In 2018, Regulation CC modified check return requirements including: a new liability for not accepting Electronic Returned Checks, as well as changes to expeditious return deadlines, notice of non-payment & notice in lieu.

Reg CC (229.33(a)): Depositary banks that do not accept electronic returns by “commercially reasonable means” may not hold a paying/returning bank liable for failure to return a check expeditiously. This approach is intended to encourage all banks to accept electronic returns. The condition does not require a depositary bank to have a direct return arrangement but does place the burden of establishing that the arrangement is commercially reasonable on the depositary bank.

Reg CC (229.31(b)) moved the expeditious return deadline up two hours from 4pm to 2pm. This requires all checks to be returned such that they will “normally be received” by the depositary bank no later than 2pm (depositary bank local time) on the second business day following banking day on which the check was presented to the paying bank. Reg CC commentary states that the paying bank may rely on the returning bank’s return deadlines and availability schedules to determine the “normally” standard, unless the paying bank has reason to believe the schedule does not reflect actual return timeframes.

Reg CC (229.31(c)) imposes 2pm deadline (depositary bank local time) for notice of non-payment (NONP) – which syncs to the return deadline change. NONP threshold increased to $5,000 – increasing from previous threshold of $2,500.

There are changes to the content requirements for the NONP and a new exception for the paying bank from the notice requirement if the depositary bank is unidentifiable. The paying bank must provide the information contained in the MICR line in the NONP as well as certain other information (e.g., payee name) to the extent available to the paying bank. (See 229.31(c)(2)).

Reg CC (229.31(f)) if a check is unavailable for return, the paying bank may send in its place a copy of the front and back of the check, or, if no such copy is available, a written notice of nonpayment (NIL) containing information specified in 229.31(c).