

its principal to pay or perform an obligation to a third person. Under a guaranty agreement, a Federal savings association agrees to satisfy the obligation of the principal only if the principal fails to pay or perform.

(b) *What requirements apply to suretyship and guaranty agreements under this section?* A Federal savings association may enter into a suretyship or guaranty agreement under this section, subject to each of the following requirements:

(1) The Federal savings association must limit its obligations under the agreement to a fixed dollar amount and a specified duration.

(2) The Federal savings association's performance under the agreement must create an authorized loan or other investment.

(3) The Federal savings association must treat its obligation under the agreement as a loan to the principal for purposes of §§ 560.93 and 563.43 of this chapter.

(4) The Federal savings association must take and maintain a perfected security interest in collateral sufficient to cover its total obligation under the agreement.

(c) *What collateral is sufficient?* (1) The Federal savings association must take and maintain a perfected security interest in real estate or marketable securities equal to at least 110 percent of its obligation under the agreement, except as provided in paragraph (c)(2) of this section.

(i) If the collateral is real estate, the Federal savings association must establish the value by a signed appraisal or evaluation in accordance with part 564 of this chapter. In determining the value of the collateral, the Federal savings association must factor in the value of any existing senior mortgages, liens or other encumbrances on the property, except those held by the principal to the suretyship or guaranty agreement.

(ii) If the collateral is marketable securities, the Federal savings association must be authorized to invest in that security taken as collateral. The Federal savings association must ensure that the value of the security is 110 percent of the obligation at all times during the term of agreement.

(2) The Federal savings association may take and maintain a perfected security interest in collateral which is at all times equal to at least 100 percent of its obligation, if the collateral is:

- (i) Cash;
- (ii) Obligations of the United States or its agencies;
- (iii) Obligations fully guaranteed by the United States or its agencies as to principal and interest; or
- (iv) Notes, drafts, or bills of exchange or bankers' acceptances that are eligible for rediscount or purchase by a Federal Reserve Bank.

[64 FR 46565, Aug. 26, 1999]

### Subpart B—Lending and Investment Provisions Applicable to all Savings Associations

#### § 560.93 Lending limitations.

(a) *Scope.* This section applies to all loans and extensions of credit to third parties made by a savings association and its subsidiaries. This section does not apply to loans made by a savings association or a GAAP-consolidated subsidiary to subordinate organizations or affiliates of the savings association. The terms *subsidiary*, *GAAP-consolidated subsidiary*, and *subordinate organization* have the same meanings as specified in § 559.2 of this chapter. The term *affiliate* has the same meaning as specified in § 563.41 of this chapter.

(b) *Definitions.* In applying these lending limitations, savings associations shall apply the definitions and interpretations promulgated by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency consistent with 12 U.S.C. 84. See 12 CFR part 32. In applying these definitions, pursuant to 12 U.S.C. 1464, savings associations shall use the terms *savings association*, *savings associations*, and *savings association's* in place of the terms *national bank* and *bank*, *banks*, and *bank's*, respectively. For purposes of this section:

(1) The term *one borrower* has the same meaning as the term *person* set forth at 12 CFR part 32. It also includes, in addition to the definition cited therein, a *financial institution* as defined at § 561.19 of this chapter.

(2) The term *company* means a corporation, partnership, business trust,

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association, or similar organization and, unless specifically excluded, the term *company* includes a *savings association* and a *bank*.

(3) *Contractual commitment to advance funds* has the meaning set forth in 12 CFR part 32.

(4) *Loans and extensions of credit* has the meaning set forth in 12 CFR part 32, and includes investments in commercial paper and corporate debt securities. The Office expressly reserves its authority to deem other arrangements that are, in substance, *loans and extensions of credit* to be encompassed by this term.

(5) The term *loans* as used in the phrase *Loans to one borrower to finance the sale of real property acquired in satisfaction of debts previously contracted for in good faith* does not include an association's taking of a purchase money mortgage note from the purchaser *provided that*:

(i) No new funds are advanced by the association to the borrower; and

(ii) The association is not placed in a more detrimental position as a result of the sale.

(6) [Reserved]

(7) *Readily marketable collateral* has the meaning set forth in 12 CFR part 32.

(8) *Residential housing units* has the same meaning as the term *residential real estate* set forth in § 541.23 of this chapter. The term *to develop* includes the various phases necessary to produce housing units as an end product, to include: acquisition, development and construction; development and construction; construction; rehabilitation; or conversion. The term *domestic* includes units within the fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, and the Pacific Islands.

(9) *Single family dwelling unit* has the meaning set forth in § 541.25 of this chapter.

(10) A *standby letter of credit* has the meaning set forth in 12 CFR part 32.

(11) *Unimpaired capital and unimpaired surplus* means—

(i) A savings association's core capital and supplementary capital included in its total capital under part 567 of this chapter; plus

(ii) The balance of a savings association's allowance for loan and lease losses not included in supplementary capital under part 567 of this chapter; plus

(iii) The amount of a savings association's loans to, investments in, and advances to subsidiaries not included in calculating core capital under part 567 of this chapter.

(c) *General limitation*. Section 5200 of the Revised Statutes (12 U.S.C. 84) shall apply to savings associations in the same manner and to the same extent as it applies to national banks. This statutory provision and lending limit regulations and interpretations promulgated by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency pursuant to a rulemaking conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, 5 U.S.C. 553 et seq. (including the regulations appearing at 12 CFR part 32) shall apply to savings associations in the same manner and to the same extent as these provisions apply to national banks:

(1) The total loans and extensions of credit by a savings association to one borrower outstanding at one time and not fully secured, as determined in the same manner as determined under 12 U.S.C. 84(a)(2), by collateral having a market value at least equal to the amount of the loan or extension of credit shall not exceed 15 percent of the unimpaired capital and unimpaired surplus of the association.

(2) The total loans and extensions of credit by a savings association to one borrower outstanding at one time and fully secured by readily marketable collateral having a market value, as determined by reliable and continuously available price quotations, at least equal to the amount of the funds outstanding shall not exceed 10 percent of the unimpaired capital and unimpaired surplus of the association. This limitation shall be separate from and in addition to the limitation contained in paragraph (c)(1) of this section.

(d) *Exceptions to the general limitation*—(1) *\$500,000 exception*. If a savings association's aggregate lending limitation calculated under paragraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of this section is less than

\$500,000, notwithstanding this aggregate limitation in paragraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of this section, such savings association may have total loans and extensions of credit, for any purpose, to one borrower outstanding at one time not to exceed \$500,000.

(2) *Statutory exceptions.* The exceptions to the lending limits set forth in 12 U.S.C. 84 and 12 CFR part 32 are applicable to savings associations in the same manner and to the extent as they apply to national banks.

(3) *Loans to develop domestic residential housing units.* Subject to paragraph (d)(4) of this section, a savings association may make loans to one borrower to develop domestic residential housing units, not to exceed the lesser of \$30,000,000 or 30 percent of the savings association's unimpaired capital and unimpaired surplus, including all amounts loaned under the authority of the General Limitation set forth under paragraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of this section, *provided that:*

(i) The final purchase price of each single family dwelling unit the development of which is financed under this paragraph (d)(3) does not exceed \$500,000;

(ii) The savings association is, and continues to be, in compliance with its capital requirements under part 567 of this chapter.

(iii) OTS permits, subject to conditions it may impose, the savings association to use the higher limit set forth under this paragraph (d)(3). A savings association that meets the requirements of paragraphs (d)(3)(i), (ii), (iv) and (v) of this section and that meets the requirements for "expedited treatment" under § 516.5 of this chapter may use the higher limit set forth under this paragraph (d)(3) if the savings association has filed a notice with OTS that it intends to use the higher limit at least 30 days prior to the proposed use. A savings association that meets the requirements of paragraphs (d)(3)(i), (ii), (iv), and (v) of this section and that meets the requirements for "standard treatment" under § 516.5 of this chapter may use the higher limit set forth under this paragraph (d)(3) if the savings association has filed an application with OTS and OTS has approved the use the higher limit;

(iv) Loans made under this paragraph (d)(3) to all borrowers do not, in aggregate, exceed 150 percent of the savings association's unimpaired capital and unimpaired surplus; and

(v) Such loans comply with the applicable loan-to-value requirements that apply to Federal savings associations.

(4) The authority of a savings association to make a loan or extension of credit under the exception in paragraph (d)(3) of this section ceases immediately upon the association's failure to comply with any one of the requirements set forth in paragraph (d)(3) of this section or any condition(s) set forth in a Director's order under paragraph (d)(3)(iii) of this section.

(5) Notwithstanding the limit set forth in paragraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of this section, a savings association may invest up to 10 percent of unimpaired capital and unimpaired surplus in the obligations of one issuer evidenced by:

(i) Commercial paper rated, as of the date of purchase, as shown by the most recently published rating by at least two nationally recognized investment rating services in the highest category; or

(ii) Corporate debt securities that may be sold with reasonable promptness at a price that corresponds reasonably to their fair value, and that are rated in one of the two highest categories by a nationally recognized investment rating service in its most recently published ratings before the date of purchase of the security.

(e) *Loans to finance the sale of REO.* A savings association's loans to one borrower to finance the sale of real property acquired in satisfaction of debts previously contracted for in good faith shall not, when aggregated with all other loans to such borrower, exceed the General Limitation in paragraph (c)(1) of this section.

(f) *Calculating compliance and record-keeping.* (1) The amount of an association's unimpaired capital and unimpaired surplus pursuant to paragraph (b)(11) of this section shall be calculated as of the association's most recent periodic report required to be filed with OTS prior to the date of granting or purchasing the loan or otherwise creating the obligation to repay funds, unless the association knows, or

has reason to know, based on transactions or events actually completed, that such level has changed significantly, upward or downward, subsequent to filing of such report.

(2) If a savings association or subsidiary thereof makes a loan or extension of credit to any one borrower, as defined in paragraph (b)(1) of this section, in an amount that, when added to the total balances of all outstanding loans owed to such association and its subsidiary by such borrower, exceeds the greater of \$500,000 or 5 percent of unimpaired capital and unimpaired surplus, the records of such association or its subsidiary with respect to such loan shall include documentation showing that such loan was made within the limitations of paragraphs (c) and (d) of this section; for the purpose of such documentation such association or subsidiary may require, and may accept in good faith, a certification by the borrower identifying the persons, entities, and interests described in the definition of one borrower in paragraph (b)(1) of this section.

(g) [Reserved]

(h) *More stringent restrictions.* The Director may impose more stringent restrictions on a savings association's loans to one borrower if the Director determines that such restrictions are necessary to protect the safety and soundness of the savings association.

#### APPENDIX TO § 560.93—INTERPRETATIONS

##### *Section 560.93–100 Interrelation of General Limitation With Exception for Loans To Develop Domestic Residential Housing Units*

1. The § 560.93(d)(3) exception for loans to one person to develop domestic residential housing units is characterized in the regulation as an “alternative” limit. This exceptional 30 percent or 30 percent limitation does not operate *in addition to* the 15 percent General Limitation or the 10 percent additional amount an association may loan to one borrower secured by readily marketable collateral, but serves as the uppermost limitation on a savings association's lending to any one person once an association employs this exception. An example will illustrate the Office's interpretation of the application of this rule:

*Example:* Savings Associations A's lending limitation as calculated under the 15 percent General Limitation is \$800,000. If Association A lends Y \$800,000 for commercial purposes, Association A cannot lend Y an additional

\$1,600,000, or 30 percent of capital and surplus, to develop residential housing units under the paragraph (d)(3) exception. The (d)(3) exception operates as the uppermost limitation on all lending to one borrower (for associations that may employ this exception) *and includes any amounts loaned to the same borrower under the General Limitation.* Association A, therefore, may lend only an additional \$800,000 to Y, provided the paragraph (d)(3) prerequisites have been met. The amount loaned under the authority of the General Limitation (\$800,000), when added to the amount loaned under the exception (\$800,000), yields a sum that does not exceed the 30 percent uppermost limitation (\$1,600,000).

2. This result does not change even if the facts are altered to assume that some or all of the \$800,000 amount of lending permissible under the General Limitation's 15 percent basket is not used, or is devoted to the development of domestic residential housing units.

In other words, using the above example, if Association A lends Y \$400,000 for commercial purposes and \$300,000 for residential purposes—both of which would be permitted under the Association's \$800,000 General Limitation—Association A's remaining permissible lending to Y would be: first, an additional \$100,000 under the General Limitation, and then another \$800,000 to develop domestic residential housing units if the Association meets the paragraph (d)(3) prerequisites. (The latter is \$800,000 because in no event may the total lending to Y exceed 30 percent of unimpaired capital and unimpaired surplus). If Association A did not lend Y the remaining \$100,000 permissible under the General Limitation, its permissible loans to develop domestic residential housing units under paragraph (d)(3) would be \$900,000 instead of \$800,000 (the total loans to Y would still equal \$1,600,000).

3. In short, under the paragraph (d)(3) exception, the 30 percent or 30 percent limit will always operate as the uppermost limitation, unless of course the association does not avail itself of the exception and merely relies upon its General Limitation.

##### *Section 560.93–101 Interrelationship Between the General Limitation and the 150 Percent Aggregate Limit on Loans to all Borrowers To Develop Domestic Residential Housing Units*

1. The Office has already received numerous questions regarding the allocation of loans between the different lending limit “baskets,” *i.e.*, the 15 percent General Limitation basket and the 30 percent Residential Development basket. In general, the inquiries concern the manner in which an association may “move” a loan from the General

Limitation basket to the Residential Development basket. The following example is intended to provide guidance:

*Example:* Association A's General Limitation under section 5(u)(1) is \$15 million. In January, Association A makes a \$10 million loan to Borrower to develop domestic residential housing units. At the time the loan was made, Association A had not received approval under a Director order to avail itself of the residential development exception to lending limits. Therefore, the \$10 million loan is made under Association A's General Limitation.

2. In June, Association A receives authorization to lend under the Residential Development exception. In July, Association A lends \$3 million to Borrower to develop domestic residential housing units. In August, Borrower seeks an additional \$12 million commercial loan from Association A. Association A cannot make the loan to Borrower, however, because it already has an outstanding \$10 million loan to Borrower that counts against Association A's General Limitation of \$15 million. Thus, Association A may lend only up to an additional \$5 million to Borrower under the General Limitation.

3. However, Association A may be able to reallocate the \$10 million loan it made to Borrower in January to its Residential Development basket provided that: (1) Association A has obtained authority under a Director's order to avail itself of the additional lending authority for residential development and maintains compliance with all prerequisites to such lending authority; (2) the original \$10 million loan made in January constitutes a loan to develop domestic residential housing units as defined; and (3) the housing unit(s) constructed with the funds from the January loan remain in a stage of "development" at the time Association A reallocates the loan to the domestic residential housing basket. The project must be in a stage of acquisition, development, construction, rehabilitation, or conversion in order for the loan to be reallocated.

4. If Association A is able to reallocate the \$10 million loan made to Borrower in January to its Residential Development basket, it may make the \$12 million commercial loan requested by Borrower in August. Once the January loan is reallocated to the Residential Development basket, however, the \$10 million loan counts towards Association's 150 percent aggregate limitation on loans to all borrowers under the residential development basket (section 5(u)(2)(A)(ii)(IV)).

5. If Association A reallocates the January loan to its domestic residential housing basket and makes an additional \$12 million commercial loan to Borrower, Association A's totals under the respective limitations would be: \$12 million under the General Limitation; and \$13 million under the Residen-

tial Development limitation. The full \$13 million residential development loan counts toward Association A's aggregate 150 percent limitation.

[61 FR 50976, Sept. 30, 1996, as amended at 61 FR 66579, Dec. 18, 1996; 62 FR 66262, Dec. 18, 1997; 66 FR 13007, Mar. 2, 2001; 69 FR 76602, Dec. 22, 2004]

#### **§ 560.100 Real estate lending standards; purpose and scope.**

This section, and § 560.101 of this subpart, issued pursuant to section 304 of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Improvement Act of 1991, 12 U.S.C. 1828(o), prescribe standards for real estate lending to be used by savings associations and all their includable subsidiaries, as defined in 12 CFR 567.1, over which the savings associations exercise control, in adopting internal real estate lending policies.

[61 FR 50971, Sept. 30, 1996, as amended at 62 FR 66262, Dec. 18, 1997]

#### **§ 560.101 Real estate lending standards.**

(a) Each savings association shall adopt and maintain written policies that establish appropriate limits and standards for extensions of credit that are secured by liens on or interests in real estate, or that are made for the purpose of financing permanent improvements to real estate.

(b)(1) Real estate lending policies adopted pursuant to this section must:

(i) Be consistent with safe and sound banking practices;

(ii) Be appropriate to the size of the institution and the nature and scope of its operations; and

(iii) Be reviewed and approved by the savings association's board of directors at least annually.

(2) The lending policies must establish:

(i) Loan portfolio diversification standards;

(ii) Prudent underwriting standards, including loan-to-value limits, that are clear and measurable;

(iii) Loan administration procedures for the savings association's real estate portfolio; and

(iv) Documentation, approval, and reporting requirements to monitor compliance with the savings association's real estate lending policies.

(c) Each savings association must monitor conditions in the real estate market in its lending area to ensure that its real estate lending policies continue to be appropriate for current market conditions.

(d) The real estate lending policies adopted pursuant to this section should reflect consideration of the Interagency Guidelines for Real Estate Lending Policies established by the Federal bank and thrift supervisory agencies.

APPENDIX TO §560.101—INTERAGENCY GUIDELINES FOR REAL ESTATE LENDING POLICIES

The agencies' regulations require that each insured depository institution adopt and maintain a written policy that establishes appropriate limits and standards for all extensions of credit that are secured by liens on or interests in real estate or made for the purpose of financing the construction of a building or other improvements.<sup>1</sup> These guidelines are intended to assist institutions in the formulation and maintenance of a real estate lending policy that is appropriate to the size of the institution and the nature and scope of its individual operations, as well as satisfies the requirements of the regulation.

Each institution's policies must be comprehensive, and consistent with safe and sound lending practices, and must ensure that the institution operates within limits and according to standards that are reviewed and approved at least annually by the board of directors. Real estate lending is an integral part of many institutions' business plans and, when undertaken in a prudent manner, will not be subject to examiner criticism.

LOAN PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

The lending policy should contain a general outline of the scope and distribution of the institution's credit facilities and the manner in which real estate loans are made, serviced, and collected. In particular, the institution's policies on real estate lending should:

- Identify the geographic areas in which the institution will consider lending.
- Establish a loan portfolio diversification policy and set limits for real estate loans by type and geographic market (e.g., limits on higher risk loans).

<sup>1</sup>The agencies have adopted a uniform rule on real estate lending. See 12 CFR Part 365 (FDIC); 12 CFR Part 208, Subpart C (FRB); 12 CFR Part 34, Subpart D (OCC); and 12 CFR 560.100-560.101 (OTS).

- Identify appropriate terms and conditions by type of real estate loan.

- Establish loan origination and approval procedures, both generally and by size and type of loan.

- Establish prudent underwriting standards that are clear and measurable, including loan-to-value limits, that are consistent with these supervisory guidelines.

- Establish review and approval procedures for exception loans, including loans with loan-to-value percentages in excess of supervisory limits.

- Establish loan administration procedures, including documentation, disbursement, collateral inspection, collection, and loan review.

- Establish real estate appraisal and evaluation programs.

- Require that management monitor the loan portfolio and provide timely and adequate reports to the board of directors.

The institution should consider both internal and external factors in the formulation of its loan policies and strategic plan. Factors that should be considered include:

- The size and financial condition of the institution.

- The expertise and size of the lending staff.

- The need to avoid undue concentrations of risk.

- Compliance with all real estate related laws and regulations, including the Community Reinvestment Act, anti-discrimination laws, and for savings associations, the Qualified Thrift Lender test.

- Market conditions.

The institution should monitor conditions in the real estate markets in its lending area so that it can react quickly to changes in market conditions that are relevant to its lending decisions. Market supply and demand factors that should be considered include:

- Demographic indicators, including population and employment trends.

- Zoning requirements.

- Current and projected vacancy, construction, and absorption rates.

- Current and projected lease terms, rental rates, and sales prices, including concessions.

- Current and projected operating expenses for different types of projects.

- Economic indicators, including trends and diversification of the lending area.

- Valuation trends, including discount and direct capitalization rates.

UNDERWRITING STANDARDS

Prudently underwritten real estate loans should reflect all relevant credit factors, including:

- The capacity of the borrower, or income from the underlying property, to adequately service the debt.

- The value of the mortgaged property.
- The overall creditworthiness of the borrower.
- The level of equity invested in the property.
- Any secondary sources of repayment.
- Any additional collateral or credit enhancements (such as guarantees, mortgage insurance or takeout commitments).

The lending policies should reflect the level of risk that is acceptable to the board of directors and provide clear and measurable underwriting standards that enable the institution's lending staff to evaluate these credit factors. The underwriting standards should address:

- The maximum loan amount by type of property.
- Maximum loan maturities by type of property.
- Amortization schedules.
- Pricing structure for different types of real estate loans.
- Loan-to-value limits by type of property.

For development and construction projects, and completed commercial properties, the policy should also establish, commensurate with the size and type of the project or property:

- Requirements for feasibility studies and sensitivity and risk analyses (e.g., sensitivity of income projections to changes in economic variables such as interest rates, vacancy rates, or operating expenses).
- Minimum requirements for initial investment and maintenance of hard equity by the borrower (e.g., cash or unencumbered investment in the underlying property).
- Minimum standards for net worth, cash flow, and debt service coverage of the borrower or underlying property.
- Standards for the acceptability of and limits on non-amortizing loans.
- Standards for the acceptability of and limits on the use of interest reserves.
- Pre-leasing and pre-sale requirements for income-producing property.
- Pre-sale and minimum unit release requirements for non-income-producing property loans.
- Limits on partial recourse or non-recourse loans and requirements for guarantor support.
- Requirements for takeout commitments.
- Minimum covenants for loan agreements.

LOAN ADMINISTRATION

The institution should also establish loan administration procedures for its real estate portfolio that address:

- Documentation, including:
  - Type and frequency of financial statements, including requirements for verification of information provided by the borrower;

Type and frequency of collateral evaluations (appraisals and other estimates of value).

- Loan closing and disbursement.
- Payment processing.
- Escrow administration.
- Collateral administration.
- Loan payoffs.
- Collections and foreclosure, including:
  - Delinquency follow-up procedures;
  - Foreclosure timing;
  - Extensions and other forms of forbearance;
  - Acceptance of deeds in lieu of foreclosure.
- Claims processing (e.g., seeking recovery on a defaulted loan covered by a government guaranty or insurance program).
- Servicing and participation agreements.

SUPERVISORY LOAN-TO-VALUE LIMITS

Institutions should establish their own internal loan-to-value limits for real estate loans. These internal limits should not exceed the following supervisory limits:

Loan category	Loan-to-value limit (percent)
Raw land .....	65
Land development .....	75
Construction:	
Commercial, multifamily, <sup>1</sup> and other non-residential .....	80
1- to 4-family residential .....	85
Improved property .....	85
Owner-occupied 1- to 4-family and home equity .....	( <sup>2</sup> )

<sup>1</sup> Multifamily construction includes condominiums and cooperatives.

<sup>2</sup> A loan-to-value limit has not been established for permanent mortgage or home equity loans on owner-occupied, 1- to 4-family residential property. However, for any such loan with a loan-to-value ratio that equals or exceeds 90 percent at origination, an institution should require appropriate credit enhancement in the form of either mortgage insurance or readily marketable collateral.

The supervisory loan-to-value limits should be applied to the underlying property that collateralizes the loan. For loans that fund multiple phases of the same real estate project (e.g., a loan for both land development and construction of an office building), the appropriate loan-to-value limit is the limit applicable to the final phase of the project funded by the loan; however, loan disbursements should not exceed actual development or construction outlays. In situations where a loan is fully cross-collateralized by two or more properties or is secured by a collateral pool of two or more properties, the appropriate maximum loan amount under supervisory loan-to-value limits is the sum of the value of each property, less senior liens, multiplied by the appropriate loan-to-value limit for each property. To ensure that collateral margins remain within the supervisory limits, lenders should redetermine conformity whenever collateral substitutions are made to the collateral pool.

In establishing internal loan-to-value limits, each lender is expected to carefully consider the institution-specific and market factors listed under “Loan Portfolio Management Considerations,” as well as any other relevant factors, such as the particular subcategory or type of loan. For any subcategory of loans that exhibits greater credit risk than the overall category, a lender should consider the establishment of an internal loan-to-value limit for that subcategory that is lower than the limit for the overall category.

The loan-to-value ratio is only one of several pertinent credit factors to be considered when underwriting a real estate loan. Other credit factors to be taken into account are highlighted in the “Underwriting Standards” section above. Because of these other factors, the establishment of these supervisory limits should not be interpreted to mean that loans at these levels will automatically be considered sound.

#### LOANS IN EXCESS OF THE SUPERVISORY LOAN-TO-VALUE LIMITS

The agencies recognize that appropriate loan-to-value limits vary not only among categories of real estate loans but also among individual loans. Therefore, it may be appropriate in individual cases to originate or purchase loans with loan-to-value ratios in excess of the supervisory loan-to-value limits, based on the support provided by other credit factors. Such loans should be identified in the institutions’ records, and their aggregate amount reported at least quarterly to the institution’s board of directors. (See additional reporting requirements described under “Exceptions to the General Policy.”) The aggregate amount of all loans in excess of the supervisory loan-to-value limits should not exceed 100 percent of total capital.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, within the aggregate limit, total loans for all commercial, agricultural, multifamily or other non-1-to-4 family residential properties should not exceed 30 percent of total capital. An institution will come under increased supervisory scrutiny as the total of such loans approaches these levels.

In determining the aggregate amount of such loans, institutions should: (a) Include all loans secured by the same property if any one of those loans exceeds the supervisory

loan-to-value limits; and (b) include the recourse obligation of any such loan sold with recourse. Conversely, a loan should no longer be reported to the directors as part of aggregate totals when reduction in principal or senior liens, or additional contribution of collateral or equity (e.g., improvements to the real property securing the loan), bring the loan-to-value ratio into compliance with supervisory limits.

#### EXCLUDED TRANSACTIONS

The agencies also recognize that there are a number of lending situations in which other factors significantly outweigh the need to apply the supervisory loan-to-value limits.

These include:

- Loans guaranteed or insured by the U.S. government or its agencies, provided that the amount of the guaranty or insurance is at least equal to the portion of the loan that exceeds the supervisory loan-to-value limit.
- Loans backed by the full faith and credit of a state government, provided that the amount of the assurance is at least equal to the portion of the loan that exceeds the supervisory loan-to-value limit.
- Loans guaranteed or insured by a state, municipal or local government, or an agency thereof, provided that the amount of the guaranty or insurance is at least equal to the portion of the loan that exceeds the supervisory loan-to-value limit, and provided that the lender has determined that the guarantor or insurer has the financial capacity and willingness to perform under the terms of the guaranty or insurance agreement.
- Loans that are to be sold promptly after origination, without recourse, to a financially responsible third party.
- Loans that are renewed, refinanced, or restructured without the advancement of new funds or an increase in the line of credit (except for reasonable closing costs), or loans that are renewed, refinanced, or restructured in connection with a workout situation, either with or without the advancement of new funds, where consistent with safe and sound banking practices and part of a clearly defined and well-documented program to achieve orderly liquidation of the debt, reduce risk of loss, or maximize recovery on the loan.
- Loans that facilitate the sale of real estate acquired by the lender in the ordinary course of collecting a debt previously contracted in good faith.
- Loans for which a lien on or interest in real property is taken as additional collateral through an abundance of caution by the lender (e.g., the institution takes a blanket lien on all or substantially all of the assets of the borrower, and the value of the real property is low relative to the aggregate value of all other collateral).

<sup>2</sup>For the state member banks, the term “total capital” means “total risk-based capital” as defined in Appendix A to 12 CFR Part 208. For insured state non-member banks, “total capital” refers to that term described in table I of Appendix A to 12 CFR Part 325. For national banks, the term “total capital” is defined at 12 CFR 3.2(e). For savings associations, the term “total capital” as described in part 567 of this chapter.



- Loans, such as working capital loans, where the lender does not rely principally on real estate as security and the extension of credit is not used to acquire, develop, or construct permanent improvements on real property.
- Loans for the purpose of financing permanent improvements to real property, but not secured by the property, if such security interest is not required by prudent underwriting practice.

## EXCEPTIONS TO THE GENERAL LENDING POLICY

Some provision should be made for the consideration of loan requests from credit-worthy borrowers whose credit needs do not fit within the institution's general lending policy. An institution may provide for prudently underwritten exceptions to its lending policies, including loan-to-value limits, on a loan-by-loan basis. However, any exceptions from the supervisory loan-to-value limits should conform to the aggregate limits on such loans discussed above.

The board of directors is responsible for establishing standards for the review and approval of exception loans. Each institution should establish an appropriate internal process for the review and approval of loans that do not conform to its own internal policy standards. The approval of any such loan should be supported by a written justification that clearly sets forth all of the relevant credit factors that support the underwriting decision. The justification and approval documents for such loans should be maintained as a part of the permanent loan file. Each institution should monitor compliance with its real estate lending policy and individually report exception loans of a significant size to its board of directors.

## SUPERVISORY REVIEW OF REAL ESTATE LENDING POLICIES AND PRACTICES

The real estate lending policies of institutions will be evaluated by examiners during the course of their examinations to determine if the policies are consistent with safe and sound lending practices, these guidelines, and the requirements of the regulation. In evaluating the adequacy of the institution's real estate lending policies and practices, examiners will take into consideration the following factors:

- The nature and scope of the institution's real estate lending activities.
- The size and financial condition of the institution.
- The quality of the institution's management and internal controls.
- The expertise and size of the lending and loan administration staff.
- Market conditions.

Lending policy exception reports will also be reviewed by examiners during the course of their examinations to determine whether

the institutions' exceptions are adequately documented and appropriate in light of all of the relevant credit considerations. An excessive volume of exceptions to an institution's real estate lending policy may signal a weakening of its underwriting practices, or may suggest a need to revise the loan policy.

## DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of these Guidelines:

*Construction loan* means an extension of credit for the purpose of erecting or rehabilitating buildings or other structures, including any infrastructure necessary for development.

*Extension of credit or loan means:*

- (1) The total amount of any loan, line of credit, or other legally binding lending commitment with respect to real property; and
- (2) The total amount, based on the amount of consideration paid, of any loan, line of credit, or other legally binding lending commitment acquired by a lender by purchase, assignment, or otherwise.

*Improved property loan* means an extension of credit secured by one of the following types of real property:

- (1) Farmland, ranchland or timberland committed to ongoing management and agricultural production;
- (2) 1- to 4-family residential property that is not owner-occupied;
- (3) Residential property containing five or more individual dwelling units;
- (4) Completed commercial property; or
- (5) Other income-producing property that has been completed and is available for occupancy and use, except income-producing owner-occupied 1- to 4-family residential property.

*Land development loan* means an extension of credit for the purpose of improving unimproved real property prior to the erection of structures. The improvement of unimproved real property may include the laying or placement of sewers, water pipes, utility cables, streets, and other infrastructure necessary for future development.

*Loan origination* means the time of inception of the obligation to extend credit (i.e., when the last event or prerequisite, controllable by the lender, occurs causing the lender to become legally bound to fund an extension of credit).

*Loan-to-value* or *loan-to-value ratio* means the percentage or ratio that is derived at the time of loan origination by dividing an extension of credit by the total value of the property(ies) securing or being improved by the extension of credit plus the amount of any readily marketable collateral and other acceptable collateral that secures the extension of credit. The total amount of all senior liens on or interests in such property(ies) should be included in determining the loan-to-value ratio. When mortgage insurance or collateral is used in the calculation of the

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loan-to-value ratio, and such credit enhancement is later released or replaced, the loan-to-value ratio should be recalculated.

*Other acceptable collateral* means any collateral in which the lender has a perfected security interest, that has a quantifiable value, and is accepted by the lender in accordance with safe and sound lending practices. Other acceptable collateral should be appropriately discounted by the lender consistent with the lender's usual practices for making loans secured by such collateral. Other acceptable collateral includes, among other items, unconditional irrevocable standby letters of credit for the benefit of the lender.

*Owner-occupied*, when used in conjunction with the term *1- to 4-family residential property* means that the owner of the underlying real property occupies at least one unit of the real property as a principal residence of the owner.

*Readily marketable collateral* means insured deposits, financial instruments, and bullion in which the lender has a perfected interest. Financial instruments and bullion must be salable under ordinary circumstances with reasonable promptness at a fair market value determined by quotations based on actual transactions, on an auction or similarly available daily bid and ask price market. Readily marketable collateral should be appropriately discounted by the lender consistent with the lender's usual practices for making loans secured by such collateral.

*Value* means an opinion or estimate, set forth in an appraisal or evaluation, whichever may be appropriate, of the market value of real property, prepared in accordance with the agency's appraisal regulations and guidance. For loans to purchase an existing property, the term "value" means the lesser of the actual acquisition cost or the estimate of value.

*1- to 4-family residential property* means property containing fewer than five individual dwelling units, including manufactured homes permanently affixed to the underlying property (when deemed to be real property under state law).

[61 FR 50971, Sept. 30, 1996, as amended at 66 FR 65821, Dec. 21, 2001; 72 FR 69438, Dec. 7, 2007]

### **§560.110 Most favored lender usury preemption.**

(a) *Definition.* The term "interest" as used in 12 U.S.C. 1463(g) includes any payment compensating a creditor or prospective creditor for an extension of credit, making available of a line of credit, or any default or breach by a borrower of a condition upon which credit was extended. It includes, among other things, the following fees con-

nected with credit extension or availability: numerical periodic rates, late fees, not sufficient funds (NSF) fees, overlimit fees, annual fees, cash advance fees, and membership fees. It does not ordinarily include appraisal fees, premiums and commissions attributable to insurance guaranteeing repayment of any extension of credit, finders' fees, fees for document preparation or notarization, or fees incurred to obtain credit reports.

(b) *Authority.* A savings association located in a state may charge interest at the maximum rate permitted to any state-chartered or licensed lending institution by the law of that state. If state law permits different interest charges on specified classes of loans, a federal savings association making such loans is subject only to the provisions of state law relating to that class of loans that are material to the determination of the permitted interest. For example, a federal savings association may lawfully charge the highest rate permitted to be charged by a state-licensed small loan company, without being so licensed, but subject to state law limitations on the size of loans made by small loan companies. Except as provided in this paragraph, the applicability of state law to Federal savings associations shall be determined in accordance with §560.2 of this part. State supervisors determine the degree to which state-chartered savings associations must comply with state laws other than those imposing restrictions on interest, as defined in paragraph (a) of this section.

(c) *Effect on state definitions of interest.* The Federal definition of the term "interest" in paragraph (a) of this section does not change how interest is defined by the individual states (nor how the state definition of interest is used) solely for purposes of state law. For example, if late fees are not "interest" under state law where a savings association is located but state law permits its most favored lender to charge late fees, then a savings association located in that state may charge late fees to its intrastate customers. The savings association may also charge late fees to its interstate customers because the fees are interest under the Federal definition of interest

and an allowable charge under state law where the savings association is located. However, the late fees would not be treated as interest for purposes of evaluating compliance with state usury limitations because state law excludes late fees when calculating the maximum interest that lending institutions may charge under those limitations.

**§ 560.120 Letters of credit and other independent undertakings to pay against documents.**

(a) *General authority.* A savings association may issue and commit to issue letters of credit within the scope of applicable laws or rules of practice recognized by law. It may also issue other independent undertakings within the scope of such laws or rules of practice recognized by law, that have been approved by OTS (approved undertaking).<sup>1</sup> Under such letters of credit and approved undertakings, the savings association'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 savings association 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

<sup>1</sup>Samples of laws or rules of practice applicable to letters of credit and other independent undertakings 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., 1/800/328-4880); 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 Convention on Independent Guarantees and Standby Letters of Credit (adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in 1995 and signed by the U.S. in 1997) (available from the U.N. Commission on International Trade Law, 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).

and sound banking practice, savings associations that issue letters of credit or approved undertakings should not be exposed to undue risk. At a minimum, savings associations should consider the following:

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

(ii) The letter of credit or approved undertaking should be limited in amount;

(iii) The letter of credit or approved undertaking should:

(A) Be limited in duration; or

(B) Permit the savings association to terminate the letter of credit or approved undertaking, either on a periodic basis (consistent with the savings association's ability to make any necessary credit assessments) or at will upon either notice or payment to the beneficiary; or

(C) Entitle the savings association to cash collateral from the account party on demand (with a right to accelerate the customer's obligations, as appropriate); and

(iv) The savings association either should be fully collateralized or have a post-honor right of reimbursement from its customer or from another issuer of a letter of credit or an independent undertaking. Alternatively, if the savings association's undertaking is to purchase documents of title, securities, or other valuable documents, it should obtain a first priority right to realize on the documents if the savings association is not otherwise to be reimbursed.

(2) *Additional considerations in special circumstances.* Certain letters of credit and approved undertakings require particular protections against credit, operational, and market risk:

(i) In the event that the undertaking is to honor by delivery of an item of value other than money, the savings association should ensure that market fluctuations that affect the value of the item will not cause the savings association to assume undue market risk;

(ii) In the event that the undertaking provides for automatic renewal, the

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terms for renewal should allow the savings association to make any necessary credit assessment prior to renewal;

(iii) In the event that a savings association issues an undertaking for its own account, the underlying transaction for which it is issued must be within the savings association's authority and comply with any safety and soundness requirements applicable to that transaction.

(3) *Operational expertise.* The savings association should possess operational expertise that is commensurate with the sophistication of its letter of credit or independent undertaking activities.

(4) *Documentation.* The savings association must accurately reflect its letters of credit or approved undertakings in its records, including any acceptance or deferred payment or other absolute obligation arising out of its contingent undertaking.

[61 FR 50971, Sept. 30, 1996, as amended at 64 FR 46565, Aug. 26, 1999]

### § 560.121 Investment in State housing corporations.

(a) Any savings association to the extent it has legal authority to do so, may make investments in, commitments to invest in, loans to, or commitments to lend to any state housing corporation; provided, that such obligations or loans are secured directly, or indirectly through a fiduciary, by a first lien on improved real estate which is insured under the National Housing Act, as amended, and that in the event of default, the holder of such obligations or loans has the right directly, or indirectly through a fiduciary, to subject to the satisfaction of such obligations or loans the real estate described in the first lien, or the insurance proceeds.

(b) Any savings association that is adequately capitalized may, to the extent it has legal authority to do so, invest in obligations (including loans) of, or issued by, any state housing corporation incorporated in the state in which such savings association has its home or a branch office; provided (except with respect to loans), that:

(1) The obligations are rated in one of the four highest grades as shown by the most recently published rating made of

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such obligations by a nationally recognized rating service; or

(2) The obligations, if not rated, are approved by the Office. The aggregate outstanding direct investment in obligations under paragraph (b) of this section shall not exceed the amount of the savings association's total capital.

(c) Each state housing corporation in which a savings association invests under the authority of paragraph (b) of this section shall agree, before accepting any such investment (including any loan or loan commitment), to make available at any time to the Office such information as the Office may consider to be necessary to ensure that investments are properly made under this section.

### § 560.130 Prohibition on loan procurement fees.

If you are a director, officer, or other natural person having the power to direct the management or policies of a savings association, you must not receive, directly or indirectly, any commission, fee, or other compensation in connection with the procurement of any loan made by the savings association or a subsidiary of the savings association.

[61 FR 60178, Nov. 27, 1996]

### § 560.160 Asset classification.

(a)(1) Each savings association must evaluate and classify its assets on a regular basis in a manner consistent with, or reconcilable to, the asset classification system used by OTS in its Thrift Activities Handbook (Available at the address of Washington Headquarters Office at § 516.40(b) of this chapter).

(2) In connection with the examination of a savings association or its affiliates, OTS examiners may identify problem assets and classify them, if appropriate. The association must recognize such examiner classifications in its subsequent reports to OTS.

(b) Based on the evaluation and classification of its assets, each savings association shall establish adequate valuation allowances or charge-offs, as appropriate, consistent with generally accepted accounting principles and the

practices of the federal banking agencies.

[61 FR 50971, Sept. 30, 1996, as amended at 66 FR 13007, Mar. 2, 2001]

**§ 560.170 Records for lending transactions.**

In establishing and maintaining its records pursuant to § 563.170 of this chapter, each savings association and service corporation should establish and maintain loan documentation practices that:

- (a) Ensure that the institution can make an informed lending decision and can assess risk on an ongoing basis;
- (b) Identify the purpose and all sources of repayment for each loan, and assess the ability of the borrower(s) and any guarantor(s) to repay the indebtedness in a timely manner;
- (c) Ensure that any claims against a borrower, guarantor, security holders, and collateral are legally enforceable;
- (d) Demonstrate appropriate administration and monitoring of its loans; and
- (e) Take into account the size and complexity of its loans.

**§ 560.172 Re-evaluation of real estate owned.**

A savings association shall appraise each parcel of real estate owned at the earlier of in-substance foreclosure or at the time of the savings association's acquisition of such property, and at such times thereafter as dictated by prudent management policy; such appraisals shall be consistent with the requirements of part 564 of this chapter. The Regional Director or his or her designee may require subsequent appraisals if, in his or her discretion, such subsequent appraisal is necessary under the particular circumstances. The foregoing requirement shall not apply to any parcel of real estate that is sold and reacquired less than 12 months subsequent to the most recent appraisal made pursuant to this part. A dated, signed copy of each report of appraisal made pursuant to any provisions of this part shall be retained in the savings association's records.

**Subpart C—Alternative Mortgage Transactions**

**§ 560.210 Disclosures for variable rate transactions.**

A savings association must provide the initial disclosures described at 12 CFR 226.19(b) and the adjustment notices described at 12 CFR 226.20(c) for variable rate transactions, as described in those regulations. The OTS administers and enforces those provisions for savings associations.

[63 FR 38463, July 17, 1998]

**§ 560.220 Alternative Mortgage Transaction Parity Act.**

(a) *Applicable housing creditors.* A housing creditor that is not a commercial bank, a credit union, or a federal savings association, may make an alternative mortgage transaction as defined at 12 U.S.C. 3802(1), by following the regulations identified in paragraph (b) of this section, notwithstanding any state constitution, law, or regulation. *See* 12 U.S.C. 3803.

(b) *Applicable regulations.* OTS identifies §§ 560.35 and 560.210 as appropriate and applicable for state housing creditors. All other OTS regulations are not identified, and are inappropriate and inapplicable for state housing creditors. State housing creditors engaged in credit sales should read the term "loan" as "credit sale" wherever applicable in applying these regulations.

[67 FR 60554, Sept. 26, 2002]

**PART 561—DEFINITIONS FOR REGULATIONS AFFECTING ALL SAVINGS ASSOCIATIONS**

Sec.	
561.1	General.
561.2	Account.
561.3	Accountholder.
561.4	Affiliate.
561.5	Affiliated person.
561.6	Audit period.
561.7–561.8	[Reserved]
561.9	Certificate account.
561.12	Consumer credit.
561.14	Controlling person.
561.15	Corporation.
561.16	Demand accounts.
561.18	Director.
561.19	Financial institution.
561.24	Immediate family.