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GENERAL INSURANCE ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE

# The Singapore General Insurance Code of Practice

Revised Copy

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## 1. Introduction

The aim of the Code of Practice is to provide clear and consistent standards for the general insurance industry so that a better and more informed relationship between general insurers and their policyholders can be established, thereby improving policyholders' confidence and trust in the general insurance industry.

It also seeks to establish transparency in the insurance products as well as insurance practices so that policyholders are able to make informed choices when making purchasing decisions. Insurance products and services covered under the Code encompass all general insurance policies issued to an individual.

Mechanisms and procedures for the resolution of complaints and disputes between insurers and their policyholders will also be made clear.

All members of the General Insurance Association of Singapore (GIA) will adopt this Code. This Code operates alongside the various rules and regulations governing the conduct of the general insurance industry.

If insurers fail to meet with any standards under the Code, policyholders may lodge complaints against them in accordance with established procedures (as laid out under item 7). The Code does not provide anyone with the right to take legal action against any insurer.

Within the Code, 'you' refers to the individual policyholder and 'we' and 'us' refer to the general insurer.



## **2. Our commitments**

### **2.1 Business Practice**

All insurers will ensure compliance with existing rules and regulations governing the general insurance industry. We will also commit to keep ourselves updated with the latest business practices, corporate governance standards and to have in place internal procedures to ensure compliance to any changes in legislation, including Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) regulations.

We promise that we will:

- Act fairly and reasonably when we deal with you.
- Make sure all the information we give you is clear and not misleading.
- Give you enough information and help so that you can make an informed decision before committing to buying an insurance policy.
- Handle your claims fairly and promptly.
- Handle your complaints fairly and promptly.

### **2.2 Advertising**

We will make sure that all advertising and promotional materials are clear, fair and not misleading.

Insurers will withdraw any advertising and promotional materials if they become aware that the information provided is not accurate, not clear, or misleading. [International Association of Insurance Supervisors (IAIS) Insurance Core Principle 19.4.2]



### 2.3 Protecting your interest

To ensure that you obtain suitable general insurance products and services, we advise you to deal only with:

- Insurers who are members of the General Insurance Association of Singapore (GIA). Refer to website: [www.gia.org.sg](http://www.gia.org.sg) for details.
- Insurance agents who are registered with the Agents' Registration Board (ARB).
- Financial Advisers (FAs) who are registered with the Agents' Registration Board (ARB).
- Registered insurance brokers or exempt insurance brokers under the Insurance Act listed in the Directory of Financial Institutions on the Monetary Authority of Singapore's website at [www.mas.gov.sg](http://www.mas.gov.sg)

### 2.4 Confidentiality

- We will implement and maintain proper procedures to preserve confidentiality of information we receive from a policyholder or which relates to a policyholder.
- A policyholder's personal data will not be collected, used or disclosed unless:
  - (a) the policyholder has given his consent to the collection, use or disclosure; or
  - (b) the collection, use or disclosure, is required or authorised under any written law.
- We will undertake to safeguard policyholders' data and comply with the Personal Data Protection Act (2012) details of which are available at <http://www.pdpc.gov.sg/personal-data-protection-act/overview>.
- We will not use concealed numbers when making outbound calls such as for marketing, servicing, claims or renewals.



- The Personal Data Protection Act (2012) provides for establishment of a national Do-Not-Call (DNC) Registry. We will take the necessary steps to comply with the DNC provisions.

## **2.5 Conflicts of Interest**

A conflict of interest occurs when an insurer's employee or the insurance intermediary has a personal interest that conflicts or might possibly conflict with his role to provide the best possible advice or service to a policyholder. This may occur as a result of employment / intermediary relationship, employee's or intermediary's family or personal relationships with insurer. In circumstances where avoidance of such conflicts of interest may not be practicable, the insurer's employee and/or intermediary will disclose to the policyholder the conflict of interest arising from the relationship with the insurer, including any material information or facts that may compromise his objectivity, before the insurance is arranged.

## **3 Buying Insurance**

### **3.1 Information about products and services**

If you are dealing directly with us, we will provide you with enough advice and information, including information on our website, printed materials, portals, electronic documents or via our call centres to help you make an informed decision before committing to buying an insurance policy.

We will explain all the main features of the products and services that we offer, including: -

- Providing a product summary highlighting important details of cover and benefits.



- Any significant or unusual restrictions, warranties or exclusions.
- Any significant conditions or obligations which you must meet.

If we do participate in any independent insurance portal, we will ensure that the above are adhered to by the independent insurance portal.

### **3.2 Matching your requirements**

We will use the information that we obtained from you:

- to assist you in the identification of your insurance needs
- to offer products that meet those needs

### **3.3 Information on costs**

We will provide you with the details of the costs of your insurance, including: -

- Separate insurance premiums for each of the individual products or services we are offering.
- Any fees and charges other than the insurance premium.
- Payment Before Cover Warranty and how it applies to your policy.  
(Please click on the Premium Payment Framework: <http://www.gia.org.sg/pdfs/PremiumPaymentFramework.pdf>)
- When you need to pay the premium, fees and charges, and an explanation of how you can pay.
- If requested by you, we will disclose any remunerations such as commissions, fees, incentives and/or other benefits that the insurance intermediary has received or will receive that are directly related to the sale of the insurance product.





### **3.4 'Free Look'**

For policies which offer a 'Free Look' feature, we will give you a 'Free Look' period of at least 14 business days from the date you receive the policy document.

Should you decide not to continue with the insurance purchased, you can cancel your cover within this period and we will refund you the premium that has been paid, if you have not made a claim. Insurance coverage would deem not to have attached, and no benefits shall be payable under the policy. An administration charge may be imposed by us.

However, this benefit does not apply to: -

- Motor insurance
- Travel insurance
- Domestic maid insurance
- Short term insurance with a term less than 1 year
- Policy renewals
- Any other compulsory insurance stipulated by law

## **4 Documentation**

### **4.1 Confirming your cover**

- We will provide an insurance quotation within 7 business days after receipt of the required information.
- The quotation will provide enough information on the coverage as well as important exclusions.
- We will confirm coverage in writing by the next working day upon receiving instructions from you to proceed.



## **4.2 Standards of written information**

We will ensure that all the written information and documents we send you are plain and clear.

## **4.3 Despatch of policy**

- We will despatch the policy documents to you within 15 business days from the date of confirmation of cover.
- The policy can be sent electronically or via hard copy documents.
- Policy document received by your broker is deemed to be received by you.

## **5. Policy Servicing**

We will answer any questions promptly and give help and advice to you whenever needed.

### **5.1 Changes to your policy**

We will deal with any changes to your insurance policy promptly by providing you:-

- Written confirmation of any changes to your policy within 7 business days upon receipt of all supporting documents.
- Full details of any premiums or charges that you are expected to pay or that will be returned to you.
- Any certificates or documents that you need to have by law.
- A receipt as proof of payment, if you pay by cash. We may not issue receipt if payment is made by cheque.



- Refunds of the premiums, fees or charges due to you within 30 business days from the date of endorsement/cancellation.
- The endorsement / documents can be sent to you electronically or via hard copy documents.

## **5.2 Notice of renewal**

### Annually Renewable Policies

We will inform you when you need to renew your policy or when the policy will expire, at least 30 business days before expiry, to allow you to consider and arrange continuing cover. We will also: -

- advise you of any changes to the cover or service being offered.
- bring to your attention the need to disclose material information to insurers.
- inform you and provide you with an explanation if we decide not to renew your policy.
- send you the policy document within 7 business days when your policy is renewed. Please note that policy document received by your broker is deemed to be received by you.
- The policy / documents can be sent to you electronically or via hard copy documents.

### Auto-Renewable Policies

We will inform you at least 30 business days before the end of the period of insurance that your annual policy will automatically be renewed upon



payment of premiums, be it via GIRO or credit card payments on an annual or monthly basis.

This will not be applicable to monthly auto-renewable policies.

## **6 Claims**

We are committed to handle all claims fairly, reasonably and promptly.

### **6.1 Making a claim**

We will ensure that there are clear instructions on how policyholders can make a claim under their insurance policy and will explain the claim procedures to you when you first become a customer. Such instructions can appear in policy documents as well as our website or via our call centre. There will also be references made to claims management procedures appearing on the GIA website at [www.gia.org.sg](http://www.gia.org.sg).

### **6.2 Our commitment**

#### Acknowledgement:

- Within 3 business days of receiving your claim, we will send you an acknowledgement.
- We will request for additional documents within 7 business days if claim documents are incomplete.
- If we appoint a service provider to adjust your claim, we will inform you of the appointment. If a firm is appointed, we will provide you with details on the name of the firm appointed and where possible, the name of the individual involved.



- Once we receive all necessary information and have completed a full investigation required to assess your claim, we will decide to accept or decline your claim and inform you of our decision within 7 business days.
- We will tell you how the claim is progressing by providing you with updates. The intervals for such updates may vary from insurer to insurer.
- A reminder will be sent after 30 business days if there is no response from you.

Settlement:

- Once we have agreed to settle your claim and on receipt of all relevant documents, we will issue the payment within 10 business days.

## **7 Complaint Management**

### **7.1 If you make a complaint to us**

When you first become a customer, we will explain and give you details of our complaints procedures appearing in our policy or service documentation.

We will handle your complaints in a fair and reasonable manner in accordance with the following complaint management guidelines:-

- Acknowledge your complaint within 7 business days.
- If we need additional information, we will contact you within 7 business days from the date of your complaint.



- We will endeavour to resolve all complaints as soon as possible. If your complaint takes longer to resolve, we will update you within 15 business days of our last communication to you.
- We will assign a complaint officer to handle your complaints.

## **7.2 Recourse**

If the outcome of your complaint is not handled to your satisfaction, you can write to the Chief Executive of the insurance company to appeal. We will respond to your appeal within 15 business days.

## **7.3 Tracking Process**

We will maintain a Complaint Register in which complaints will be managed or tracked.

## **8 Disputes Resolution**

### **8.1 Insurance Disputes Resolution Scheme**

If you are still dissatisfied with the Chief Executive's response, we will refer you to the following independent dispute resolution organisation

Contact details:

Financial Industry Disputes Resolution Centre Ltd (FIDReC)

36 Robinson Road #15-01

City House

Singapore 068877

Telephone: +65 6327 8878



Fax : +65 6327 8488 / +65 6327 1089

Email: [info@fidrec.com.sg](mailto:info@fidrec.com.sg)

Website: [www.fidrec.com.sg](http://www.fidrec.com.sg)

## **8.2 Mediation (Singapore Mediation Centre)**

Where claims are small, expensive and prolonged litigation can exhaust time and resources, mediation may be the solution to take control of the outcome of these disputes in a timely and cost-efficient manner.

### Contact Details:

Singapore Mediation Centre

1 Supreme Court Lane, Level 4

Singapore 178879

Tel: +65 6332 4366 / Fax: +65 6333 5085

E-mail: [enquiries@mediation.com.sg](mailto:enquiries@mediation.com.sg)

## **8.3 Arbitration (Singapore International Arbitration Centre)**

Any dispute, difference or question which may arise at any time hereafter in relation to true construction of the policy or our respective rights or liabilities under this policy, will be referred to arbitration in Singapore and Singapore laws will apply. The arbitration will be heard by a single arbitrator to be agreed by your respective insurer and you within 14 business days of the commencement of the arbitration.

### Contact Details:

Singapore International Arbitration Centre

32 Maxwell Road

#02-01, Maxwell Chambers



Singapore 069115  
Tel: +65 6221 8833  
Fax: +65 6224 1882

## **9 Other information**

### **9.1 Service Standards of Insurers**

We have appended in Annex 1 a summary of the Service Standards of Insurers for ease of reference.

### **9.2 Copies of the Code**

Copies of the General Insurance Code of Practice are available free from the GIA website at <http://www.gia.org.sg> or from the General Insurance Association of Singapore.

### **9.3 More information**

If you have any questions about the Code, please contact the General Insurance Association of Singapore (GIA) at the address below.

General Insurance Association of Singapore  
180 Cecil Street #15-01  
Bangkok Bank Building  
Singapore 069546  
Tel: +65 6221 8788  
Fax: +65 6227 2051  
Email: [feedback@gia.org.sg](mailto:feedback@gia.org.sg)





**10 Disclaimer**

Nothing in this code shall give any general insurance customer any right or cause of action whatsoever against GIA or its Members.



## Annex 1 Service Standards of Insurers

Item	Transactions	Response Time (business days)	Remarks
<b>4</b>	<b>Documentation</b>		
4.1	Provide Quotation	7	After receipt of required information
4.1	Confirm Coverage	1	Upon receiving instructions to proceed
4.3	Despatch of Insurance Policy (electronically or hard copy)	15	From date of confirmation of cover
<b>5</b>	<b>Policy Servicing</b>		
5.1	Changes to policy details	7	Notify you of the changes
5.1	Refunds of premiums, fees or charges due	30	From the date of endorsement or cancellation or according to your payment mode
5.2	Renewals		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual renewable policy</li> </ul>	30	Before expiry
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy document</li> </ul>	7	Upon renewal of policy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Auto-renewable policy</li> </ul>	30	Before end of period of insurance of an annual policy
<b>6</b>	<b>Claims</b>		
6.2	Acknowledgement of notice of claim	3	Upon receipt of your claim
6.2	Request for additional documents	7	If claim documents are incomplete
6.2	Accept or decline claim	7	Upon receipt of all necessary information
6.2	Reminder	30	If there is no response from you
6.2	Agreed to pay	10	Make payment once we agree to settle your claim
<b>7</b>	<b>Complaint Management</b>		
7.1	Acknowledgement of complaint	7	Upon receipt of your complaint
7.1	Request for additional information	7	From the date of your complaint



Item	Transactions	Response Time (business days)	Remarks
7.1	Update you on progress	15	From the date of our last communication
7.2	Respond to your appeal	15	Upon receipt of your appeal