

Code of Consumer Rights and Responsibilities

Insurance companies, along with the brokers and agents who sell home, auto and business insurance, are committed to safeguarding your rights when you shop for insurance and when you submit a claim following a loss. Your rights include the right to be informed fully, to be treated fairly, to timely complaint resolution, and to privacy. These rights are grounded in the contract between you and your insurer and the insurance laws of your province. With rights, however, come responsibilities including, for example, the expectation that you will provide complete and accurate information to your insurer. Your policy outlines other important responsibilities. Insurers and their distribution networks, and governments also have important roles to play in ensuring that your rights are protected.

Right to Be Informed

You can expect to access clear information about your policy, your coverage, and the claims settlement process. You have the right to an easy-to-understand explanation of how insurance works and how it will meet your needs. You also have the right to know how insurers calculate price based on relevant facts.

You have the right to ask who is providing compensation to your broker or agent for the sale of your insurance. If you are a first-time customer, your broker or agent will provide written information detailing for you how he or she is paid, by whom, how much, and in what ways.

Insurance companies publicize their compensation arrangements with their distribution networks, and brokers and agents are committed to informing you of any perceived or real conflict of interest.

Responsibility to Ask Questions and Share Information

To safeguard your right to purchase appropriate coverage at a competitive price, you should ask questions about your policy so that you understand what it covers and what your obligations are under it. You can access information through brochures and Web sites, as well as through one-on-one meetings with your broker, agent, or company representative. You have the option to shop the marketplace for the combination of coverage and service levels that best suits your insurance needs. To maintain your protection against loss, you must promptly inform your insurance company, broker, or agent of any change in your circumstances.

Right to Complaint Resolution

Insurance companies, their brokers and agents are committed to high standards of customer service. If you have a complaint about the service you have received, you have a right to access your company's complaint resolution process. Your insurer, agent or broker can provide you with information about how you can ensure that your complaint is heard and promptly handled. Disputes involving claims settlement matters may be handled by the independent General Insurance OmbudService www.gio-scad.org where your complaint may be referred to an independent mediator.

Responsibility to Resolve Disputes

You should always enter into the dispute resolution process in good faith, provide required information in a timely manner, and remain open to recommendations made by independent observers as part of that process.

Right to Professional Service

You have the right to deal with insurance professionals who exhibit a high ethical standard, which includes acting with honesty, integrity, fairness and skill. Home and car insurance brokers and agents must exhibit extensive knowledge of the product, its coverage and its limitations in order to best serve you. These standards are outlined in a *Consumer's Guide to Property and Casualty Insurance Transactions*, supported by members of the Insurance Brokers Association of Canada.

Right to Privacy

Because it is important for you to disclose any and all information required by an insurer to provide the insurance coverage that best suits you, you have the right to know that your information will be used for the purpose set out in the privacy statement made available to you by your broker, agent or insurance representative. This information will not be disclosed to anyone except as permitted by law. You should know that insurers are subject to Canada's privacy laws.