

191—15.41(507B) Claims settlement guidelines for property and casualty insurance. For purposes of this rule, “insurer” means property and casualty insurers.

15.41(1) An insurer shall fully disclose to first-party claimants all pertinent benefits, coverages or other provisions of a policy or contract under which a claim is presented.

15.41(2) Within 30 days after receipt by the insurer of properly executed proofs of loss, the first-party property claimant shall be advised of the acceptance or denial of the claim by the insurer. No insurer shall deny a claim on the grounds of a specific policy provision, condition or exclusion unless reference to such provision, condition, or exclusion is included in the denial. The denial must be given to the claimant in writing, and the claim file of the insurer shall contain documentation of the denial.

When there is a reasonable basis supported by specific information available for review by the commissioner that the first-party claimant has fraudulently caused or contributed to the loss, the insurer is relieved from the requirements of this subrule. However, the claimant shall be advised of the acceptance or denial of the claim within a reasonable time for full investigation after receipt by the insurer of a properly executed proof of loss.

15.41(3) If the insurer needs more time to determine whether a first-party claim should be accepted or denied, the insurer shall so notify the first-party claimant within 30 days after receipt of the proof of loss and give the reasons more time is needed. If the investigation remains incomplete, the insurer shall, 45 days from the initial notification and every 45 days thereafter, send to the claimant a letter setting forth the reasons additional time is needed for investigation.

When there is a reasonable basis supported by specific information available for review by the commissioner for suspecting that the first-party claimant has fraudulently caused or contributed to the loss, the insurer is relieved from the requirements of this subrule. However, the claimant shall be advised of the acceptance or denial of the claim by the insurer within a reasonable time for full investigation after receipt by the insurer of a properly executed proof of loss.

15.41(4) Insurers shall not fail to settle first-party claims on the basis that responsibility for payment should be assumed by others except as may otherwise be provided by policy provisions.

15.41(5) No insurer shall make statements indicating that the rights of a third-party claimant may be impaired if a form or release, other than a release to obtain medical records, is not completed within a given period of time unless the statement is given for the purpose of notifying the third-party claimant of the provision of a statute of limitations.

15.41(6) The insurer shall affirm or deny liability on claims within a reasonable time and shall tender payment within 30 days of affirmation of liability, if the amount of the claim is determined and not in dispute. In claims where multiple coverages are involved, payments that are not in dispute under one of the coverages and where the payee is known should be tendered within 30 days if such payment would terminate the insurer’s known liability under that coverage.

15.41(7) No producer shall conceal from a first-party claimant benefits, coverages or other provisions of any insurance policy or insurance contract when such benefits, coverages or other provisions are pertinent to a claim.

15.41(8) A claim shall not be denied on the basis of failure to exhibit property unless there is documentation of breach of the policy provisions to exhibit or cooperate in the claim investigation.

15.41(9) No insurer shall deny a claim based upon the failure of a first-party claimant to give written notice of loss within a specified time limit unless the written notice is a written policy condition. An insurer may deny a claim if the claimant’s failure to give written notice after being requested to do so is so unreasonable as to constitute a breach of the claimant’s duty to cooperate with the insurer.

15.41(10) No insurer shall indicate to a first-party claimant on a payment draft, check or in any accompanying letter that said payment is “final” or “a release” of any claim unless the policy limit has been paid or there has been a compromise settlement agreed to by the first-party claimant and the insurer as to coverage and amount payable under the contract.

15.41(11) No insurer shall request or require any insured to submit to a polygraph examination unless authorized under the applicable insurance contracts and state law.

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