

21 NCAC 58A .0117 ACCOUNTING FOR TRUST MONEY

(a) A broker shall create, maintain and retain records sufficient to identify the ownership of all funds belonging to others. Such records shall be sufficient to show proper deposit and disbursement of such funds into and from a trust or escrow account and to verify the accuracy and proper use of the trust or escrow account.

(b) A trust or escrow account shall satisfy the requirements of G.S. 93A-6(g) and shall be designated as a "Trust Account" or "Escrow Account." All bank statements, deposit tickets and checks drawn on said account shall bear the words "Trust Account" or "Escrow Account." A trust account shall provide for the full withdrawal of funds on demand without prior notice and without penalty or deduction to the funds.

(c) A broker shall create, maintain or retain, as required by Rule .0108 of this Section, the following records:

- (1) bank statements;
- (2) canceled checks and other evidence or memoranda of payments from the trust or escrow account, whether by transfer between accounts, wire payments, or payments by electronic means, that shall be referenced to the corresponding journal entry or check stub entries and to the corresponding sales transaction ledgers or for rental transactions, the corresponding property or owner ledgers. Checks and other evidence or memoranda of payments from the account shall identify the payee by name and shall bear a notation identifying the purpose of the disbursement. When a payment is used to disburse funds for more than one sales transaction, owner, or property, the check or other evidence or memoranda of payment shall bear a notation identifying each sales transaction, owner, or property for which disbursement is made, including the amount disbursed for each, and the corresponding sales transaction, property, or owner ledger entries. When necessary, the check notation may refer to the required information recorded on a supplemental disbursement worksheet that shall be cross-referenced to the corresponding check or payment. In lieu of retaining canceled checks, a broker may retain digitally imaged copies of the canceled checks or substitute checks provided that such images are legible reproductions of the front and back of such instruments with no smaller images than 1.1875 x 3.0 inches and provided that the broker's bank retains for a period of at least five years the original checks, "substitute checks" as described in 12 C.F.R. 229.51 or the capacity to provide substitute checks as described in 12 C.F.R. 229.51 and makes the original or substitute checks available to the broker and the Commission upon request. The description of "substitute checks" contained in 12 C.F.R. 229.51 is incorporated by referencing, including subsequent amendments and additions. The regulation may be accessed at www.gpo.gov at no charge.
- (3) deposit tickets or other evidence or memoranda of deposits or payments into the account, whether by transfer between accounts, wire payments, or payments by electronic means:
 - (A) for a sales transaction, the deposit ticket or other evidence or memoranda of deposits or payments into the account shall identify the purpose and remitter of the funds deposited, the property, the parties involved, and a reference to the corresponding sales transaction ledger;
 - (B) for a rental transaction, the deposit ticket or other evidence or memoranda of deposits or payments into the account shall identify the purpose and remitter of the funds deposited, the tenant, and the corresponding property or owner ledger;
 - (C) for deposits of funds belonging to or collected on behalf of a property owner association, the deposit ticket or other evidence or memoranda of deposits or payments into the account shall identify the property or property interest for which the payment is made, the property or interest owner, the remitter, and the purpose of the payment;
 - (D) when a single deposit ticket or payment is used to deposit funds collected for more than one sales transaction, property owner, or property, the required information may either be recorded on the ticket or other evidence or memoranda of deposits or payments into the account for each sales transaction, owner, or property, or it may refer to the same information recorded on a supplemental deposit worksheet that shall be cross-referenced to the corresponding deposit ticket;
- (4) a separate ledger for each sales transaction, for each property or owner of property managed by the broker and for company funds held in the trust account:
 - (A) the ledger for a sales transaction shall identify the property, the parties to the transaction, the amount, date, and purpose of the deposits and from whom received, the amount, date, check number, and purpose of disbursements and to whom paid, and the running balance of funds on deposit for each deposit and disbursement entry;

- (B) the ledger for a rental transaction shall identify the particular property or owner of property, the tenant, the amount, date, and purpose of the deposits and from whom received, the amount, date, check number, and purpose of disbursements and to whom paid, and the running balance of funds on deposit for each deposit and disbursement entry. Monies held as tenant security deposits in connection with rental transactions may be accounted for on a separate tenant security deposit ledger for each property or owner of property managed by the broker. For each security deposit, the tenant security deposit ledger shall identify the remitter, the date the deposit was paid, the amount, the tenant, landlord, and subject property as well as the check number, amount, date, payee, purpose and a running balance for each disbursement. When tenant security deposit monies are accounted for on a separate ledger as provided in this Rule, deposit tickets, canceled checks and supplemental worksheets shall reference the corresponding tenant security deposit ledger entries;
 - (C) a broker may maintain a maximum of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) in company funds in a trust account for the purpose of paying service charges incurred by the account. In the event that the services charges exceed one hundred dollars (\$100.00) monthly, the broker may deposit an amount each month sufficient to cover the service charges. A broker shall maintain a separate ledger for company funds held in the trust account identifying the date, amount and running balance for each deposit and disbursement;
 - (5) a general journal, check register or check stubs identifying in chronological order each bank deposit and disbursement of monies to and from the trust or escrow account, including the amount and date of each deposit and a reference to the corresponding deposit ticket and any supplemental deposit worksheet, and the amount, date, check number, and purpose of disbursements and to whom paid. The journal or check stubs shall also show a running balance for each entry into the account;
 - (6) a payment record for each property or interest for which funds are collected and deposited into a property owner association trust account as required by Rule .0118 of this Section. Payment record(s) shall identify the amount, date, remitter, and purpose of payments received, the amount and nature of the obligation for which payments are made, and the amount of any balance due or delinquency;
 - (7) copies of earnest money checks, due diligence fee checks, receipts for cash payments, contracts, and closing statements in sales transactions;
 - (8) copies of leases, security deposit checks, property management agreements, property management statements, and receipts for cash payments in leasing transactions;
 - (9) copies of covenants, bylaws, minutes, management agreements and periodic statements relating to the management of property owner associations;
 - (10) copies of invoices, bills, and contracts paid from the trust account; and
 - (11) copies of any documents not otherwise described in this Rule that are necessary to verify and explain record entries.
- (d) Records of all receipts and disbursements of trust or escrow monies shall be maintained in such a manner as to create an audit trail from deposit tickets and canceled checks to check stubs or journals and to the ledger sheets.
- (e) Brokers shall reconcile their trust or escrow accounts monthly. The trust account reconciliation shall be performed in the following manner as of a specific cutoff date selected by the broker:
- (1) a trial balance shall be prepared showing a list of the property or owner ledgers, their balances, and the total of all of the property or owner ledger balances as of the cutoff date;
 - (2) a bank statement shall be reconciled by deducting from the statement's ending balance the amount of any outstanding checks and then adding to the balance the amount of any deposits-in-transit as of the cutoff date; and
 - (3) the trial balance, reconciled bank statement balance, and the journal balance shall be compared as of the cutoff date. If the amounts on the trial balance, journal balance and reconciled bank balance do not agree, the broker shall investigate the reason for any variation between the balances and make the necessary corrections to bring the balances into agreement.
- A broker shall maintain and retain a worksheet for each monthly trust account reconciliation showing the balance of the journal or check stubs, the trial balance and the reconciled bank statement balance to be in agreement as of the cutoff date.
- (f) In addition to the records required by Paragraph (c) of this Rule, a broker acting as agent for the landlord of a residential property used for vacation rentals shall create and maintain either a subsidiary ledger sheet for each property or owner of such properties on which all funds collected and disbursed are identified in categories by purpose or an

accounts payable ledger for each owner or property and each vendor to whom trust monies are due. If a broker maintains a subsidiary ledger, the broker shall reconcile the subsidiary ledgers to the corresponding property or property owner ledger on a monthly basis. If a broker maintains an accounts payable ledger, the broker shall record on the ledger monies collected on behalf of the owner or property identifying the date of receipt of the trust monies, from whom the monies were received, rental dates, and the corresponding property or owner ledger entry including the amount to be disbursed for each and the purpose of the disbursement. The broker may also maintain an accounts payable ledger in the format described above for vacation rental tenant security deposit monies and vacation rental advance payments.

(g) Upon the written request of a client, a broker shall, no later than ten days after receipt of the request, furnish the client with copies of any records retained as required by Rule .0108 of this Section that pertain to the transaction to which the client was a party.

(h) All trust or escrow account records shall be made available for inspection by the Commission or its authorized representatives in accordance with Rule .0108 of this Section.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 93A-3(c); 93A-6;
Eff. April 1, 2013;
Amended Eff. July 1, 2014.*