



Help with an Insurance Complaint

If you have an insurance-related complaint, first try to resolve the problem with the company. Many times complaints result from misunderstandings and can be worked out by discussing your issues with the company. Most companies in Texas have toll-free numbers for customer assistance. Read your policy to find out how to contact the company. If you're unable to resolve your issue by talking with the company, file a complaint with TDI.

Read about TDI's consumer complaints process in *Helping You With Your Insurance Complaint*. You may also e-mail, mail, or fax your complaint along with copies of your supporting documents to

Texas Department of Insurance

Consumer Protection Program (MC 111-1A)

P.O. Box 149091

Austin, TX 78714-9091

Fax: **512-475-1771**

E-mail:

ConsumerProtection@tdi.state.tx.us

For More Information or Assistance

If you need information, have a complaint, or can't locate your agent or company, call TDI's toll-free **Consumer Help Line**

1-800-252-3439



Texas Department of Insurance
P.O. Box 149104 • 333 Guadalupe
Austin, Texas 78714-9104

Texas Financial Responsibility Law: Minimum Auto Liability Insurance Limits have Increased



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TEXAS LAW REQUIRES people who drive in Texas to be able to pay for the automobile accidents they cause. Most drivers do this by buying automobile liability insurance. Liability insurance pays to repair or replace the other driver's car and pays other people's medical expenses. It does not pay to repair or replace your car or for your injuries.

The minimum coverage amount required by the state's financial responsibility law increased on April 1, 2008, to \$25,000 for each injured person, up to a total of \$50,000 per accident, and \$25,000 for property damage. (The limits prior to April 1 were \$20,000 for each injured person, up to a total of \$40,000 per accident, and \$15,000 for property damage per accident.)

The limits will increase again on January 1, 2011, to \$30,000 for each injured person, up to a total of \$60,000 per accident, and \$25,000 for property damage per accident.

Drivers will be required to comply with the new limits as their policies are issued or renewed on or after the effective dates.

Consumer Bill of Rights

Your insurance company is required to provide you with a summary of your rights under Texas insurance law when it issues you a policy. This summary is called the "Consumer Bill of Rights." The Bill of Rights is being revised to reflect the change in the state's minimum liability limits. Until the revised Bill of Rights is adopted, the copy you receive with your new policy will still include the old limits in place prior to April 1.

What is Financial Responsibility?

Financial responsibility is the ability to pay

for any accidents you cause. The Transportation Code lists various ways for drivers to establish financial responsibility. Most drivers, however, do this by buying automobile liability insurance.

Violating the Law

There are severe penalties for violating the state's financial responsibility law. A first conviction will result in a fine between \$175 and \$350. Subsequent convictions could result in fines of \$350 to \$1,000, suspension of your driver's license, and impoundment of your automobile.

When you obtain an auto insurance policy, your insurance company will send you a proof-of-insurance card. You will need this card to show proof of insurance when you

- are asked for it by a law enforcement officer
- have an accident
- register your car or renew its registration
- obtain or renew your driver's license
- get your car inspected.

The state is also implementing TexasSure, Texas' financial responsibility verification program. TexasSure will allow law enforcement officers and other designated state users to immediately verify whether a person has auto insurance. This means, for example, that a law enforcement officer can electronically confirm whether a registered vehicle has insurance coverage in effect during a traffic stop. For more information, visit the **TexasSure** website

www.TexasSure.com

Obtaining Auto Insurance

To buy auto insurance to comply with the state's financial responsibility law, contact an

insurance company or agent in your area. Rates vary widely among companies, so it pays to shop around. Make sure you get quotes from several companies and agents before you buy.

The Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) provides several helpful publications and web resources to help you shop:

- *Shopping Smart*
- *Automobile Price Comparisons*
- *Automobile Insurance Made Easy*
- *Glossary of Auto Insurance Terms*

Having Trouble Finding Insurance

If a company turns you down, keep shopping. Different companies have different criteria for accepting drivers for coverage.

If you can't find auto insurance from a licensed company, you might be able to buy coverage through the **Texas Automobile Insurance Plan Association (TAIPA)**. TAIPA provides basic liability insurance, personal injury protection, and uninsured/underinsured motorist coverage to drivers rejected by insurance companies. TAIPA is available for drivers who can't find basic liability coverage elsewhere. TAIPA sometimes is called the assigned-risk plan.

You qualify for coverage through TAIPA only if two insurance companies reject you. A licensed insurance agent must sign your application and send it to TAIPA. TAIPA then assigns you to a company, which collects your premium and pays your claims. The company will provide coverage for as long as three years.

1-800-580-TAIP (8247)
444-4441 in Austin