Insurance Council
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Fact Sheet

Who we are

The Insurance Council of British Columbia is the regulatory body that oversees the licensing and professional conduct of over 42,000 insurance agents, salespersons and adjusters doing business in BC.

It's our role to protect the public by ensuring that insurance licensees act within a professional framework that promotes ethical conduct, integrity and competence.

Where our authority comes from

The Insurance Council is established by the *Financial Institutions Act*. Members of Council are appointed by the BC government, comprising voting and non-voting members representing industry as well as members of the public.

What we do

The Insurance Council carries out regulatory oversight of its licensees to protect the public interest.

We do this by:

1. Assessing qualification through entry exams and a robust application and screening process
2. Ensuring that licensees understand and carry out their duties and responsibilities by providing practice advice, issuing guidance, and carrying out audits
3. Investigating complaints against licensees and disciplining where warranted.

Our licensees

Our licensees are insurance intermediaries—they work directly with the consumer, helping them access insurance products or services provided by insurance companies.

Our licensees are individual agents and salespersons, as well as the agencies that employ them. Agencies are different to insurance companies, which provide insurance products and are regulated by the BC Financial Services Authority (BCFSA).

We license nearly 38,000 individuals and more than 4,100 corporate licensees. Of these, 52% work in Life and/or Accident & Sickness Insurance, 44% in General Insurance, 3% are Insurance Adjusters, and 1% are Travel Agencies licensed to sell insurance.

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Protecting the public

Complaints against licensees

To protect the public, the Insurance Council has a robust process for reviewing complaints, investigating inappropriate conduct, and disciplining where warranted.

During our last reporting year (June 1, 2019-May 31, 2020) we received 144 complaints against individual licensees or agencies. Complaints were split nearly 50/50 between general insurance and life insurance.

All complaints received are reviewed carefully, but not all of these will result in discipline. In these cases, the complaint may be out of our regulatory scope, or may not constitute a breach of the Insurance Council Rules or Code of Conduct.

Discipline and enforcement

In instances where the evidence indicates that there has been a breach of the Insurance Council Rules or Code of Conduct, discipline may be warranted.

Complaints most frequently resulting in disciplinary action are:

1. Unsuitable recommendations by life agents
2. Theft of general insurance agency funds or regulated products
3. Breaches related to information management
4. Cheating on exams.

Last year, the Insurance Council issued 74 disciplinary decisions and assessed $221,500 in fines, and $131,591 in investigative and hearing costs. All disciplinary decisions are published on our website.