

within the designated area unless authorized by the Captain of the Port Charleston (COTP) or a designated representative.

**DATES:** The regulation in 33 CFR 100.701, Table to § 100.701, Item No. (g)(6) will be enforced from 4:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. on December 14, 2019.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** If you have questions about this notice of enforcement, call or email LT Chad Ray, Sector Charleston Office of Waterways Management, Coast Guard; telephone (843) 740-3184, email *Chad.L.Ray@uscg.mil*.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Coast Guard will enforce the special local regulation in 33 CFR 100.701, Item No. (g)(6), for the Charleston Harbor Christmas Parade of Boats from 4:00 p.m. through 8:30 p.m. on December 14, 2019. This action is being taken to provide for the safety of life on navigable waterways during this event. Our regulation for marine events within the Seventh Coast Guard District § 100.701, Item No. (g)(6), specifies the location of the regulated area for the Charleston Harbor Christmas Parade of Boats, which encompasses a portion of the waterways during the parade transit from Charleston Harbor Anchorage A through Bennis Reach, Horse Reach, Hog Island Reach, Town Creek Lower Reach, Ashley River, and finishing at City Marina. During the enforcement periods, as reflected in § 100.701(c)(1), if you are the operator of a vessel in the regulated area you must comply with directions from the Patrol Commander or any Official Patrol displaying a Coast Guard ensign.

In addition to this notice of enforcement in the **Federal Register**, the Coast Guard plans to provide notification of this enforcement period via the Local Notice to Mariners, Broadcast Notice to Mariners, and on-scene designated representatives.

Dated: December 9, 2019.

**J.W. Reed,**

*Captain, U.S. Coast Guard, Captain of the Port Charleston.*

[FR Doc. 2019-26822 Filed 12-12-19; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 9110-04-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### Patent and Trademark Office

#### 37 CFR Part 2

[Docket No. PTO-T-2017-0004]

RIN 0651-AD15

#### Changes to the Trademark Rules of Practice To Mandate Electronic Filing; Correction

**AGENCY:** Patent and Trademark Office, Commerce.

**ACTION:** Final rule; correction.

**SUMMARY:** The United States Patent and Trademark Office published in the **Federal Register** on July 31, 2019 (delayed on October 2, 2019), a final rule amending its regulations to mandate electronic filing of trademark applications and all submissions associated with trademark applications and registrations, and to require the designation of an email address for receiving USPTO correspondence, with limited exceptions. This rulemaking clarifies the mandatory electronic filing regulation addressing the requirements for receiving a filing date, by amending it to remove the word “domicile.” This rulemaking also clarifies the mandatory electronic filing regulation addressing the requirements for a TEAS Plus application.

**DATES:** This correction is effective on December 21, 2019.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Catherine Cain, Office of the Deputy Commissioner for Trademark Examination Policy, *TMFRNotices@uspto.gov*, (571) 272-8946.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On July 31, 2019 (84 FR 37081), the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) published in the **Federal Register** a final rule amending the Rules of Practice in Trademark Cases and the Rules of Practice in Filings Pursuant to the Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks to mandate electronic filing of trademark applications based on section 1 and/or section 44 of the Trademark Act (Act), 15 U.S.C. 1051, 1126, and all submissions associated with trademark applications and registrations, and to require the designation of an email address for receiving USPTO correspondence, with limited exceptions (Mandatory Electronic Filing Rule). The effective date of the July 31, 2019, rule was delayed until December 21, 2019 (84 FR 52363, October 2, 2019). In § 2.21, the Mandatory Electronic

Filing Rule addressing the requirements for receiving a filing date were amended to require the “domicile address” of each applicant. Prior to the July 31, 2019, Mandatory Electronic Filing Rule, the regulations at § 2.21(a) required “[t]he name of the applicant” and “[a] name and address for correspondence.” 37 CFR 2.21(a)(1), (2). In the May 30, 2018 notice of proposed rulemaking, the USPTO proposed to amend § 2.21(a)(1) to require “[t]he name, postal address, and email address of each applicant” to receive a filing date and made a conforming amendment to § 2.32(a)(2) to require the same information for a complete application. In the July 31, 2019, final rule, the USPTO replaced the word “postal” with “domicile” in amended § 2.21(a)(1) and amended § 2.32(a)(2) to reconcile the final rule with the provisions of another final rule entitled “Requirement of U.S. Licensed Attorney for Foreign Trademark Applicants and Registrants” (84 FR 31498, July 2, 2019) (U.S. Counsel rule) that required provision of domicile addresses. The USPTO has determined that substituting the wording “domicile address” for “postal address” in the July 31, 2019, final rule might result in the unintended consequence of the loss of a filing date for some applicants who provide an address that is later determined not to be their domicile address. Therefore, the USPTO has determined that the better practice is to retain the existing requirement for an “address” as a filing-date requirement. The requirement for a “domicile address” remains a requirement for a complete application in amended § 2.32(a)(2). Thus, this rulemaking amends § 2.21(a)(1) in the July 31, 2019, final rule to remove the word “domicile.”

In addition, in light of the amendment made to § 2.21(a)(1), the USPTO makes a conforming change to § 2.22(a)(1) in the July 31, 2019, final rule to reinsert the requirement for a domicile address. In the U.S. Counsel rule, the USPTO added the requirement for the applicant’s domicile address to the regulation addressing the requirements for a TEAS Plus application. 37 CFR 2.22(a)(1). Subsequently, in the July 31, 2019, Mandatory Electronic Filing Rule, the USPTO removed this requirement from § 2.22(a)(1) as duplicative because the domicile requirement added to § 2.21(a)(1) also applied to TEAS Plus applications. The amendment made to § 2.21(a)(1) in this rulemaking removes the requirement for a domicile address from § 2.21(a)(1), as discussed above, and requires the USPTO to reinsert it back in § 2.22(a)(1) so that it will

continue to apply to TEAS Plus applications as a requirement for receiving a reduced filing fee.

### Rulemaking Requirements

*Administrative Procedure Act:* The changes in this rulemaking involve rules of agency practice and procedure, and/or interpretive rules. See *Perez v. Mortg. Bankers Ass'n*, 135 S. Ct. 1199, 1204 (2015) (Interpretive rules “advise the public of the agency’s construction of the statutes and rules which it administers.” (citation and internal quotation marks omitted)); *Nat’l Org. of Veterans’ Advocates v. Sec’y of Veterans Affairs*, 260 F.3d 1365, 1375 (Fed. Cir. 2001) (Rule that clarifies interpretation of a statute is interpretive.); *Bachow Commc’ns Inc. v. FCC*, 237 F.3d 683, 690 (D.C. Cir. 2001) (Rules governing an application process are procedural under the Administrative Procedure Act.); *Inova Alexandria Hosp. v. Shalala*, 244 F.3d 342, 350 (4th Cir. 2001) (Rules for handling appeals were procedural where they did not change the substantive standard for reviewing claims.).

Accordingly, prior notice and opportunity for public comment for the changes in this rulemaking are not required pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b) or (c), or any other law. See *Perez*, 135 S. Ct. at 1206 (Notice-and-comment procedures are required neither when an agency “issue[s] an initial interpretive rule” nor “when it amends or repeals that interpretive rule.”); *Cooper Techs. Co. v. Dudas*, 536 F.3d 1330, 1336–37 (Fed. Cir. 2008) (stating that 5 U.S.C. 553, and thus 35 U.S.C. 2(b)(2)(B), does not require notice and comment rulemaking for “interpretative rules, general statements of policy, or rules of agency organization, procedure, or practice” (quoting 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(A))).

In addition, good cause exists under 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B) and (d)(3) to issue this rule without prior notice and opportunity for comment and the 30-day delay in effectiveness, as it would be impracticable and contrary to the public interest. This action amends § 2.21(a)(1) to avoid a possible unintended consequence (*i.e.*, possible loss of a filing date for some applicants who provide an address that is later determined not to be their domicile address) that might result from substituting the wording “domicile address” for “postal address” in the July 31, 2019 final rule. Therefore, the USPTO has determined that the better practice is to retain the existing requirement for an “address” as a filing-date requirement. The requirement for a “domicile address” remains a

requirement for a complete application in amended § 2.32(a)(2). Delay of this correction to allow for prior notice and opportunity for comment would result in the implementation of a requirement that may result in a loss of a filing date for some applicants as well as confusion among applicants regarding the requirements for a filing date. In addition, because the July 31, 2019 final rule is not effective until December 21, 2019, no party has been negatively impacted or affected by this rulemaking, which is being published prior to that effective date. Therefore, the USPTO waives the requirement for prior notice and opportunity for comment, and implements this correction on the effective date of this rule.

### Corrections

In FR Doc. 2019–16259 appearing on page 37081 in the **Federal Register** of Wednesday, July 31, 2019, delayed at 84 FR 52363, October 2, 2019, the following corrections are made:

#### § 2.21 [Corrected]

■ 1. On page 37093, in the third column, in § 2.21, in paragraph (a)(1), “The name, domicile address, and email address of each applicant;” is corrected to read “The name, address, and email address of each applicant;”

■ 2. On page 37094, in the first and second columns, in § 2.22, paragraphs (a)(1) through (19) are redesignated as paragraphs (a)(2) through (20) and new paragraph (a)(1) is added to read as follows:

#### § 2.22 Requirements for a TEAS Plus application.

(a) \* \* \*

(1) The applicant’s name and domicile address;

\* \* \* \* \*

Dated: December 9, 2019.

**Andrei Iancu,**

*Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office.*

[FR Doc. 2019–26899 Filed 12–12–19; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510–16–P**

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### 38 CFR Part 17

#### RIN 2900–AQ01

### Reimbursement of Qualifying Adoption Expenses for Certain Veterans

**AGENCY:** Department of Veterans Affairs.

**ACTION:** Final rule.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) adopts as final, with changes based on subsequent statutory authority, an interim final rule providing for reimbursement of qualifying adoption expenses incurred by a veteran with a service-connected disability that results in the inability of the veteran to procreate without the use of fertility treatment. Under the Continuing Appropriations and Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017, and Zika Response and Preparedness Act, VA may use funds appropriated or otherwise made available to VA for the “Medical Services” account to provide adoption reimbursement to these veterans. Under the law, reimbursement may be for the adoption-related expenses for an adoption that is finalized after the date of the enactment of this Act under the same terms as apply under the adoption reimbursement program of the Department of Defense (DoD), as authorized in DoD Instruction 1341.09, including the reimbursement limits and requirements set forth in such instruction. This rulemaking implements the new adoption reimbursement benefit for covered veterans.

**DATES:** *Effective date:* This rule is effective on December 13, 2019.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Patricia M. Hayes, Ph.D. Chief Consultant, Women’s Health Services, Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20420, (202) 461–0373. (This is not a toll-free number.)

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Public Law 114–223, the Continuing Appropriations and Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017, and Zika Response and Preparedness Act (the “2017 Act”), section 260, allows VA to use appropriated funds available to VA for the Medical Services account to provide fertility counseling and treatment using assisted reproductive technology (ART) to a covered veteran or the spouse of a covered veteran, or adoption reimbursement to a covered veteran. On January 19, 2017, VA published an interim final rule at 82 FR 6275 addressing fertility counseling and treatment using ART, including in vitro fertilization (IVF) (which is a type of ART), for both covered veterans and spouses. On March 5, 2018, VA published an interim final rule to implement our authority to provide reimbursement of qualifying adoption