



## **usTLD Dispute Resolution Policy**

# usTLD Dispute Resolution Policy

**1. Purpose**—This usTLD Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Policy”) has been adopted by the United States Department of Commerce (“DOC”). It is incorporated by reference into the usTLD Registration Agreement, and sets forth the terms and conditions in connection with a dispute between you (as the registrant) and any party other than us (as the registrar) or the registry administrator for the usTLD (as the “Registry”) over the registration and use of an Internet domain name registered by you. Proceedings under Paragraph 4 of this Policy will be conducted according to the Rules for the usTLD Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Rules”), which are attached hereto, and the selected administrative-dispute-resolution service provider’s supplemental rules.

**2. Your Representations**—By applying to register a domain name, registering a domain name, or by asking us to maintain or renew a domain name registration, you hereby represent and warrant to us that (a) the statements that you made in your usTLD Registration Agreement are complete and accurate; (b) to your knowledge, the registration of the domain name will not infringe upon or otherwise violate the rights of any third party; (c) you are not registering the domain name for an unlawful purpose; and (d) you will not knowingly use the domain name in violation of any applicable laws or regulations. It is your responsibility to determine whether your domain name registration infringes or violates someone else’s rights.

**3. Cancellations, Transfers, and Changes**—We will cancel, transfer or otherwise make changes to a domain name registration that is subject to this Policy under the following circumstances:

- a. Subject to the provisions of Paragraph 8, our receipt of written or appropriate electronic instructions from you or your authorized agent to take such action;
- b. Our receipt of an order from a court or arbitral tribunal, in each case of competent jurisdiction in the United States, requiring such action; and/or
- c. Our receipt of a decision of an Administrative Panel requiring such action in any administrative proceeding to which you were a party and which was conducted under this Policy or a later version of this Policy adopted by the DOC.

We may also cancel, transfer or otherwise make changes to a domain name registration in accordance with the terms of your usTLD Registration Agreement or other legal requirements.

**4. Mandatory Administrative Proceeding**—This Paragraph sets forth the type of disputes for which you are required to submit to a mandatory administrative proceeding. These proceedings will be conducted before one of the administrative-dispute-resolution service providers listed at [http://www.neustar.us/policies/dispute\\_providers.html](http://www.neustar.us/policies/dispute_providers.html) (each, a “Provider”).

a. Applicable Disputes—You are required to submit to a mandatory administrative proceeding in the event that a third party (a “Complainant”) asserts to the applicable Provider, in compliance with the Rules, that:

- i. Your domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which the Complainant has rights;
- ii. You have no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the domain name; and

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iii. Your domain name has been registered in bad faith or is being used in bad faith.

In the administrative proceeding, the Complainant must prove that each of these three elements is present.

b. Evidence of Registration or Use in Bad Faith—For the purposes of Paragraph 4(a)(1)(iii), the following circumstances, in particular but without limitation, if found by the Panel to be present, shall be evidence of the registration or use of a domain name in bad faith:

i. Circumstances indicating that you have registered or you have acquired the domain name primarily for the purpose of selling, renting, or otherwise transferring the domain name registration to the Complainant who is the owner of the trademark or service mark or to a competitor of that Complainant, for valuable consideration in excess of your documented out-of-pocket costs directly related to the domain name;

ii. You have registered the domain name in order to prevent the owner of the trademark or service mark from reflecting the mark in a corresponding domain name;

iii. You have registered the domain name primarily for the purpose of disrupting the business of a competitor; or

iv. By using the domain name, you have intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to your web site or other on-line location, by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's mark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of your web site or location or of a product or service on your web site or location.

c. How to Demonstrate Your Rights to and Legitimate Interests in the Domain Name in Responding to a Complaint—When you receive a complaint, you should refer to the Rules in determining how your response should be prepared. Any of the following circumstances, in particular but without limitation, if found by the Panel to be proved based on its evaluation of all evidence presented, shall demonstrate your rights or legitimate interests to the domain name for purposes of Paragraph 4(a)(ii):

i. You are the owner or beneficiary of a trade or service mark that is identical to the domain name;

ii. Before any notice to you of the dispute, your use of, or demonstrable preparations to use, the domain name or a name corresponding to the domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services;

iii. You (as an individual, business, or other organization) have been commonly known by the domain name, even if you have acquired no trademark or service mark rights; or

iv. You are making a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the domain name, without intent for commercial gain to misleadingly divert consumers or to tarnish the trademark or service mark at issue.

d. Selection of Provider—The Complainant shall select the Provider from among those approved by DOC by submitting the complaint to that Provider. The selected Provider will administer the proceeding, except in cases of consolidation as described in Paragraph 4(f).

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e. Initiation of Proceeding and Process and Appointment of Administrative Panel—The Rules state the process for initiating and conducting a proceeding and for appointing the panel that will decide the dispute (the “Administrative Panel”).

f. Consolidation—In the event of multiple disputes between you and a Complainant, either you or the Complainant may petition to consolidate the disputes before a single Administrative Panel. This petition shall be made to the first Administrative Panel appointed to hear a pending dispute between the parties. This Administrative Panel may consolidate before it any or all such disputes in its sole discretion, provided that the disputes being consolidated are governed by this Policy or a later version of this Policy adopted by DOC.

g. Fees—All fees charged by a Provider in connection with any dispute before an Administrative Panel pursuant to this Policy shall be paid by the Complainant, except in cases where you elect to expand the Administrative Panel from one to three panelists as provided in Paragraph 5(b)(iv) of the Rules, in which case all fees will be split evenly by you and the Complainant.

h. Our Involvement in Administrative Proceedings—We do not, and will not, participate in the administration or conduct of any proceeding before an Administrative Panel. In addition, we will not be liable as a result of any decisions rendered by the Administrative Panel.

i. Remedies—The remedies available to a Complainant pursuant to any proceeding before an Administrative Panel shall be limited to requiring the cancellation of your domain name or the transfer of your domain name registration to the Complainant.

j. Notification and Publication—The Provider shall notify us of any decision made by an Administrative Panel with respect to a domain name you have registered with us. All decisions under this Policy will be published in full over the Internet, except when an Administrative Panel determines in an exceptional case to redact portions of its decision.

k. Availability of Court Proceedings—The mandatory administrative proceeding requirements set forth in Paragraph 4 shall not prevent either you or the Complainant from submitting the dispute to a court of competent jurisdiction in the United States for independent resolution before such mandatory administrative proceeding is commenced or after such proceeding is concluded. If an Administrative Panel decides that your domain name registration should be canceled or transferred, we will wait ten (10) business days (as observed in the location of our principal office) after we are informed by the applicable Provider of the Administrative Panel’s decision before implementing that decision. We will then implement the decision unless we have received from you during that ten (10) business day period official documentation (such as a copy of a complaint, file-stamped by the clerk of the court) that you have commenced a lawsuit against the Complainant in a jurisdiction to which the Complainant has submitted under Paragraph 3 of the Rules. (In general, that jurisdiction is either the location of our principal office or of your address as shown in our Whois database. If we receive such documentation within the ten (10) business day period, we will not implement the Administrative Panel’s decision, and we will take no further action, until we receive (i) evidence satisfactory to us of a resolution between the parties; (ii) evidence satisfactory to us that your lawsuit has been dismissed or withdrawn; or (iii) a copy of an order from such court dismissing your lawsuit or ordering that you do not have the right to continue to use your domain name.

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**5. All Other Disputes and Litigation**—All other disputes between you and any party other than us regarding your domain name registration that are not brought pursuant to the mandatory administrative proceeding provisions of Paragraph 4 shall be resolved between you and such other party through any court, arbitration or other proceeding that may be available.

**6. Our Involvement in Disputes**—We will not participate in any way in any dispute between you and any party other than us regarding the registration and use of your domain name. You shall not name us as a party or otherwise include us in any such proceeding. In the event that we are named as a party in any such proceeding, we reserve the right to raise any and all defenses deemed appropriate, and to take any other action necessary to defend ourselves.

**7. Maintaining the Status Quo**—We will not cancel, transfer, activate, deactivate, or otherwise change the status of any domain name registration under this Policy except as provided in Paragraph 3 above.

### **8. Transfers During a Dispute**

a. **Transfers of a Domain Name to a New Holder**—You may not transfer your domain name registration to another holder (i) during a pending administrative proceeding brought pursuant to Paragraph 4 or for a period of fifteen (15) business days (as observed in the location of our principal place of business) after such proceeding is concluded; or (ii) during a pending court proceeding or arbitration commenced regarding your domain name unless the party to whom the domain name registration is being transferred agrees, in writing, to be bound by the decision of the court or arbitrator. We reserve the right to cancel any transfer of a domain name registration to another holder that is made in violation of this subparagraph.

b. **Changing Registrars**—You may not transfer your domain name registration to another registrar during a pending administrative proceeding brought pursuant to Paragraph 4 or for a period of fifteen (15) business days (as observed in the location of our principal place of business) after such proceeding is concluded. You may transfer administration of your domain name registration to another registrar during a pending court action or arbitration, provided that the domain name you have registered with us shall continue to be subject to the proceedings commenced against you in accordance with the terms of this Policy. In the event that you transfer a domain name registration to us during the pendency of a court action or arbitration, such dispute shall remain subject to the domain name dispute policy of the registrar from which the domain name registration was transferred.

**9. Policy Modifications**—We reserve the right to modify this Policy at any time with the permission of DOC. We will post our revised Policy at <http://www.neustar.us/policies/> at least thirty (30) calendar days before it becomes effective. Unless this Policy has already been invoked by the submission of a complaint to a Provider, in which event the version of the Policy in effect at the time it was invoked will apply to you until the dispute is over, all such changes will be binding upon you with respect to any domain name registration dispute, whether the dispute arose before, on or after the effective date of the change. In the event that you object to a change in this Policy, your sole remedy is to cancel your domain name registration with us, provided that you will not be entitled to a refund of any fees you paid to us. The revised Policy will apply to you until you cancel your domain name registration.

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## Rules for the usTLD Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Rules”)

Administrative proceedings for the resolution of disputes under the usTLD Dispute Resolution Policy adopted by DOC shall be governed by these Rules and also the Supplemental Rules of the Provider administering the proceedings, as posted on its web site.

### 1. Definitions

In these Rules:

*Complainant* means the party initiating a complaint concerning a domain name registration.

*DOC* refers to the United States Department of Commerce.

*Mutual Jurisdiction* means a court jurisdiction in the United States at the location of either (a) the principal office of the Registrar of the domain name in question, or (b) the domain name holder’s address as shown for the registration of the domain name in Registrar’s Whois database at the time a complaint is submitted to a Provider. If neither (a) or (b) are located within the United States, then Mutual Jurisdiction shall lie in solely in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

*Panel* means an administrative panel appointed by a Provider to decide a complaint concerning a domain name registration.

*Panelist* means an individual appointed by a Provider to be a member of a Panel.

*Party* means a Complainant or a Respondent.

*Policy* means the usTLD Dispute Resolution Policy that is incorporated by reference and made a part of the Registration Agreement.

*Provider* means a dispute-resolution service provider approved by DOC. A list of such Providers appears at [http://www.neustar.us/policies/dispute\\_providers.html](http://www.neustar.us/policies/dispute_providers.html).

*Registrar* means the entity with which the Respondent has registered a domain name that is the subject of a complaint.

*Registration Agreement* means the agreement between a Registrar and a domain name holder.

*Respondent* means the holder of a domain name registration against which a complaint is initiated.

*Reverse Domain Name Hijacking* means using the Policy in bad faith to attempt to deprive a registered domain name holder of a domain name.

*Supplemental Rules* means the rules adopted by the Provider administering a proceeding to supplement these Rules. Supplemental Rules shall not be inconsistent with the Policy or these Rules and shall cover such topics as fees, word and page limits and guidelines, the means for communicating with the Provider and the Panel, and the form of cover sheets.

*Written Notice* means hard copy notification by the Provider to the Respondent of the commencement of an administrative proceeding under the Policy which shall inform the respondent that a complaint has been filed against it, and which shall state that the Provider has electronically transmitted the complaint

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to the Respondent by the means specified herein. Written notice does not include a hard copy of the complaint itself or of any annexes.

### 2. Communications

a. Any written communication required under these Rules shall be made electronically (a record of the transmission being available). Additionally, when notifying the Respondent of the complaint as required in Paragraph 4, the Provider shall provide specific notification as follows:

- i. sending Written Notice of the complaint to all postal-mail and facsimile addresses shown in the domain name's registration data in Registrar's Whois database for the registered domain-name holder, the technical contact, and the administrative contact and
- ii. sending the complaint in electronic form by e-mail to the e-mail addresses for those technical, administrative, and billing contacts. Annexes may be transmitted via email or via a web-based portal offered by the Provider.

b. Any communication to the Provider or the Panel shall be made in accordance with the Provider's Supplemental Rules.

c. All communications shall be made in the language prescribed in Paragraph 11.

d. Either Party may update its contact details by notifying the other Party, the Provider and the Registrar.

e. Except as otherwise provided in these Rules, or decided by a Panel, all communications provided for under these Rules shall be deemed to have been made:

- i. If delivered by facsimile transmission, on the date shown on the confirmation of transmission;
- ii. If by postal or courier service, on the date marked on the receipt; or
- iii. If via the Internet, including a Provider's web-based portal, on the date that the communication was transmitted, provided that the date of transmission is verifiable.

f. Except as otherwise provided in these Rules, all time periods calculated under these Rules shall begin to run on the earliest date that the communication is deemed to have been made in accordance with Paragraph 2(e).

g. Except as otherwise provided in these Rules, any communication by:

- i. A Panel to any Party shall be copied to the Provider and to the other Party;
- ii. The Provider, following the commencement of an administrative proceeding pursuant to Paragraph 4(c), to any Party shall be copied to the other Party; and
- iii. A Party shall be copied to the other Party, the Panel and the Provider, as the case may be.

h. It shall be the responsibility of the sender to retain records of the fact and circumstances of sending, which shall be available for inspection by affected parties and for reporting purposes. This includes the Provider in sending Written Notice to the Respondent by post and/or facsimile under Paragraph 2(a)(i).

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i. In the event that a Party sending a communication receives notification of non-delivery of the communication, that Party shall promptly notify the Provider of the circumstances of the notification.

### 3. The Complaint

a. Any person or entity may initiate an administrative proceeding by submitting a complaint in accordance with the Policy and these Rules to any Provider approved by DOC. (Due to capacity constraints or for other reasons, a Provider's ability to accept complaints may be suspended at times. In that event, the Provider shall refuse the submission. The person or entity may submit the complaint to another Provider.)

b. The complaint shall be submitted entirely in electronic form, in accordance with Paragraph 2(b).

c. The complaint shall:

i. Request that the complaint be submitted for decision in accordance with the Policy and Rules and describe why the domain name registration should be considered subject to the Policy;

ii. Provide the full name, postal and e-mail addresses, and the telephone and telefax numbers of the Complainant and of any representative authorized to act for the Complainant in the administrative proceeding;

iii. Specify a preferred method for communications directed to the Complainant in the administrative proceeding (including person to be contacted, medium, and address information) for each of (A) electronic-only material and (B) material including hard copy (where applicable);

iv. Designate whether Complainant elects to have the dispute decided by a single member or a three-member Panel and, in the event Complainant elects a three member Panel, provide the names and contact details of three candidates to serve as one of the Panelists (these candidates may be drawn from any DOC-approved Provider's list of panelists);

v. Provide the full name of the Respondent and, if different from the contact details available in the Whois database for the domain name, provide all information known to the Complainant regarding how to contact Respondent or any representative of Respondent, including contact information based on pre-complaint dealings;

vi. Specify the domain name(s) that is/are the subject of the complaint;

vii. Identify the Registrar(s) with whom the domain name(s) is/are registered at the time the complaint is filed;

viii. Specify the trademark(s) or service mark(s) on which the complaint is based and, for each mark, describe the goods or services, if any, with which the mark is used (the Complainant may also separately describe other goods and;

ix. Describe, in accordance with the Policy, the grounds on which the complaint is made including,

(1) The extent to which the domain name(s) is/are identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which the Complainant has rights;



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(2) Why the Respondent (domain name holder) should be considered as having no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the domain name(s) that is/are the subject of the complaint; and

(3) Why the domain name(s) should be considered as having been registered or used in bad faith. (The description should, for elements (2) and (3), discuss any aspects of Paragraphs 4(b) and 4(c) of the Policy that are applicable. The description shall comply with any word or page limit set forth in the Provider's Supplemental Rules.);

x. Specify, in accordance with the Policy, the remedies sought;

xi. Identify any other legal proceedings that have been commenced or terminated in connection with or relating to any of the domain name(s) that are the subject of the complaint;

xii. Identify the Mutual Jurisdiction to which the Complainant(s) will submit, with respect to any challenges to a decision in the administrative proceeding to transfer the domain name as follows:

"The Complainant hereby designates [identify precisely the court jurisdiction] as the Mutual Jurisdiction, for the purposes of challenges to a decision in the administrative proceeding to cancel or transfer the domain name."

xiii. Conclude with the following statement followed by the signature of the Complainant or its authorized representative:

"Complainant agrees that its claims and remedies concerning the registration of the domain name, the dispute, or the dispute's resolution shall be solely against the domain name holder and waives all such claims and remedies against (a) the dispute resolution provider and panelists, except in the case of deliberate wrongdoing, (b) the registrar, (c) the registry administrator, and (d) the Department of Commerce, as well as their directors, officers, employees, and agents."

"Complainant certifies that the information contained in this Complaint is to the best of Complainant's knowledge complete and accurate, that this Complaint is not being presented for any improper purpose, such as to harass, and that the assertions in this Complaint are warranted under these Rules and under applicable law, as it now exists or as it may be extended by a good-faith and reasonable argument"; and

xiv. Annex any documentary or other evidence and any trademark or service mark registration upon which the complaint relies, together with a schedule indexing such evidence.

c. The complaint may relate to more than one domain name, provided that the same domain name holder registers the domain names.

### 4. Notification of Complaint

a. The Provider shall, within one business day of receiving the complaint, notify the Registrar of the dispute and request a lock of the domain name(s) and current registrant information.

b. The Registrar shall provide the requested information, including a confirmation of the lock, within 2 business days.

c. The Provider shall review the complaint for formal compliance with the Policy and the Rules. If the complaint is found to be in compliance, the Provider shall notify it to the Respondent, in the manner

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prescribed by Paragraph 2(a). For the purposes of notifying the Complainant, the Provider shall not be required to use any contact details other than those available in the Whois database for the domain name(s) in dispute.

d. If the Provider finds the complaint to be formally deficient, it shall promptly notify the Complainant of the nature of the deficiencies identified. The Complainant shall have five (5) calendar days within which to correct any such deficiencies, after which the administrative proceeding will be deemed withdrawn without prejudice to submission of a different complaint by Complainant.

e. The date of commencement of the administrative proceeding shall be the date on which the Provider completes its responsibilities under Paragraph 2(a) in connection with forwarding the Complaint to the Respondent.

f. The Provider shall immediately notify the Complainant, the Respondent, the concerned Registrar(s), and DOC of the date of commencement of the administrative proceeding.

### 5. The Response

a. Within twenty (20) calendar days of the date of commencement of the administrative proceeding the Respondent shall submit a response to the Provider.

b. The response shall be submitted entirely in electronic form in accordance with Paragraph 2(b).

c. The response shall:

i. Specifically respond to the statements and allegations contained in the complaint and include any and all bases for the Respondent to retain registration and use of the disputed domain name;

ii. Provide the name, postal and e- mail addresses, and the telephone and telefax numbers of the Respondent and of any representative authorized to act for the Respondent in the administrative proceeding;

iii. Specify a preferred method for communications directed to the Respondent in the administrative proceeding (including person to be contacted, medium, and address information) for each of (A) electronic-only material and (B) material including hard copy (where applicable);

iv. If Complainant has elected a single-member panel in the Complaint (see Paragraph 3(b)(iv)), state whether Respondent elects instead to have the dispute decided by a three-member panel;

v. If either Complainant or Respondent elects a three-member Panel, provide the names and contact details of three candidates to serve as one of the Panelists (these candidates may be drawn from any DOC-approved Provider's list of panelists);

vi. Identify any other legal proceedings that have been commenced or terminated in connection with or relating to any of the domain name(s) that are the subject of the complaint;

vii. Conclude with the following statement followed by the signature of the Respondent or its authorized representative:

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“Respondent certifies that the information contained in this Response is to the best of Respondent’s knowledge complete and accurate, that this Response is not being presented for any improper purpose, such as to harass, and that the assertions in this Response are warranted under these Rules and under applicable law, as it now exists or as it may be extended by a good- faith and reasonable argument.”; and

viii. Annex any documentary or other evidence upon which the Respondent relies, together with a schedule indexing such documents.

d. If Complainant has elected to have the dispute decided by a single-member Panel and Respondent elects a three-member Panel, Respondent shall be required to pay one- half of the applicable fee for a three-member Panel as set forth in the Provider’s Supplemental Rules. This payment shall be made together with the submission of the response to the Provider. In the event that the required payment is not made, the dispute shall be decided by a single-member Panel.

e. At the request of the Respondent, the Provider may, in exceptional cases, extend the period of time for the filing of the response. The period may also be extended by written stipulation between the Parties, provided the Provider approves the stipulation.

f. If a Respondent does not submit a response, in the absence of exceptional circumstances, the Panel shall decide the dispute based upon the complaint.

### **6. Appointment of the Panel and Timing of Decision**

a. Each Provider shall maintain and publish a publicly available list of panelists and their qualifications.

b. If neither the Complainant nor the Respondent has elected a three-member Panel (Paragraphs 3(b)(iv) and 5(b)(iv)), the Provider shall appoint, within five (5) calendar days following receipt of the response by the Provider, or the lapse of the time period for the submission thereof, a single Panelist from its list of panelists. The fees for a single member Panel shall be paid entirely by the Complainant.

c. If either the Complainant or the Respondent elects to have the dispute decided by a three member Panel, the Provider shall appoint three Panelists in accordance with the procedures identified in Paragraph 6(e). The fees for a three- member Panel shall be paid in their entirety by the Complainant, except where the election for a three-member Panel was made by the Respondent, in which case the applicable fees shall be shared equally between the Parties.

d. Unless it has already elected a three- member Panel, the Complainant shall submit to the Provider, within five (5) calendar days of communication of a response in which the Respondent elects a three-member Panel, the names and contact details of three candidates to serve as one of the Panelists. These candidates may be drawn from any DOC-approved Provider’s list of panelists.

e. In the event that either the Complainant or the Respondent elects a three-member Panel, the Provider shall endeavor to appoint one Panelist from the list of candidates provided by each of the Complainant and the Respondent. In the event the Provider is unable within five (5) calendar days to secure the appointment of a Panelist on its customary terms from either Party’s list of candidates, the Provider shall make that appointment from its list of panelists. The third Panelist shall be appointed by the Provider from a list of five candidates submitted by the Provider to the Parties, the Provider’s

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selection from among the five being made in a manner that reasonably balances the preferences of both Parties, as they may specify to the Provider within five (5) calendar days of the Provider's submission of the five-candidate list to the Parties.

f. Once the entire Panel is appointed, the Provider shall notify the Parties of the Panelists appointed and the date by which, absent exceptional circumstances, the Panel shall forward its decision on the complaint to the Provider.

**7. Impartiality and Independence**—A Panelist shall be impartial and independent and shall have, before accepting appointment, disclosed to the Provider any circumstances giving rise to justifiable doubt as to the Panelist's impartiality or independence. If, at any stage during the administrative proceeding, new circumstances arise that could give rise to justifiable doubt as to the impartiality or independence of the Panelist, that Panelist shall promptly disclose such circumstances to the Provider. In such event, the Provider shall have the discretion to appoint a substitute Panelist.

**8. Communication Between Parties and the Panel**—No Party or anyone acting on its behalf may have any unilateral communication with the Panel.

**9. Transmission of the File to the Panel**—The Provider shall forward the case file as soon as the last Panelist is appointed in the case of a three-member Panel.

### 10. General Powers of the Panel

a. The Panel shall conduct the administrative proceeding in such manner as it considers appropriate in accordance with the Policy and these Rules.

b. In all cases, the Panel shall ensure that the Parties are treated with equality and that each Party is given a fair opportunity to present its case.

c. The Panel shall ensure that the administrative proceeding takes place with due expedition. It may, at the request of a Party or on its own motion, extend, in exceptional cases, a period of time fixed by these Rules or by the Panel.

d. The Panel shall determine the admissibility, relevance, materiality and weight of the evidence.

e. A Panel shall decide a request by a Party to consolidate multiple domain name disputes in accordance with the Policy and these Rules.

**11. Language of Proceedings**—All communications shall be made in English.

**12. Further Statements**—In addition to the complaint and the response, the Panel may request, in its sole discretion, further statements or documents from either of the Parties.

**13. In-Person Hearings**—There shall be no in-person hearings (including hearings by teleconference, videoconference, and web conference), unless the Panel determines, in its sole discretion and as an exceptional matter, that such a hearing is necessary for deciding the complaint.

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a. In the event that a Party, in the absence of exceptional circumstances, does not comply with any of the time periods established by these Rules or the Panel, the Panel shall proceed to a decision on the complaint.

b. If a Party, in the absence of exceptional circumstances, does not comply with any provision of, or requirement under, these Rules or any request from the Panel, the Panel shall draw such inferences there from as it considers appropriate.

### 15. Panel Decisions

a. A Panel shall decide a complaint on the basis of the statements and documents submitted and in accordance with the Policy, these Rules and any rules and principles of law that it deems applicable.

b. In the absence of exceptional circumstances, the Panel shall forward its decision on the complaint to the Provider within fourteen (14) days of its appointment pursuant to Paragraph 6.

c. In the case of a three-member Panel, the majority shall make the Panel's decision.

d. The Panel's decision shall be in writing, provide the reasons on which it is based, indicate the date on which it was rendered and identify the name(s) of the Panelist(s).

e. Panel decisions and dissenting opinions shall normally comply with the guidelines as to length set forth in the Provider's Supplemental Rules. Any dissenting opinion shall accompany the majority decision. If the Panel concludes that the dispute is not within the scope of Paragraph 4(a) of the Policy, it shall so state. If after considering the submissions the Panel finds that the complaint was brought in bad faith, for example in an attempt at Reverse Domain Name Hijacking or was brought primarily to harass the domain name holder, the Panel shall declare in its decision that the complaint was brought in bad faith and constitutes an abuse of the administrative proceeding.

### 16. Communication of Decision to Parties

a. Within three (3) calendar days after receiving the decision from the Panel, the Provider shall communicate the full text of the decision to each Party, the concerned Registrar(s), and DOC. The concerned Registrar(s) shall immediately communicate to each Party, the Provider, and DOC the date for the implementation of the decision in accordance with the Policy.

b. Except if the Panel determines otherwise (see Paragraph 4(j) of the Policy), the Provider shall publish the full decision and the date of its implementation on a publicly accessible web site. In any event, the portion of any decision determining a complaint to have been brought in bad faith (see Paragraph 15(e) of these Rules) shall be published.

### 17. Settlement or Other Grounds for Termination

a. If, before the Panel's decision, the Parties agree on a settlement, the Panel shall terminate the administrative proceeding.

b. If, before the Panel's decision is made, it becomes unnecessary or impossible to continue the administrative proceeding for any reason, the Panel shall terminate the administrative proceeding,

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unless a Party raises justifiable grounds for objection within a period of time to be determined by the Panel.

### 18. Effect of Court Proceedings

a. In the event of any legal proceedings initiated prior to or during an administrative proceeding in respect of a domain name dispute that is the subject of the complaint, the Panel shall have the discretion to decide whether to suspend or terminate the administrative proceeding, or to proceed to a decision.

b. In the event that a Party initiates any legal proceedings during the pendency of an administrative proceeding in respect of a domain name dispute that is the subject of the complaint, it shall promptly notify the Panel and the Provider. See Paragraph 8 above.

### 19. Fees

a. The Complainant shall pay to the Provider an initial fixed fee, in accordance with the Provider's Supplemental Rules, within the time and in the amount required. A Respondent electing under Paragraph 5(b)(iv) to have the dispute decided by a three-member Panel, rather than the single-member Panel elected by the Complainant, shall pay the Provider one-half the fixed fee for a three-member Panel. See Paragraph 5(c). In all other cases, the Complainant shall bear all of the Provider's fees, except as prescribed under Paragraph 19(d). Upon appointment of the Panel, the Provider shall refund the appropriate portion, if any, of the initial fee to the Complainant, as specified in the Provider's Supplemental Rules.

b. The Provider shall not take any action on a complaint until it has received from Complainant the initial fee in accordance with Paragraph 19(a).

c. If the Provider has not received the fee within ten (10) calendar days of receiving the complaint, the complaint shall be deemed withdrawn and the administrative proceeding terminated.

d. In exceptional circumstances, for example in the event an in-person hearing is held, the Provider shall request the Parties for the payment of additional fees, which shall be established in agreement with the Parties and the Panel.

**20. Exclusion of Liability**—Except in the case of deliberate wrongdoing, neither the Provider nor a Panelist shall be liable to a Party for any act or omission in connection with any administrative proceeding under the Policy and the Rules.

**21. Amendments**—The version of these Rules in effect at the time of the submission of the complaint to the Provider shall apply to the administrative proceeding commenced thereby. These Rules may not be amended without the express written approval of DOC.