

§ 7.1011 National bank acting as payroll issuer.

A national bank may disburse to an employee of a customer payroll funds deposited with the bank by that customer. The bank may disburse those funds by direct payment to the employee, by crediting an account in the employee's name at the disbursing bank, or by forwarding funds to another institution in which an employee maintains an account.

§ 7.1012 Messenger service.

(a) *Definition.* For purposes of this section, a "messenger service" means any service, such as a courier service or armored car service, used by a national bank and its customers to pick up from, and deliver to, specific customers at locations such as their homes or offices, items relating to transactions between the bank and those customers.

(b) *Pick-up and delivery of items constituting nonbranching activities.* Pursuant to 12 U.S.C. 24 (Seventh), a national bank may establish and operate a messenger service, or use, with its customers, a third party messenger service. The bank may use the messenger service to transport items relevant to the bank's transactions with its customers without regard to the branching limitations set forth in 12 U.S.C. 36, provided the service does not engage in branching functions within the meaning of 12 U.S.C. 36(j). In establishing or using such a facility, the national bank may establish terms, conditions, and limitations consistent with this section and appropriate to assure compliance with safe and sound banking practices.

(c) *Pick-up and delivery of items constituting branching functions by a messenger service established by a third party.* (1) Pursuant to 12 U.S.C. 24 (Seventh), a national bank and its customers may use a messenger service to pick up from, and deliver to, customers items that relate to branching functions within the meaning of 12 U.S.C. 36(j) without regard to the branching limitations set forth in 12 U.S.C. 36, provided the messenger service is established and operated by a third party. In using such a facility, a national bank may establish terms, con-

ditions, and limitations, consistent with this section and appropriate to assure compliance with safe and sound banking practices.

(2) The OCC reviews whether a messenger service is established by a third party on a case-by-case basis, considering all of the circumstances. However, a messenger service is clearly established by a third party if:

(i) A party other than the national bank owns the service and its facilities (or rents them from a party other than the bank) and employs the person engaged in the provision of the service; and

(ii) The messenger service:

(A) Makes its services available to the public, including other depository institutions;

(B) Retains ultimate discretion to determine which customers and geographical areas it will serve;

(C) Maintains ultimate responsibility for scheduling, movement, and routing;

(D) Does not operate under the name of the bank, and the bank and the messenger service do not advertise, or otherwise represent, that the bank itself is providing the service, although the bank may advertise that its customers may use one or more third party messenger services to transact business with the bank;

(E) Assumes responsibility for the items during transit and for maintaining adequate insurance covering thefts, employee fidelity, and other in-transit losses; and

(F) Acts as the agent for the customer when the items are in transit. The bank does not deem items intended for deposit to be deposited until credited to the customer's account at an established bank office or other permissible nonbranch facility. The bank deems items representing withdrawals to be paid when the items are given to the messenger service.

(3) A national bank may defray all or part of the costs incurred by a customer in transporting items through a messenger service. Payment of those costs may only cover expenses associated with each transaction involving the customer and the messenger service. The national bank may impose terms, conditions, and limitations that

it deems appropriate with respect to the payment of such costs.

(d) *Pickup and delivery of items pertaining to branching activities where the messenger service is established by the national bank.* A national bank may establish and operate a messenger service to transport items relevant to the bank's transactions with its customers if such transactions constitute one or more branching functions within the meaning of 12 U.S.C. 36(j), provided the bank receives approval to establish a branch pursuant to 12 CFR 5.30.

§7.1013 Debt cancellation contracts.

A national bank may enter into a contract to provide for loss arising from cancellation of an outstanding loan upon the death or disability of a borrower. The imposition of an additional charge and the establishment of necessary reserves in order to enable the bank to enter into such debt cancellation contracts are a lawful exercise of the powers of a national bank.

§7.1014 Sale of money orders at nonbanking outlets.

A national bank may designate bonded agents to sell the bank's money orders at nonbanking outlets. The responsibility of both the bank and its agent should be defined in a written agreement setting forth the duties of both parties and providing for remuneration of the agent. The bank's agents need not report on sales and transmit funds from the nonbanking outlets more frequently than at the end of the third business day following receipt of the funds.

§7.1015 Receipt of stock from a small business investment company.

A national bank may purchase the stock of a small business investment company (SBIC) (see 15 U.S.C. 682(b)), and may receive the benefits of such stock ownership (e.g., stock dividends). The receipt and retention of a dividend by a national bank from an SBIC in the form of stock of a corporate borrower of the SBIC is not a purchase of stock within the meaning of 12 U.S.C. 24 (Seventh).

§7.1016 Independent undertakings to pay against documents.

(a) *General authority.* A national bank may issue and commit to issue letters of credit and other independent undertakings within the scope of the applicable laws or rules of practice recognized by law.¹ Under such letters of credit and other independent undertakings, the bank's obligation to honor depends upon the presentation of specified documents and not upon nondocumentary conditions or resolution of questions of fact or law at issue between the account party and the beneficiary. A national bank may also confirm or otherwise undertake to honor or purchase specified documents upon their presentation under another person's independent undertaking within the scope of such laws or rules.

(b) *Safety and soundness considerations—(1) Terms.* As a matter of safe and sound banking practice, banks that issue independent undertakings should not be exposed to undue risk. At a minimum, banks should consider the following:

(i) The independent character of the undertaking should be apparent from its terms (such as terms that subject it to laws or rules providing for its independent character);

(ii) The undertaking should be limited in amount;

(iii) The undertaking should:

(A) Be limited in duration; or

(B) Permit the bank to terminate the undertaking either on a periodic basis

¹Samples of such laws or rules of practice include, but are not limited to: the applicable version of Article 5 of the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) (1962, as amended 1990) or revised Article 5 of the UCC (as amended 1995) (available from West Publishing Co., 1/800/340-9378); the Uniform Customs and Practice for Documentary Credits (International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Publication No. 500) (available from ICC Publishing, Inc., 212/206-1150); the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Convention on Independent Guarantees and Standby Letters of Credit (adopted by UNCITRAL 1995) (available from UNCITRAL, 212/963-5353); and the Uniform Rules for Bank-to-Bank Reimbursements Under Documentary Credits (ICC Publication No. 525) (available from ICC Publishing, Inc., 212/206-1150); as any of the foregoing may be amended from time to time.