

Registrar Transfer Dispute Resolution Policy

NOTE: On 26 January 2020, the ICANN Board passed a resolution to defer contractual compliance enforcement of the Gaining Registrar's requirement to obtain express authorization of an inter-registrar transfer from the Transfer Contact via a Standardized Form of Authorization (FOA). ICANN Contractual Compliance has deferred and will continue to defer enforcement of Section I(A)(2.1) of the Transfer Policy until the matter is settled in the GNSO Council's Transfer Policy Review, which is currently ongoing. Accordingly, the absence of a Standardized Form of Authorization (FOA) from the Gaining Registrar shall not result in a decision of transfer reversal under Section 3.2.4(ii) of the Transfer Dispute Resolution Policy.

Updated 21 February 2024 to reflect changes required to implement the Registration Data Policy. Contracted parties may implement this updated Policy beginning on 21 August 2024 and must implement no later than 21 August 2025.

In any dispute relating to Inter-Registrar domain name transfers, Registrars are encouraged to first of all attempt to resolve the problem among the Registrars involved in the dispute. In cases where this is unsuccessful and where a registrar elects to file a dispute, the following procedures apply. It is very important for Registrars to familiarize themselves with the Transfer Dispute Resolution Policy (TDRP) as described in this document before filing a dispute. Transfer dispute resolution fees can be substantial. It is critical that Registrars fully understand the fees that must be paid, which party is responsible for paying those fees and when and how those fees must be paid.

This version of the TDRP and corresponding procedures will apply to all Complaints filed on or after 1 December 2016.

1. Definitions

1.1 Complainant

A party bringing a Complaint under the TDRP. A Complainant may be either a Losing Registrar (in the case of an alleged fraudulent transfer) or a Gaining Registrar (in the case of an improper NACK) under this Policy.

1.2 Complaint

The initial document in a TDRP proceeding that provides the allegations and

claims brought by the Complainant against the Respondent.

1.3 Dispute Resolution Panel

The Dispute Resolution Panel shall mean an administrative panel appointed by a Dispute Resolution Provider ("Provider") to decide a Complaint concerning a dispute under the TDRP.

1.4 Dispute Resolution Provider

The Dispute Resolution Provider must be an independent and neutral third party that is neither associated nor affiliated with the Respondent, Complainant, or the Registry Operator under which the disputed domain name is registered. ICANN shall have the authority to accredit one or more independent and neutral Dispute Resolution Providers according to criteria developed in accordance with the TDRP.

1.5 Form of Authorization (FOA)

The standardized form of consent that the Gaining Registrar and Losing Registrar ~~may be are~~ required¹ to use to obtain authorization from the Registrant ~~or Administrative Contact~~ in order to properly process the transfer of domain name sponsorship from one Registrar to another.

1.6 Gaining Registrar

The registrar who seeks to become the Registrar of Record by submitting a transfer request.

1.7 Invalid Transfer

A transfer that is found non-compliant with the Transfer Policy.

1.8 Losing Registrar

The registrar who was the Registrar of Record at the time a request for the transfer of domain is submitted.

1.9 NACK

A denial of a request for transfer by the Losing Registrar.

¹ See Section I.A. 2.1.1 of the Transfer Policy: Until such time as a secure method for transferring data is required by ICANN to be offered, if the Gaining Registrar is unable to gain access to then-current Registration Data for a domain name subject of a transfer, the Gaining Registrar is not required to obtain a Form of Authorization labeled "Initial Authorization for Registrar Transfer" from the Registered Name Holder.

1.10 Registrant

The individual, organization, or entity that holds the right to use a specific domain name for a specified period of time.

1.11 Registrar of Record

The Registrar who sponsors a domain name at the registry.

1.12 Registry (Registry Operator)

The organization authorized by ICANN to provide registration services for a given TLD to ICANN-accredited Registrars.

1.13 Respondent

A party against whom a Complaint is brought. Under the TDRP, the Respondent can be a Losing Registrar in the case of an improper (NACK), a Gaining Registrar in the case of an alleged fraudulent transfer, or the Registrar of Record.

1.14 Supplemental Rules

The Supplemental Rules shall mean those rules adopted by the Provider administering a proceeding to supplement the TDRP. Supplemental Rules shall be consistent with the TDRP and shall cover topics such as fees, word and page limits and guidelines, the means for communicating with the Provider, and the form of cover sheets.

1.15 Transfer Policy

The ICANN Consensus Policy governing the transfer of sponsorship of registrations between registrars as referenced in the Registry-Registrar Agreement executed between a Registrar and the Registry, as well as the Registrar Accreditation Agreement which is executed between ICANN and all ICANN-accredited registrars.

2. Dispute Resolution Process

2.1 Filing a Complaint

The Complainant may file a Complaint with a Dispute Resolution Provider. The decision of the Dispute Resolution Panel is final, except as it may be appealed to a court of competent jurisdiction in accordance with Section 3.4 of the TDRP.

2.2 Statute of Limitations

A dispute must be filed no later than twelve (12) months after the alleged violation of the Transfer Policy. In the case where a Losing Registrar alleges that

a transfer was in violation of the Transfer Policy, the date the transfer was completed shall be deemed the date on which the "alleged violation" took place. In the case where a Gaining Registrar alleges that a transfer should have taken place, the date on which the NACK (as defined below) was received by the Registry, shall be deemed the date on which the "alleged violation" took place.

3. Dispute Procedures

3.1 Registrar files a Request for Enforcement with a Dispute Resolution Provider

3.1.1 Either the Gaining Registrar or Losing Registrar may submit a Complaint. This must be done in accordance with the Supplemental Rules adopted by the applicable Dispute Resolution Provider.

3.1.2 The Complaint shall be submitted to the Dispute Resolution Provider and to the Respondent in electronic form and shall:

- i. Request that the Complaint be submitted for decision in accordance with the TDRP and the applicable Supplemental Rules;
- ii. Provide the name, postal and e-mail addresses, and the telephone and fax numbers of the Complainant and those representatives authorized by the Complainant to act on behalf of the Complainant in the administrative proceeding;
- iii. Provide the name of the Respondent and all information (including any postal and e-mail addresses and telephone and fax numbers) known to Complainant regarding how to contact Respondent or any representative of Respondent, including contact information based on pre-complaint dealings;
- iv. Specify the domain name(s) that is/are the subject of the Complaint;
- v. Specify the incident(s) that gave rise to the dispute;
- vi. Describe, in accordance with the Transfer Policy, the grounds on which the Complaint is based;
- vii. State the specific remedy being sought (either approval or denial of the transfer);
- viii. 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;
- ix. Certify that a copy of the Complaint, together with the cover sheet as prescribed by the Provider's Supplemental Rules, has been sent or transmitted to the Respondent; and

- x. Conclude with the following statement followed by the signature of the Complainant or its authorized representative:
"<insert name of 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 Respondent and waives all such claims and remedies against the Dispute Resolution Provider as well as its directors, officers, employees, and agents, except in the case of deliberate wrongdoing or gross negligence."
"<insert name of 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 the TDRP and under applicable law, as it now exists or as it may be extended by a good-faith and reasonable argument."

3.1.3 The Complaint may relate to more than one domain name, provided that the domain names involve the same Complainant and Respondent and that the claims arise out of the same or similar factual circumstances.

3.1.4 The Complaint shall annex the following documentary evidence (as applicable and available) in electronic form if possible, together with a schedule indexing such evidence:

- i. For the Gaining Registrar:
- a. Completed Form of Authorization ("FOA"), where applicable²
 - b. Copy of the Registration Data Directory Service (hereinafter "RDDS") Whois output for the date transfer was initiated, which was used to identify the authorized Registered Name Holder, where applicable³~~Transfer Contacts~~
 - c. Copy of evidence of identity used
 - d. Copy of a bilateral agreement, final determination of a dispute resolution body or court order in cases when the Registered Name Holder~~Registrant of Record~~ is being changed simultaneously with a Registrar Transfer
 - e. Copies of all communications made to the Losing Registrar with regard to the applicable transfer request along with any responses from the Losing Registrar

² See Section I.A. 2.1.2.1 of the Transfer Policy.

³ See Section I.A. 2.1.1 of the Transfer Policy.

ii. For the Losing Registrar:

- a. Completed FOA from the Losing Registrar
- b. Copy of the RDDS Whois-output, including if applicable, the value(s) of any Registration Data redacted pursuant to the Registration Data Policy, for the date the transfer was initiated
- c. Relevant history of RDDS Whois modifications made to the applicable registration, including if applicable, modifications to the value(s) of any Registration Data redacted pursuant to the Registration Data Policy
- d. Evidence of one of the following if a transfer was denied:
 - fraud;
 - Pending UDRP proceeding that the Registrar has been informed of;
 - URS proceeding or URS Suspension that the Registrar has been informed of;
 - Pending dispute under the Transfer Dispute Resolution Policy;
 - court order by a court of competent jurisdiction;
 - Registered Name Holder Registrant or administrative contact-identity dispute in accordance with Section 4 of the Transfer Policy [Registrar of Record Requirements]
 - applicable payment dispute along with evidence that the registration was put on HOLD status;
 - express written objection from the Registered Name Holder ~~or Administrative Contact~~;
 - LOCK status along with proof of a reasonable means for the Registered Name Holder registrant to remove LOCK status as per Section __ of Exhibit __ to this Agreement;
 - The Registrar imposed a 60-day inter-registrar transfer lock following a Change of Registrant, and the Registered Name Holder did not opt out of the 60-day inter-registrar transfer lock prior to the Change of Registrant request.
 - domain name within 60 days of initial registration; or

- domain name within 60 days of a prior transfer.
- e. Copies of all communications made to the Gaining Registrar with regard to the applicable transfer request along with any responses from the Gaining Registrar.

3.2 The Respondent shall have seven (7) calendar days from receipt of the Complaint to prepare a Response to the Complaint ("Response").

3.2.1 The Response shall be submitted in electronic form to both the Dispute Resolution Provider and Complainant and shall:

- i. Respond specifically to the statements and allegations contained in the Complaint (This portion of the response shall comply with any word or page limit set forth in the Dispute Resolution Provider's Supplemental Rules.);
- ii. Provide the name, postal and e-mail addresses, and the telephone and fax numbers of the Respondent (non-filing Registrar);
- iii. 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;
- iv. State that a copy of the Response has been sent or transmitted to the Complainant;
- v. Conclude with the following statement followed by the signature of the Respondent or its authorized representative:
"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
- vi. Annex any documentary or other evidence upon which the Respondent relies, together with a schedule indexing such documents.

3.2.2 At the request of the Respondent, the Dispute Resolution Provider may, in exceptional cases, extend the period of time for the filing of the response, but in no case may the extension be more than an additional five (5) calendar days. The period may also be extended by written stipulation between the Parties, provided the stipulation is approved by the Dispute Resolution Provider.

3.2.3 If a Respondent does not submit a response, in the absence of exceptional circumstances, the Dispute Resolution Panel appointed by the Dispute

Resolution Provider shall decide the dispute based upon the Complaint.

3.2.4 The Dispute Resolution Panel appointed by the Dispute Resolution Provider must review all applicable documentation and compare registrant/contact data with that contained within the authoritative RDDS Whois database and reach a conclusion not later than thirty (30) days after receipt of Response from the Respondent.

- i. If the registrant/contact data does not match the data listed in authoritative RDDSWhois, or if the registrant/contact data is redacted in the authoritative RDDS pursuant to the Registration Data Policy, the Dispute Resolution Panel should contact each Registrar and require additional documentation.
- ii. If the registrant/contact data is published in the authoritative RDDS and the Gaining Registrar is unable to provide a complete FOA with data matching that contained within the authoritative RDDSWhois database at the time of the transfer request, where required, then the Dispute Resolution Panel shall find that the transfer should be reversed. In the case of a thick Registry, if the Registrar of Record's RDDS Whois is not accessible or invalid, the applicable Registry Operator's RDDS Whois should be used. In the case of a thin Registry, if the Registrar of Record's RDDS Whois is not accessible or is invalid, the Dispute Resolution Provider may place the dispute on hold until such time as the problem is resolved.
- iii. In the case where a Losing Registrar NACKs a transfer, the Losing Registrar must provide evidence of one of the factors for which it is allowed to NACK as set forth in Section 3.1.4(xii)(d) of the TDRP. If the Losing Registrar cannot provide evidence that demonstrates any of the factors, and the Gaining Registrar provides to the Dispute Resolution Provider a complete FOA with data matching that contained within the authoritative RDDSWhois database at the time of the transfer request, where required, pursuant to Section I.A.2 of the Transfer Policy,⁴ then the transfer should be approved.
- iv. The Dispute Resolution Panel may not issue a finding of "no decision." It must weigh the applicable evidence in light of the Transfer Policy and determine, based on a preponderance of the evidence, which Registrar should prevail in the dispute and what resolution to the Complaint will appropriately redress the issues set forth in the Complaint.
- v. Resolution options for the Dispute Resolution Panel are limited to the following:

⁴ See Section I.A.2.1.1 of the Transfer Policy

- a. Approve Transfer
 - b. Deny the Transfer (This could include ordering the domain name be returned to the Losing Registrar in cases where a Transfer has already occurred.)
- vi. Transfers from a Gaining Registrar to a third registrar, and all other subsequent transfers, are invalid if the Gaining Registrar acquired sponsorship of the domain name(s) at issue through an Invalid Transfer, as determined through the dispute resolution process set forth in this Transfer Dispute Resolution Policy.
 - vii. In the event the Dispute Resolution Panel determines that an Invalid Transfer occurred, the domain shall be transferred back to the registrar that was Registrar of Record immediately prior to the Invalid Transfer.

3.3 Fees for Dispute Resolution Service

3.3.1 The applicable Dispute Resolution Provider shall determine the applicable filing fee ("Filing Fees"). The specific fees along with the terms and conditions governing the actual payment of such fees shall be included in the Dispute Resolution Provider's Supplemental Rules.

3.3.2 In the event that the Complainant does not prevail in a dispute, the Filing Fees shall be retained by the Dispute Resolution Provider.

3.3.3 In the event that the Complainant prevails in a dispute, the Respondent, must submit to the Dispute Resolution Provider, the Filing Fees within fourteen (14) calendar days after such decision. In such an event, the Dispute Resolution Provider shall refund to the Complainant, whichever applicable, the Filing Fees, no later than fourteen (14) calendar days after it receives the Filing Fees from the Respondent. Such fees must be paid regardless of whether a court proceeding is commenced in accordance with Section 3.4 below. Failure to pay Filing Fees to the Dispute Resolution Provider may result in the loss of accreditation by ICANN.

3.4 Availability of Court Proceedings

The procedures set forth above shall not prevent a Registrar from submitting a dispute to a court of competent jurisdiction for independent resolution before such administrative proceeding is commenced or after such proceeding is concluded. If a Dispute Resolution Panel decides a domain name registration should be transferred (either to the Gaining Registrar, or alternatively, back from the Gaining Registrar to the Losing Registrar), such Registrar will wait fourteen (14) calendar days after it is informed of the decision before implementing that decision. The Registry will then implement the decision unless it has received from either of the parties to the dispute during that fourteen (14) calendar day

period official documentation (such as a copy of a complaint, file-stamped by the clerk of the court) that a lawsuit has commenced with respect to the impacted domain name(s). If such documentation is received by the Registry, as applicable, within the fourteen (14) calendar day period, the decision will not be implemented until (i) evidence is presented that the parties have resolved such dispute; (ii) evidence is presented that the lawsuit has been dismissed or withdrawn; or (iii) a copy of an order from such court dismissing the lawsuit or ordering certain actions with respect to the domain name.

3.5 Decision Publication

3.5.1. The relevant Dispute Resolution Provider shall publish any decision made with respect to a transfer dispute initiated under the TDRP. All decisions under this Policy will be published in full over the Internet except when the Panel, convened by the Dispute Resolution Provider, in an exceptional case, determines to redact portions of its decision. In any event, the portion of any decision determining a complaint to have been brought in bad faith shall be published.

3.5.2. Decision reports shall include, at a minimum:

- i. The domain name under dispute;
- ii. The names of parties involved in the dispute;
- iii. The full decision of the case;
- iv. The date of the implementation of the decision.

3.5.3 If the Dispute Resolution Provider believes a decision should not be published, the Dispute Resolution Provider should confer with ICANN and publish the decision if so directed.

3.5.4. Publication does not apply to TDRP Complaints filed prior to 1 December 2016.