

# December 2009 Supplement to Characteristics and Risks of Standardized Options

The February 1994 version of the booklet entitled *Characteristics and Risks of Standardized Options* (the “Booklet”) is amended as provided below. Part I of this Supplement contains information regarding options on indexes measuring (i) the historical (“realized”) variance or the predicted (“implied”) or realized volatility of the daily returns of a stock index; (ii) the return from a trading strategy involving purchases and sales of equity securities and options on those securities; or (iii) the dividends on the component stocks of a dividend index. Part II of this Supplement contains information relating to the adjustment of stock option contracts to reflect cash dividends or distributions on the underlying securities. This Supplement supersedes and replaces the September 2008 Supplement to the Booklet.

## Part I. Variability Options.

1. *The first full paragraph on page 2, as amended in Part III of the May 2007 Supplement, is further amended to read as follows:*

Each options market selects the underlying interests on which options are traded on that market. Options are currently available covering four types of underlying interests: equity securities (which term includes “fund shares” described in Chapter III), indexes (including stock, variability, strategy-based and dividend indexes), government debt securities, and foreign currencies. Options on other types of underlying interests may become available in the future.

2. *The second paragraph on page 7, as amended by the June 2008 Supplement, is replaced with the following paragraph:*

Exercise prices for each options series (except for series of delayed start options) are established by the options market on which that series is traded at the time trading in the series is introduced, and are generally set at levels above and below the then market value of the underlying interest. However, the options markets may use other methods to set exercise prices. Specific information regarding the setting of exercise prices may be obtained from the listing options market. The options markets generally have the authority to introduce additional series of options with different exercise prices based on changes in the value of the underlying interest, or in response to investor interest, or in unusual market conditions, or in other circumstances. For series of delayed start options, exercise price setting formulas—rather than exercise prices—are established by the options market on which each series is traded before the time trading commences in each such series. Those exercise price setting formulas provide that on the exercise price setting date the exercise price for the series will be fixed at the money, in the money by a certain amount, or out of the money by a certain amount.

3. The first two paragraphs on page 23, under the caption “About Indexes,” are replaced with the following three paragraphs and new caption:

As referred to in this booklet, an index is a measure of the prices or other attributes of a group of securities\* or other interests. Although indexes have been developed to cover a variety of interests, such as stocks and other equity securities, debt securities and foreign currencies, and even to measure the cost of living, the following discussion relates only to (i) indexes on equity securities (which are called stock indexes in this booklet), (ii) indexes intended to measure the implied volatility, or the realized variance or volatility, of specified stock indexes (which are collectively called variability indexes in this booklet), (iii) strategy-based indexes, such as indexes measuring the return of a particular strategy involving the component securities of a stock index and options on that index, (iv) indexes intended to measure the stock price changes of the component securities of underlying indexes that result solely from the distribution of ordinary cash dividends, as calculated on their respective ex-dividend dates (which are called dividend indexes in this booklet), and (v) options on the above indexes (including binary index options and range options).

Stock indexes are compiled and published by various sources, including securities markets. A stock index may be designed to be representative of the stock market of a particular nation as a whole, of securities traded in a particular market, of a broad market sector (e.g., industrials), or of a particular industry (e.g., electronics). A stock index may be based on securities traded primarily in U.S. markets, securities traded primarily in a foreign market, or a combination of securities whose primary markets are in various countries. A stock index may be based on the prices of all, or only a sample, of the securities whose prices it is intended to represent. Like stock indexes, variability indexes, strategy-based indexes, and dividend indexes are securities indexes. However, variability indexes may measure the implied volatility of an index, using the premiums for series of options on that index, or may measure the historical variance or volatility of the returns of an index using daily returns over a certain period assuming a mean daily return of zero. Strategy-based indexes measure the return of a particular strategy involving the component securities of an index and options on that index. Dividend indexes measure the stock price changes of the component securities of underlying indexes that result solely from the distribution of ordinary cash dividends, as calculated on their respective ex-dividend dates. In this booklet options on variability indexes are referred to generically as variability options, options on strategy-based indexes are referred to as strategy-based index options, and options on dividend indexes are referred to as dividend index options.

Information relating specifically to stock indexes, variability indexes, strategy-based indexes and dividend indexes appears below under the captions “Stock Indexes,” “Variability Indexes,” “Strategy-based Indexes” and “Dividend Indexes,” respectively.

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\* Some indexes reflect values of companies, rather than securities, by taking into account both the prices of component securities and the number of those securities outstanding.

## STOCK INDEXES

4. *The first sentence in the second full paragraph on page 25 is amended as follows:*

Investors should keep in mind that a stock index can respond only to reported price movements in its component securities.

5. *The paragraph that was inserted following the third full paragraph on page 26 in the December 1997 Supplement to this booklet is relocated so that it follows the second full paragraph on page 25 (since that paragraph relates to stock indexes and not to variability indexes or strategy-based indexes).*

6. *The following paragraphs and captions are added on page 25 following the relocated paragraph referred to in point 3 immediately above:*

## DIVIDEND INDEXES

Dividend indexes measure the stock price changes of the component securities of underlying indexes that result solely from the distribution of ordinary cash dividends, as calculated on their respective ex-dividend dates. As of the date of this Supplement, dividend indexes on which options are approved to be traded are based on the accumulated "ex-dividend amounts" reflecting ordinary cash dividends for the component securities over a specified accrual period. Investors should note that determinations by the reporting authority for a dividend index as to whether a cash dividend is "ordinary" and therefore reflected in the index may be made using rules other than those relating to adjustments of stock options and described in Chapter III under "Features of Stock Options." At the end of each accrual period, the value of a dividend index is reset to zero. The values of dividend indexes are typically published once per trading day, and these values could be affected by an issuer's determination to pay stock dividends in lieu of cash dividends or to forego payment of cash dividends. An "ex-dividend amount" is the amount by which the market price of a stock decreases on the ex-dividend date to reflect the dividend that will be received by holders of the stock immediately prior to the ex-dividend date. The "ex-dividend amount" is calculated by the reporting authority for the index, and information as to the method of calculation is available from the listing options market. Investors must understand the method used to calculate dividend indexes in order to understand the relationship between current dividend index values and the prices of dividend index options.

## VARIABILITY INDEXES

Variability indexes, and investment strategies involving the use of variability options, are inherently complex. You should be certain that you understand the method of calculation and significance of any variability index and the uses for which variability options based on that index are suited before buying or selling the options.

Economic, political, social and other events affecting the *level* of the reference index may also affect the *variability* of the reference index. Variability indexes based on equity securities have historically tended to move inversely to their reference indexes, since variability, whether in the form of variance or volatility, tends to be associated with turmoil in the stock markets and turmoil tends to be associated with downward moves in the stock market. But this

relationship does not always hold true and, indeed, a variability index may be rising at a time when its reference index is also rising.

As with other index options, a call variability option will be in the money at exercise if the exercise settlement value of the underlying index is above the exercise price of the option, and a put variability option will be in the money at exercise if the exercise settlement value of the underlying index is below the exercise price of the option. Whether the variability option is in the money is determined in relation only to the value of the underlying variability index, and not in relation to the reference index.

The information set forth on pages 26 through 28 of the Booklet under the caption “Features of Index Options” is generally applicable to variability options. However, the method of determining the exercise settlement value for certain variability options may differ from those for other index options, and you should read the information below relating to the particular types of variability options you wish to trade. Note also that variability options may have expiration dates that are different from those of other index options. You should be sure that you know the expiration date for each variability option you wish to buy or write.

As of the date of this Supplement, options are approved for trading on three different types of variability indexes representing three different ways of measuring variability. A realized variance index represents the variability of returns of a specified reference index over a specified time period relative to an average (mean) daily return of zero. The realized volatility of the same index over the same time period, also referred to as the standard deviation, is equal to the square root of the realized variance. Both of these measures are calculated from actual historical index values over the relevant period of time. An implied volatility index is a measure of the predicted future variability of the reference index over a specified future time period. It measures the predicted standard deviation of the daily returns of the reference index measured over the specified future time period. An implied volatility index reflects *predictions* about the future volatility of the reference index as those predictions are *implied* by reported current premium values for options on the reference index. The realized volatility of the reference index may not conform to those predictions.

There are various methods of estimating implied volatility, and different methods may provide different estimates. Under the method that is used for volatility options that are traded at the date of this Supplement, implied volatility index values are calculated using premium values of out-of-the-money series of options on the reference index in expiration months that are selected and weighted to yield a measure of the volatility of the reference index over a specified future time period. For example, an implied volatility index that is calculated using this method and that is designed to provide a prediction of volatility over 30 calendar days is based on premium values of out-of-the-money options series on the reference index expiring in the two nearest months with at least 8 calendar days left to expiration. Implied volatility index values will be affected by any factor that affects the component options series of the index, including, among other things, applicable laws, regulations and trading rules, the market-making and order processing systems of the markets on which the options are traded, and the liquidity and efficiency of those markets.

Implied volatility options that are described in this Supplement are European-style and “A.M.-settled,” which means that the exercise settlement values are derived from opening values of the component put and call options. An exercise settlement value for implied volatility options is calculated from *actual opening premium prices* of the relevant series of options on the reference index unless there is no trade in a series at the opening, in which case the *mid-point of the bid and offer premium quotations* for that series as determined at the opening of trading is used. All other index values for each of these implied volatility indexes are calculated using the *mid-points of the bid and offer premium quotations* of the options series that comprise the index. (Since these index values are based on quotations they are sometimes referred to as “indicative values.”)

Because different values may be used in calculating the indicative values and exercise settlement values for implied volatility options, there is a risk that there may be a divergence between the exercise settlement value for implied volatility options and an indicative value calculated at the opening on the date on which the exercise settlement value is being determined. This risk is described further in Chapter X of this booklet, under the heading “Special Risks of Index Options.” Additional information regarding the method used to calculate the values of a particular implied volatility index is available from the market on which options on that index are traded.

Investors should keep in mind that indicative values of an implied volatility index can reflect changes in the implied volatility of the reference index only to the extent that quotations of the component options of the index are current. Indicative values for an implied volatility index may be disseminated, and implied volatility options may be traded, during times when one or more component securities in the reference index are not trading, or when the quotations for one or more of the options series comprising the implied volatility index are not current. Similarly, an exercise settlement value for an implied volatility index may be calculated even if one or more component securities in the reference index are not trading. In any of these cases, an indicative value or exercise settlement value will be based on non-current information. The quality of the information reflected in the values of an implied volatility index should be evaluated in light of the depth and liquidity of the markets for the securities in the reference index and the options that are the components of the index.

The realized variability indexes underlying variability options approved for trading as of the date of this Supplement measure the actual volatility or variance, as the case may be, of the reference index for a fixed period ending on the last trading day before the expiration date for the variability option. As of the date of this Supplement indicative values for a realized variability index are published once per trading day during the fixed period, but values published early in the period, which are based on a small number of observations, may vary substantially from the exercise settlement value. The exercise settlement amount for a realized variability option is equal to the difference between the exercise settlement value and the exercise price of the option, times a multiplier.

Realized variability options that are described in this Supplement are European-style and “A.M.-settled.” The initial and final values of a reference index for purposes of calculating the exercise settlement value for realized variability options described in this Supplement are ordinarily calculated from the *actual opening prices* of the component securities

of the reference index in their primary market. If a component security does not open for trading, the *last reported price* in the primary market may be used. OCC's rules provide for other methods of determining the exercise settlement value of a reference index in extraordinary circumstances. All other values for realized variability indexes are calculated from the published closing value of the reference index.

## STRATEGY-BASED INDEXES

Strategy-based indexes are complex, and their calculations may involve the use of multiple variables, including the values of equity securities and options on those securities. Strategies based on options on these indexes, referred to as "strategy-based index options," are also complex. Investors should be certain that they understand the method of calculation and significance of any strategy-based index and the uses for which strategy-based index options are suited before buying or selling the options.

Strategy-based indexes measure the returns from investment strategies involving the purchase and sale of various securities. All of the securities purchased and sold pursuant to the strategy are deemed to be the component securities of the strategy-based index. As of the date of this Supplement, the only strategy-based index on which options are approved to be traded is a buy-write index measuring the return on a hypothetical "buy-write" strategy involving the simultaneous writing of call options on a stock index and purchase of the component securities of that index. Under the hypothetical strategy, a succession of at the money index call options with one month to expiration are assumed to be written, and the proceeds (*i.e.*, the premiums received) from writing the options are assumed to be invested in a weighted basket of the component securities that mirrors the index. Dividends received from ownership of the component securities of the index are similarly assumed to be reinvested in the basket of securities. The options are deemed held until expiration, and new call options are assumed to be written on the business day immediately after the settlement value is determined. All options written under the buy-write strategy are deemed to have been assigned an exercise notice on the expiration date if in the money on that date, and to have expired without value if out of the money on the expiration date. The buy-write index measures the cumulative gross rate of return of the strategy since the inception of the index. The index will therefore rise during periods when the strategy is profitable and decline when it is unprofitable. The following example illustrates the calculation of the buy-write index.

**EXAMPLE:** Assume that the buy-write index has a value of 800 on January 1. The return from the buy-write strategy, taking into account the returns of the component securities of the stock index and of the options assumed to be written on the index, is .5% and 1% on January 2 and 3, respectively. The index value at the end of a given trading day is equal to the previous closing value of the index multiplied by one plus the rate of return for that trading day. In this example, the value of the buy-write index at the close of trading on January 3 would be 812.04 ( $800 * 1.005 * 1.01$ ). Assume that the return of the buy-write strategy on January 4, again taking into account the returns of the component securities of the stock index and of the options assumed written on that index, is a negative .7%. The value of the buy-write index at the close of trading on January 4 would be 806.36 ( $812.04 * .993$ ).

The calculation of the buy-write index, as in the case of any strategy-based index, requires the making of assumptions about, for example, the timing of transactions involved with a particular strategy and the prices received or paid for the securities traded (which are determined using market data for specified time periods). The index is calculated throughout the trading day using reported values for the reference index and reported premium values for the options as well as the value of any ordinary dividends payable on the component securities. The calculation of the index assumes that transactions can be continuously executed, *i.e.*, that there will be no market disruptions, and may use assumed prices equal to volume-weighted average prices, which may not be the same as the prices an investor employing the strategy would pay or receive. Detailed information regarding calculation of the buy-write index is available from the exchange on which the options are traded. A special opening value for the reference index is used in calculating the index on the date that a new option is written to replace an expiring option, which is known as a roll date, and special procedures are used on roll dates to reflect the hypothetical transactions that are assumed to take place on those dates.

## **STOCK INDEXES, VARIABILITY INDEXES, STRATEGY-BASED INDEXES AND DIVIDEND INDEXES**

*7. The first sentence of the third full paragraph on page 26 of the Booklet is replaced with the following:*

With some exceptions, such as those noted above with regard to mutual fund indexes, certain foreign stock indexes, realized variance and realized volatility indexes, and dividend indexes, the values of indexes are ordinarily updated throughout the trading day.

*8. The last sentence of the third full paragraph on page 26 of the Booklet is replaced with the following:*

Information regarding the method of calculation of any index on which options are traded, including information concerning the standards used in adjusting the index, adding or deleting securities, and making similar changes, and on any modification of the index in determining the underlying value for the options, is generally available from the options market where the options are traded.

*9. The following paragraph is inserted before the first full paragraph on page 27, as amended by the June 2008 Supplement:*

The underlying interest for an index option may be a fraction or multiple of a particular index. An option on a fraction or multiple of a particular index is equivalent to an option on the full value of the index, but with a different contract size. Investors in index options should be aware that the underlying interest for an index option may not be the full value of a published index with which they are familiar.

*10. The last paragraph on page 27 is replaced with the following paragraph:*

The exercise settlement values of index options are determined by their reporting authorities in a variety of ways. The exercise settlement values of some index options are based on the reported level of the underlying index derived from the last reported prices of the

component securities of the index at the closing on the day of exercise. The exercise settlement values of other options are based on the reported level of the index derived from the opening prices of the component securities on the day of exercise. If an option is exercised on a day that is not scheduled as a trading day for the component securities of the index, the exercise settlement value is based on the reported level of the index derived from the opening or closing prices (depending on the options series) of the component securities on the last prior day that is scheduled as a trading day. If a particular component security does not open for trading on the day the exercise settlement value is determined, a substitute value, such as the last reported price of that security, is used. Other means for determining the exercise settlement values of some index options series have been, and may continue to be, established. For example, the exercise settlement values for options on an index of foreign securities may be fixed in relation to a value fixed by a foreign exchange.

*11. The second paragraph on page 28 is deleted.*

*12. The following paragraph is inserted on page 73, immediately following the caption "Special Risks of Index Options," and immediately before the paragraph inserted at that location by the June 2008 Supplement to this booklet:*

The risks described in paragraphs 1 through 10 on pages 73 through 78 of this booklet relate primarily to options on stock indexes. The risks described in paragraph 11 relate to options on implied volatility indexes. Risks described in paragraphs 12 through 14 relate to options on variability indexes or strategy-based indexes. The risks described in paragraph 15 relate to delayed start options, and the risk described in paragraph 16 relates to dividend index options.

*13. The following paragraphs are inserted on page 78 immediately following paragraph number 10, as amended by the June 2008 Supplement:*

11. Because different values may be used in calculating indicative values and exercise settlement values of the volatility indexes underlying implied volatility options, there is a risk that there may be a divergence between the exercise settlement value and an indicative value calculated at the opening on the date on which the exercise settlement value is being determined. (Please refer to the discussion in Chapter IV under the heading "Variability Indexes" for the definition of the term indicative value and a description of the method that is used to calculate an exercise settlement value for implied volatility options.) It is to be expected that there will be at least some divergence between the exercise settlement value for expiring implied volatility options and an indicative value calculated at the opening on the same date because the opening price for each of the options series that is used to calculate the exercise settlement value will typically be at either the bid or the ask quotation, depending on the forces of supply and demand for that series, and not at the mid-point between the bid and ask quotations. This divergence may represent a significant percentage of the indicative value for the implied volatility index if the forces of supply and demand cause all or most of the series to open on the same side of the market.

12. Strategies involving the purchase and sale of options on a variability index or strategy-based index are inherently complex and require a thorough understanding of the

concepts that are measured by these indexes. Investors must understand the method used to calculate the index in order to understand how conditions in the market for the component securities used to calculate its value may affect the value of the index. Investors may fail to realize their investment objective even if they have correctly predicted certain events if they do not understand how those events may or may not affect the level of the index. The component securities of an implied volatility index are put and call options (not stocks, which are the component securities of stock indexes). A realized variability index, on the other hand, measures the actual volatility of an index and is calculated directly from the values of the reference index. There is no assurance that predicted volatility as measured by a particular implied volatility index will correspond to the actual volatility of the reference index or to measures of predicted volatility calculated using other methods. A strategy-based index may be calculated from the prices of multiple component securities of different types, such as in the case of a buy-write index measuring the return of a strategy that involves transactions in stocks and options. The return from a particular strategy as measured by a strategy-based index may differ from the actual returns that an investor following that strategy achieves, because of assumptions regarding transactions and the failure to take into account significant factors such as taxes and transaction costs.

13. Persons who exercise variability options or strategy-based index options or are assigned exercises based on an erroneous index level will ordinarily be required to make settlement based on the exercise settlement value as initially reported by the designated reporting authority for the index, even if a corrected value is subsequently announced. In extraordinary circumstances (e.g., where an exercise settlement value as initially reported is obviously wrong, and a corrected value is promptly announced), OCC has discretion to direct that exercise settlements be based on a corrected exercise settlement value. Ordinarily, however, the exercise settlement value as initially reported by the designated reporting authority for the underlying variability index will be conclusive for exercise settlement purposes. As described in paragraph 8. on page 77 with respect to other indexes, reported levels of a variability or strategy-based index may be based on non-current information. This may occur as a result of delays or interruptions in the market for the component securities of the underlying index or the reference index (which are the same in the case of realized variability indexes).

14. As in the case of writers of other index options, writers of variability or strategy-based index options cannot provide in advance for their potential settlement obligations by acquiring the underlying interest. Offsetting the risk of writing a variability option or strategy-based index option may be even more difficult than offsetting the risk of writing other index options. Even where some offsetting of risk is possible, there are timing risks and other risks analogous to those discussed in paragraphs 3 and 4 on pages 74 and 75 of the booklet whenever an investor attempts to employ strategies involving transactions in variability or strategy-based index options and transactions in stocks or in options, futures contracts or other investments related to stocks.

*14. The following paragraph is inserted on page 78 immediately following paragraph number 15, as added by the June 2008 Supplement:*

16. The reported values of dividend indexes may be affected by factors other than the financial ability of the issuers of the component securities of a dividend index to pay cash

dividends. For example, an issuer's determination to pay stock dividends in lieu of cash dividends or to forego payment of cash dividends notwithstanding its ability to do so may affect the level of a dividend index.

**Part II. Definition of Ordinary Cash Dividend.** The following replaces Part I of the May 2007 Supplement:

*The fourth paragraph on page 19 of the Booklet is amended to read as follows:*

As a general rule, no adjustment is made for ordinary cash dividends or cash distributions. A cash dividend or distribution announced prior to February 1, 2009, will generally be considered "ordinary" unless it exceeds 10% of the aggregate market value of the underlying security outstanding as of the close of trading on the declaration date. The same rule will continue to apply on and after that date with respect to options series designated by OCC as "grandfathered" for purposes of this rule (*i.e.*, series opened prior to publication of the May 2007 Supplement that remain outstanding on February 1, 2009). In the case of all other options series, a cash dividend or distribution announced *on or after* February 1, 2009, will generally be considered "ordinary," regardless of size, if OCC believes that it was declared pursuant to a policy or practice of paying such dividends or distributions on a quarterly or other regular basis. No adjustment will normally be made for any cash dividend or distribution that amounts to less than \$12.50 per contract. If an option contract has been previously adjusted to cover more shares than a standard-size option contract (*i.e.*, a contract covering 100 shares or any other number of shares specified as the standard size for a contract prior to any adjustments) and if a corresponding standard-size option contract also exists, the previously adjusted option contract will be adjusted only if the corresponding standard-size option contract is also adjusted. As an exception to the general rule, options on fund shares will generally be adjusted for capital gains distributions even if made on a regular basis, and adjustments may be made for certain other distributions in respect of fund shares in special circumstances described in OCC's rules, provided in each case that the amount of the adjustment would be \$.125 or more per fund share. Determinations whether to adjust for cash dividends or distributions not covered by the preceding rules, or when other special circumstances apply, are made on a case-by-case basis.