Reserve Bank deems it necessary to do so.

(5) Checks received by a Federal Reserve Bank payable in other districts will be forwarded for collection upon the terms and conditions herein provided to the Federal Reserve Bank of the district in which such checks are payable.

(6) The amount of any check for which payment is actually and finally collected funds is not received shall be charged back to the forwarding bank, regardless of whether or not the check itself can be returned.

SECTION VI. PENALTIES FOR DEFICIENCIES IN RESERVES.

(a) Statutory provisions. Section 19 of the Federal Reserve Act provides that-

The required balance carried by a member bank with a Federal Reserve Bank may, under the regulations and subject to such penalties as may be prescribed by the Federal Reserve Board, be checked against and withdrawn by such member bank for the purpose of meeting existing liabilities; Provided, however, that no bank shall at any time make new loans or shall pay any dividends unless and until the total balance required by law is fully restored.

(b) Computation of reserves.-Items can not be counted as part of the minimum reserve balance to be carried by a member bank with its Federal Reserve Bank until such time as may be specified in the appropriate time schedule referred to in Section IV. If a member bank draw against items before such time, the draft will be charged against its reserve balance if such balance be sufficient in amount to pay it; but any resulting impairment of reserve balances will be subject to all the penalties provided by the Act.

(c) Basic penalty. - Inasmuch as it is essential that the law in respect to the maintenance by member banks of the required minimum reserve balance shall be strictly complied with, the Federal Reserve Board, under authority vested in it by section 19 of the Federal Reserve Act, hereby prescribes a basic penalty for deficiencies in reserves according to the following rules:

1. Deficiencies in reserve balances of member banks in central reserve and reserve cities will be computed on the basis of average daily net deposit balances covering a weekly period of seven days. Deficiencies in reserve balances of other member banks will be computed on the basis of average daily net deposit balances covering a semi-monthly period.

2. Penalties for deficiencies in reserves will be assessed monthly on the basis of average daily deficiencies during each of the reserve computation periods ending in the preceding month.

3. A basic rate of 2 per cent per annum above the Federal Reserve Bank discount rate on 90-day commercial paper will be assessed as a penalty on deficiencies in reserves of member banks.

(d) Progressive penalty. - The Federal Reserve Board will also prescribe for any Federal Reserve District, upon the application of the Federal Reserve Bank of that district, an additional progressive penalty for continued deficiencies in reserves, in accordance with the following rules.

1. When a member bank in a central reserve or reserve city has had an average deficiency in reserves for six consecutive weekly periods, a progressive penalty, increasing at the rate of one-fourth of 1 per cent for each week thereafter during which the average reserve balance is deficient, will be assessed on weekly deficiencies until the required reserve has been restored and maintained for four consecutive weekly periods, provided that the maximum penalty charged will not exceed 10 per cent.

2. When a member bank outside of a central reserve or reserve city has had an average deficiency in reserves for three consecutive semi-monthly periods, a progressive penalty, increasing at the rate of one-half of 1 per cent for each half month thereafter during which the average reserve balance is deficient, will be assessed on semi-monthly deficiencies until the required reserve has been restored and maintained for two consecutive semi-monthly periods, provided that the maximum penalty charged will not exceed 10 per cent.

SECTION VII. OTHER RULES AND REGULATIONS.

Each Federal Reserve Bank shall also promulgate rules and regulations not inconsistent with the terms of the law or of this regulation, governing the details of its check clearing and collection operations. Such rules and regulations shall be set forth by the Federal Reserve Banks in their letters of instruction to their member and nonmember clearing banks and shall be binding upon any member or nonmember clearing bank which sends any check to such Federal Reserve Bank for collection or to any other Federal Reserve Bank for the account of such Federal Reserve Bank for collection.