

TITLE XXII
DISCLOSURE ACTIONS

RULE 220. GENERAL

(a) **Applicability:** The Rules of this Title XXII set forth the special provisions which apply to the three types of disclosure actions relating to written determinations by the Internal Revenue Service and their background file documents, as authorized by Code section 6110. They consist of (1) actions to restrain disclosure, (2) actions to obtain additional disclosure, and (3) actions to obtain disclosure of identity in the case of third party contacts. Except as otherwise provided in this Title, the other Rules of Practice and Procedure of the Court, to the extent pertinent, are applicable to such disclosure actions.

(b) **Definitions:** As used in the Rules in this Title—

(1) A “written determination” means a ruling, determination letter, or technical advice memorandum. See Code sec. 6110(b)(1).

(2) A “prior written determination” is a written determination issued pursuant to a request made before November 1, 1976.

(3) A “background file document” has the meaning provided in Code section 6110(b)(2).

(4) A “notice of intention to disclose” is the notice described in Code section 6110(f)(1).

(5) “Party” includes a petitioner, the respondent Commissioner of Internal Revenue, and any intervenor under Rule 225.

(6) A “disclosure action” is either an “additional disclosure action”, an “action to restrain disclosure”, or a “third party contact action”, as follows:

(A) An “additional disclosure action” is an action to obtain disclosure within Code section 6110(f)(4).

(B) An “action to restrain disclosure” is an action within Code section 6110(f)(3) or (h)(4) to prevent any part or all of a written determination, prior written determination, or background file document from being opened to public inspection.

(C) A “third party contact action” is an action to obtain disclosure of the identity of a person to whom a

written determination pertains in accordance with Code section 6110(d)(3).

(7) “Third party contact” means the person described in Code section 6110(d)(1) who has communicated with the Internal Revenue Service.

(c) Jurisdictional Requirements: The Court does not have jurisdiction of a disclosure action under this Title unless the following conditions are satisfied:

(1) In an additional disclosure action, the petitioner has exhausted all administrative remedies available within the Internal Revenue Service. See Code sec. 6110(f)(2)(A) and (4)(A).

(2) In an action to restrain disclosure—

(A) The Commissioner has issued a notice of intention to disclose or, in the case of a prior written determination, the Commissioner has issued public notice in the Federal Register that the determination is to be opened to public inspection.

(B) In the case of a written determination, the petition is filed with the Court within 60 days after mailing by the Commissioner of a notice of intention to disclose, or, in the case of a prior written determination, the petition is filed with the Court within 75 days after the date of publication of the notice in the Federal Register.

(C) The petitioner has exhausted all administrative remedies available within the Internal Revenue Service. See Code sec. 6110(f)(2)(B) and (3)(A)(iii).

(3) In a third party contact action—

(A) The Commissioner was required to make a notation on the written determination in accordance with Code section 6110(d)(1).

(B) A petition is filed within 36 months after the first date on which the written determination is open to public inspection.

(d) Form and Style of Papers: All papers filed in a disclosure action shall be prepared in the form and style set forth in Rule 23, except that whenever any party joins or intervenes in the action, then thereafter, in addition to the number of copies required to be filed under such Rule, an additional copy shall be filed for each party who joins or intervenes in the action. In the case of anonymous parties, see Rule 227.

**RULE 221. COMMENCEMENT OF DISCLOSURE
ACTION**

(a) Commencement of Action: A disclosure action shall be commenced by filing a petition with the Court. See Rule 22, relating to the place and manner of filing the petition, and Rule 32, relating to the form of pleadings.

(b) Content of Petition: Every petition shall be entitled “Petition for Additional Disclosure” or “Petition To Restrain Disclosure” or “Petition To Disclose Identity”. Subject to the provisions of Rule 227, dealing with anonymity, each petition shall contain the petitioner’s name and address, an appropriate prayer for relief, and the signature, mailing address, and telephone number of the petitioner or the petitioner’s counsel, as well as counsel’s Tax Court bar number. In addition, each petition shall contain the allegations described in paragraph (c), (d), or (e) of this Rule.

(c) Petition in Additional Disclosure Action: The petition in an additional disclosure action shall contain:

(1) A brief description (including any identifying number or symbol) of the written determination, prior written determination, or background file document, as to which the petitioner seeks additional disclosure. A copy of any such determination or document, as it is then available to the public, shall be appended.

(2) The date of the petitioner’s request to the Internal Revenue Service for additional disclosure, with a copy of such request appended.

(3) A statement of the Commissioner’s disposition of the request, with a copy of the disposition appended.

(4) A statement that the petitioner has exhausted all administrative remedies available within the Internal Revenue Service.

(5) In separate lettered subparagraphs, a clear and concise statement identifying each portion of the written determination, prior written determination, or background file document as to which the petitioner seeks additional disclosure together with any facts and reasons to support disclosure. See Rule 229 with respect to the burden of proof in an additional disclosure action.

(d) Petition in Action To Restrain Disclosure: The petition in an action to restrain disclosure shall contain:

(1) A statement that the petitioner is (A) a person to whom the written determination pertains, or (B) a successor in interest, executor, or other person authorized by law to act for or on behalf of such person, or (C) a person who has a direct interest in maintaining the confidentiality of the written determination or background file document or portion thereof, or (D) in the case of a prior written determination, the person who received such prior written determination.

(2) A statement that the Commissioner has issued a notice of intention to disclose with respect to a written determination or a background file document, stating the date of mailing of the notice of intention to disclose and appending a copy of it to the petition, or, in the case of a prior written determination, a statement that the Commissioner has issued public notice in the Federal Register that the determination is to be opened to public inspection, and stating the date and citation of such publication in the Federal Register.

(3) A brief description (including any identifying number or symbol) of the written determination, prior written determination, or background file document, as to which the petitioner seeks to restrain disclosure.

(4) The date of the petitioner's request to the Internal Revenue Service to refrain from disclosure, with a copy of such request appended.

(5) A statement of the Commissioner's disposition of the request, with a copy of such disposition appended.

(6) A statement that the petitioner has exhausted all administrative remedies available within the Internal Revenue Service.

(7) In separate lettered subparagraphs, a clear and concise statement identifying each portion of the written determination, prior written determination, or background file document as to which the petitioner seeks to restrain disclosure, together with any facts and reasons to support the petitioner's position. See Rule 229 with respect to the burden of proof in an action to restrain disclosure.

(e) Petition in Third Party Contact Action: The petition in a third party contact action shall contain:

(1) A brief description (including any identifying number or symbol) of the written determination to which the

action pertains. There shall be appended a copy of such determination, and the background file document (if any) reflecting the third party contact, as then available to the public.

(2) The date of the first day that the written determination was open to public inspection.

(3) A statement of the disclosure sought by the petitioner.

(4) A clear and concise statement of the impropriety alleged to have occurred or the undue influence alleged to have been exercised with respect to the written determination or on behalf of the person whose identity is sought, and the public interest supporting any other disclosure. See Rule 229 with respect to the burden of proof in a third party contact action.

(f) Service: For the provisions relating to service of the petition and other papers, see Rule 21.

(g) Anonymity: With respect to anonymous pleading, see Rule 227.

RULE 222. DESIGNATION OF PLACE OF HEARING

At the time of filing a petition in a disclosure action, a designation of a place of hearing shall be filed in accordance with Rule 140. In addition, the petitioner shall include the date on which the petitioner believes the action will be ready for submission to the Court and the petitioner's estimate of the time required therefor. The Commissioner shall, at the time the answer is filed, also set forth in a separate statement the date on which the Commissioner expects the action will be ready for submission to the Court and an estimate of the time required therefor. An intervenor shall likewise furnish such information to the Court in a separate statement filed with the intervenor's first pleading in the case. After the action is at issue (see Rule 224), it will ordinarily, without any further request by the Court for information as to readiness for submission, be placed on a calendar for submission to the Court. See also Rule 229.

RULE 223. OTHER PLEADINGS

(a) Answer: (1) *Time To Answer or Move:* The Commissioner shall have 30 days from the date of service of the

petition within which to file an answer or move with respect to the petition, or, in an action for additional disclosure, to file an election not to defend pursuant to Code section 6110(f)(4)(B), in which event the Commissioner shall be relieved of the obligation of filing an answer or any subsequent pleading. With respect to intervention when the Commissioner elects not to defend, see Rule 225.

(2) *Form and Content:* The answer shall be drawn so that it will advise the petitioner and the Court fully of the nature of the defense. It shall contain a specific admission or denial of each material allegation in the petition. If the Commissioner shall be without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of an allegation, then the Commissioner shall so state, and such statement shall have the effect of a denial. If the Commissioner intends to qualify or to deny only a part of an allegation, then the Commissioner shall specify so much of it as is true and shall qualify or deny only the remainder. In addition, the answer shall contain a clear and concise statement of every ground, together with the facts in support thereof on which the Commissioner relies and has the burden of proof. Paragraphs of the answer shall be designated to correspond to those of the petition to which they relate.

(3) *Effect of Answer:* Every material allegation set out in the petition and not expressly admitted or denied in the answer shall be deemed to be admitted.

(b) Reply: Each petitioner may file a reply or move with respect to the answer within 20 days from the date of service of the answer. Where a reply is filed, every affirmative allegation set out in the answer and not expressly admitted or denied in the reply, shall be deemed to be admitted. Where a reply is not filed, the affirmative allegations in the answer will be deemed denied. Any new material contained in the reply shall be deemed denied.

RULE 224. JOINDER OF ISSUE

A disclosure action shall be deemed at issue upon the filing of the reply or at the expiration of the time for doing so.

RULE 225. INTERVENTION

(a) Who May Intervene: The persons to whom notice is required to be given by the Commissioner pursuant to Code section 6110(d)(3), (f)(3)(B), or (f)(4)(B) shall have the right to intervene in the action as to which the notice was given. The Commissioner shall append a copy of the petition to any such notice.

(b) Procedure: If a person desires to intervene, then such person shall file an initial pleading, which shall be a petition in intervention or an answer in intervention, not later than 30 days after mailing by the Commissioner of the notice referred to in paragraph (a) of this Rule. In an action for additional disclosure where the Commissioner elects not to defend pursuant to Code section 6110(f)(4)(B), the Commissioner shall mail to each person, to whom the Commissioner has mailed the notice referred to in paragraph (a) of this Rule, a notice of the Commissioner's election not to defend, and any such person desiring to intervene shall have 30 days after such mailing within which to file a petition in intervention or an answer in intervention. The initial pleading of an intervenor, whether a petition or answer, shall show the basis for the right to intervene and shall include, to the extent appropriate, the same elements as are required for a petition under Rule 221 or an answer under Rule 223. An intervenor shall otherwise be subject to the same rules of procedure as apply to other parties. With respect to anonymous intervention, see Rule 227.

RULE 226. JOINDER OF PARTIES

The joinder of parties in a disclosure action shall be subject to the following requirements:

(a) Commencement of Action: Any person who meets the requirements for commencing such an action may join with any other such person in filing a petition with respect to the same written determination, prior written determination, or background file document. But see Code sec. 6110(f)(3)(B), (h)(4).

(b) Consolidation of Actions: If more than one petition is filed with respect to the same written determination, prior written determination, or background file document,

then see Rule 141 with respect to the consolidation of the actions.

RULE 227. ANONYMOUS PARTIES

(a) **Petitioners:** A petitioner in an action to restrain disclosure relating to either a written determination or a prior written determination may file the petition anonymously, if appropriate.

(b) **Intervenors:** An intervenor may proceed anonymously, if appropriate, in any disclosure action.

(c) **Procedure:** A party who proceeds pursuant to this Rule shall be designated as “Anonymous”. In all cases where a party proceeds anonymously pursuant to paragraph (a) or (b) of this Rule, such party shall set forth in a separate paper such party’s name and address and the reasons why such party seeks to proceed anonymously. Such separate paper shall be filed with such party’s initial pleading. Anonymity, where appropriate, shall be preserved to the maximum extent consistent with the proper conduct of the action. See Rule 13(d), relating to contempt of Court. With respect to confidential treatment of pleadings and other papers, see Rule 228.

RULE 228. CONFIDENTIALITY

(a) **Confidentiality:** The petition and all other papers submitted to the Court in any disclosure action shall be placed and retained by the Court in a confidential file and shall not be open to inspection unless otherwise permitted by the Court.

(b) **Publicity of Court Proceedings:** On order of the Court portions or all of the hearings, testimony, evidence, and reports in any action under this Title may be closed to the public or to inspection by the public, to the extent deemed by the Court to be appropriate in order to preserve the anonymity, privacy, or confidentiality of any person involved in an action within Code section 6110. See Code sec. 6110(f)(6).

RULE 229. BURDEN OF PROOF

The burden of proof shall be upon the petitioner as to the jurisdictional requirements described in Rule 220(c). As to other matters, the burden of proof shall be determined consistently with Rule 142(a), subject to the following:

(a) In an action for additional disclosure, the burden of proof as to the issue of whether disclosure should be made shall be on the Commissioner and on any other person seeking to deny disclosure. See Code sec. 6110(f)(4)(A).

(b) In an action to restrain disclosure, the burden of proof as to the issue of whether disclosure should be made shall be upon the petitioner.

(c) In a third party contact action, the burden of proof shall be on the petitioner to establish that one could reasonably conclude that an impropriety occurred or undue influence was exercised with respect to the written determination by or on behalf of the person whose identity is sought.

RULE 229A. PROCEDURE IN ACTIONS HEARD BY A SPECIAL TRIAL JUDGE OF THE COURT

(a) **Where Special Trial Judge Is To Make the Decision:** If a disclosure action is assigned to a Special Trial Judge who is authorized in the order of assignment to make the decision, then the opinion and proposed decision of the Special Trial Judge shall be submitted to and approved by the Chief Judge, or by another Judge designated by the Chief Judge for that purpose, prior to service of the opinion and decision upon the parties.

(b) **Where Special Trial Judge Is Not To Make the Decision:** If a disclosure action is assigned to a Special Trial Judge who is not authorized in the order of assignment to make the decision, then the procedure provided in Rule 183 shall be followed.