



THE OMBUDSMAN

For Short-Term Insurance

(Incorporated under Section 21) (Registration Number 2000/030638/08)

APPEAL MECHANISM

Attached please find an extract from our Terms of Reference which constitutes the rules applicable to appeals. These rules apply to complaints received on or after the 1st December 2013.

“8. Right of appeal against rulings or findings of the Ombudsman

- 8.1 Any party affected by any formal ruling or finding on the part of the Ombudsman may appeal against the ruling or finding of the Ombudsman, either in part or in whole. In this context a “Ruling” shall mean, in relation to a complaint received, “a written directive issued by the Ombudsman which is binding on the insurer and which is based either in law or equity and fairness or a combination of law and equity”. “Finding” shall mean, with respect to a complaint, “a written directive issued by the Ombudsman in relation to the complaint received in terms of which the Ombudsman has dismissed the complaint or declined to intervene in a dispute between the complainant and insurer”.
- 8.2 No appeal against the ruling or finding of the Ombudsman shall be considered by any Appeal Tribunal, unless the Ombudsman shall have granted the applicant leave to appeal against such ruling or finding.
- 8.3 The Ombudsman shall only grant leave to appeal to any appellant where he is of the opinion that:
- 8.3.1 There is a reasonable prospect that the appeal, either in whole or in part, if prosecuted, will succeed; and
 - 8.3.2 The matter is one of complexity or difficulty; or
 - 8.3.3 The ruling or finding in question involves issues or considerations which are of substantial public or industry interest or importance or It is in the interest of justice or public policy that the ruling or decision be considered by an Appeal Tribunal; or
 - 8.3.4 The ruling or decision involves principles of law where the law may be considered to be uncertain or unsettled; or

- 8.3.5 The matter in dispute involves the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman to entertain the dispute; or
- 8.3.6 The issues are of such a nature that the judgment or order sought by the appellant will not be of academic relevance only and will have a practical effect or result.
- 8.4 The power to grant leave to appeal as contemplated in this section shall not be limited by reason only of the value of the matter in dispute, or the amount claimed or awarded by the Ombudsman, or by reason only of the fact that the matter in dispute is incapable of being valued in money.
- 8.5 Notice of any intention to appeal against any ruling or finding of the Ombudsman shall be filed with the Ombudsman within a period of 30 calendar days of the handing down of any ruling or finding and shall state whether the appellant appeals against the whole or part of the ruling or finding of the Ombudsman, the findings of fact and/or ruling of law appealed against and the grounds upon which the appeal is founded. The notice of intention to appeal shall be accompanied by an application for leave to appeal.
- 8.6 A Notice of Cross-Appeal shall be delivered within 15 calendar days after delivery of the Notice of Appeal, or within such other period of time as may, upon good cause shown, be permitted by the Ombudsman. The provisions of these rules with regard to appeals shall equally apply to cross-appeals. A “cross-appeal” shall mean a process by which the respondent in any appeal proceedings, having been advised by the Ombudsman of receipt of a notice of intention to appeal, wishes in turn to appeal against the terms of the ruling or finding made by the Ombudsman in relation to the complaint submitted to the Ombudsman.
- 8.7 Where an appeal has been noted, or an application for leave to appeal has been made, the operation and execution of the ruling or finding of the Ombudsman shall be suspended, pending the decision of the Appeal Tribunal on the matter, unless the Ombudsman, on the application of a party and on good cause shown, otherwise directs.
- 8.8 Upon receipt of a Notice of Appeal the Ombudsman shall within a period of 5 business days thereafter notify every other party to the dispute that a Notice of Appeal has been received.
- 8.9 All documentation in connection with any appeal proceedings including the notice of intention to appeal and the application for leave to appeal, shall be served upon the office of the Ombudsman by hand or alternatively by way of registered post or by e-mail save where the Ombudsman shall have expressly consented to any other method

of service. Documentation served upon the Ombudsman shall be in A4 format and shall be clearly legible and capable of being photocopied. Wherever possible, original documents should form the subject of any appeal proceedings but copies of documents shall be acceptable subject to the provisions of these terms of reference.

Applications for Leave to Appeal

- 8.10 Any party who desires to appeal against any ruling or finding of the Ombudsman shall, within 30 calendar days of the handing down by the Ombudsman of any final ruling or finding, serve upon the Ombudsman as provided for herein, a Notice of intention to Appeal, together with an Application for Leave to Appeal which shall set out the basis for the proposed appeal as contemplated in Clause 8.5 above, together with reasons why Leave to Appeal against such ruling or finding should be granted by the Ombudsman. The granting of leave to appeal shall be a pre-requisite for the prosecution of any appeal.
- 8.11 Failing receipt by the Ombudsman of any Notice of Appeal within the time period referred to in paragraph 8 above, the final ruling or finding by the Ombudsman shall become final and binding upon the parties and shall be carried into effect without further delay.
- 8.12 Any late filing of a Notice of Appeal or an Application for Leave to Appeal shall be null and void save where accompanied by an application for condonation for the late filing of the appeal. Any application for condonation must set out in full the reasons why condonation should be granted, the reasons for any non-compliance and that the matter is one worthy of consideration.
- 8.13 The Ombudsman, after considering any application for condonation, may grant or refuse such application in his discretion.
- 8.14 Where leave to appeal against any ruling or finding of the Ombudsman is refused by the Ombudsman, the unsuccessful party may, within 15 business days of notification of such refusal, petition the Chairman of the Appeal Tribunal, to review the decision of the Ombudsman not to grant leave for appeal. The same provision shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to any application for condonation for the late filing of an appeal.
- 8.15 Any such request shall be addressed to the Chairman of the Appeal Tribunal via the Ombudsman who shall convey such request to the Chairman of the Appeal Tribunal. The Chairman of the Appeal Tribunal shall within a reasonable period of time but in any event not later than a period of 15 calendar days of the receipt of any such petition, either confirm or amend the decision of the Ombudsman not to grant leave to appeal or refusal to condone any application for the late filing of an appeal. The Ombudsman shall thereafter within a period of 5 business days, inform the parties accordingly.

Appeals

- 8.16 An appeal against the ruling or finding of the Ombudsman shall be heard by an Appeal Tribunal who shall consider the matter as if it were the Ombudsman and shall include the consideration of procedural as well as substantive matters pertaining to the objection raised by such party to the decision of the Ombudsman.
- 8.17 The Appeal Tribunal may, where it considers it necessary or in the interests of justice, permit the leading of evidence or new evidence on any matter, even if the Ombudsman himself did not hold a hearing, or receive evidence on any matter prior to making a finding on any complaint referred to him.
- 8.18 Where the Appeal Tribunal decides to permit, or calls for the leading of evidence, or evidence is led on material that was never considered by the Ombudsman, the tribunal may decide, in its sole discretion to invite the Ombudsman to consider the matter in the light of such evidence and to canvass the views of the Ombudsman on the matter. The Ombudsman should be invited to comment on the new material in the manner and on such terms as it may regard to be fair to both parties.
- 8.19 Save where the Appeal Tribunal permits or calls for the leading of evidence, no evidence shall be led and the matter shall be decided by the Appeal Tribunal on the basis of the record of appeal furnished to it by the Ombudsman, including the documentation filed by the parties in connection with the appeal.
- 8.20 The record of appeal shall, save where in the opinion of the Ombudsman additional documentation is required, consist of the following:-
- 8.20.1 The complainant's Application for Assistance form and supporting documentation;
 - 8.20.2 The insurer's response to the complaint;
 - 8.20.3 The complainant's reply to the insurer's response to the complaint;
 - 8.20.4 The Ombudsman's finding in relation to the complaint and any reasons furnished by the Ombudsman for any ruling or finding; and
 - 8.20.5 The submissions or representations made by the parties to the Appeal Tribunal in connection with the appeal.
- 8.21 The Ombudsman may, in his discretion, when submitting the documentation to the Appeal Tribunal in connection with any appeal, make representations to the Appeal

Tribunal by way of explanation or elaboration of his earlier determination and shall be entitled in such representations to deal with such matters as policy, industry practices and the approach followed by him in regard to equity. In addition the Ombudsman may furnish the Appeal Tribunal with such other information as he may consider to be of assistance or guidance to the Appeal Tribunal, save that the parties shall be afforded an opportunity to respond to any such additional material thus placed before the Appeal Tribunal.

- 8.22 Save as aforesaid, the Ombudsman shall not participate in the appeal process save where he should be asked to do so by the Appeal Tribunal itself on such terms and in such manner as may be determined by the Tribunal.

Composition of the Appeal Tribunal

- 8.23 The Chairman of the Board, in consultation with the Vice-Chairman, must appoint the members of the Appeal Tribunal from the persons nominated by the Ombudsman.

- 8.24 The Appeal Tribunal must consist of a Chairperson and at least two members appointed for a minimum period of two years.

- 8.25 The Chairman of the Board must appoint the Chairperson of the Appeal Tribunal and such Chairperson must either be a retired Judge or a practicing Attorney or Advocate, or a person who formally practiced as an Attorney or Advocate, with at least ten years' experience and with appropriate experience in Insurance Law.

- 8.26 The Chairperson of the Appeal Tribunal is responsible for assigning matters for adjudication, taking into consideration the nature and complexity of the dispute or any special circumstance, to a panel of two or more members of the Appeal Tribunal who are suitably qualified to decide on a particular matter.

- 8.27 The Chairman of the panel must be the Chairperson of the Appeal Tribunal.

- 8.28 The person's nominated by the Ombudsman must be:

8.28.1 Practicing Attorneys or Advocates or persons who formerly practiced as an Attorney or Advocate, with at least ten years' experience and with appropriate experience in Insurance Law, and may include retired Judges; or

8.28.2 Persons with extensive experience in relation to the insurance industry and who by virtue of their knowledge, training and experience are able to perform the functions of a member of the Appeal Tribunal; or

8.28.3 Academics with the particular knowledge of specific areas of the law or persons of specific knowledge, skill or training whose expertise as an expert in any particular field may be appropriate.

8.29 The Chairman of the Appeal Tribunal may, in consultation with the Chairman of the Board and the Ombudsman, appoint a person who is not a member of the Appeal Tribunal to serve on the panel if in the opinion of the Chairperson of the Appeal Tribunal such appointment is merited or deemed desirable.

The hearing of Appeals

8.30 The Ombudsman shall be in charge of all practical or administrative matters preceding and relating to the hearing of an appeal and shall be responsible for the preparation of the record, the giving of notices and the making of arrangements for the hearing of an appeal, the recording of evidence, if any, and all such other matters incidental to the hearing or disposal of the appeal.

8.31 The Appeal Tribunal shall determine its own procedure both prior to and during the course of the hearing, including the hearing of oral evidence.

8.32 Appeals shall be heard at such place and time and in such manner as the Appeal Tribunal shall determine from time to time.

8.33 Not later than 10 business days before the hearing of an appeal, the appellant shall deliver to the Ombudsman a concise and succinct statement of the main points which he intends to argue on appeal, as well as the list of legal authorities (if any) to be tendered in support of each point to be raised. Not later than 5 business days before the hearing of an appeal, the respondent shall deliver a similar statement.

8.34 The Chairman of the Appeal Tribunal may, after consultation with the Ombudsman, direct that a contemplated appeal be dealt with as an urgent matter and that the appeal be prosecuted at such time and in such manner as the Chairman of the Appeal Tribunal deems appropriate.

8.35 The Appeal Tribunal should approach the matter on appeal put forward as if it were the Ombudsman determining the complaint. The Appeal Tribunal shall take into account the balance of probabilities and its finding shall be based on the criteria of law, equity and fairness.

8.36 The Appeal Tribunal shall deliver its judgment on the matter in writing to the Ombudsman within one calendar month of the conclusion of the hearing. The Ombudsman shall in turn deliver a copy thereof to the parties within a period of 10 business days.

Representation

- 8.37 Any party to any appeal shall have the right to be represented at the hearing but, wherever possible, the parties should confine their submissions in regard to matters before the Appeal Tribunal to written submissions contained in a statement of case including, where appropriate, heads of argument.
- 8.38 Any party who employs a representative to represent their interest before the Appeal Tribunal shall be personally responsible for any fees and expenses associated with such representation.

The Effect of the Decision and Order of the Appeal Tribunal

- 8.39 Where a complainant appeals against the ruling or finding of the Ombudsman, such person shall abide by the decision of the Appeal Tribunal and the order of the Appeal Tribunal shall be final and binding in relation to the proceedings before the office of the Ombudsman. The complainant shall however be entitled, if so desired, to thereafter pursue the matter further in any court of law.
- 8.40 An unsuccessful appellant insurer shall have no further right of recourse or action and shall be bound by the terms of the order of the Appeal Tribunal save that nothing contained herein shall in any way affect the right of an insurer to review any ruling made by the Ombudsman or the Appeal Tribunal in a court of law.

Precedent

- 8.41 In recognition of the requirement that rulings made by the Ombudsman shall not establish any precedent in the Ombudsman's office, the decisions of the Appeal Tribunal shall not be accorded any formal status or regarded as creating binding precedents, but may serve as guidelines for future cases. Such findings or orders may however, serve as strong persuasive value for the Ombudsman and any other Appeal Tribunal in which the same dispute may be raised so as to ensure consistency in the decisions of the office of the Ombudsman.

Cost to the Parties to Appeals

- 8.42 Where an insurer notes an appeal against any final ruling of the Ombudsman and is not, in the opinion of the Chairman of the Appeal Tribunal, successful with such appeal, it shall defray the cost of such appeal incurred by the Ombudsman in connection with the appeal proceedings.

- 8.43 Where the insurer is the appellant in any proceedings, save where the Chairman of the Appeal Tribunal may direct otherwise, the cost to be paid by the insurer in relation to any appeal proceedings may be determined by the Board of the Ombudsman for Short-term Insurance, from time to time.
- 8.44 Where the complainant is the appellant in any appeal proceedings the Ombudsman may, in his discretion and taking into account, inter alia, the amount of the claim, the complexity of the issues and the complainant's personal circumstances, call upon such party to pay a deposit in an amount determined by the Ombudsman which deposit shall be refunded to the appellant should the appellant be successful in the appeal. In the event that the appeal fails, the deposit shall be forfeited to the office of the Ombudsman and shall constitute the only liability on the part of the complainant for the costs of the appeal proceedings. If the appeal is, in the view of the Appeal Tribunal, successful, the amount paid by the appellant shall be refunded to the appellant.
- 8.45 In no case shall the Appeal Tribunal award costs in favour of a successful party and in no case shall a losing party to an appeal be ordered by the Appeal Tribunal to pay costs to the other party, save where the Chairman of the Appeal Tribunal considers that, having regard to the presence of exceptional circumstances, a punitive order as to costs against any party is merited."