
Newfoundland & Labrador

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

ON OPERATIONS CARRIED OUT UNDER

THE AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE ACT

Chapter A-22, RSNL 1990, AS AMENDED

FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 1, 2010 TO MARCH 31, 2011

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report highlights the main activities of the Board in carrying out its mandate under the *Automobile Insurance Act*.

During 2010-2011 the Board received 40 Category 1 filings (reflecting no changes or reductions in rates) and issued 17 Orders involving Category 2 rate filings (representing rate increases). The Board did not conduct any compliance audits of automobile insurers operating in the Province during the period.

There were no significant changes in the market or its composition over the year. Based on the most recently available market information (2009) 53 automobile insurers reported positive direct premiums written of \$318,128,000 in the Province, compared to \$292,301,000 in 2008. The market continues to show a high level of concentration, with 13 insurers writing 88% of all the automobile insurance business in the Province.

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LEGISLATION

The *Automobile Insurance Act*, Chapter A-22, RSNL 1990, and the *Insurance Companies Act*, Chapter I-10, RSNL 1990 as amended, provide the Board with specific statutory responsibilities concerning the regulation of aspects of the automobile insurance industry in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Specifically the Board has responsibility for: the rates charged by insurers for automobile insurance; underwriting guidelines used in the classification of business written; the grounds on which insurers may refuse to provide insurance or discontinue coverage; and, the risk classification system used by insurers to determine individual rates for all automobile insurance.

MARKETPLACE CHANGES

Based on the 2009 Report of the Superintendent of Insurance, the latest information available, there were 53 automobile insurers operating in Newfoundland and Labrador reporting positive Direct Premiums Written. Of the active companies, 13 wrote 88% of the automobile insurance market in the Province. The distribution of these companies by size and market share is shown in Table 1.

2009 Superintendent of Insurance Report

TABLE 1 2009 DISTRIBUTION OF COMPANIES BY SIZE AND MARKET SHARE AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE			
Volume of Direct Premiums Written (000's \$)	Number of Companies	Percent of Market Share (%)	Total Direct Premiums Written (000s \$)
0 - 1,000	31	2.14	6,825
1,001 - 5,000	10	9.69	30,823
Over 5,000	12	88.17	280,480
Totals	53	100.00	318,128

Table 2 shows comparative information for 2009 versus 2008 in relation to direct premiums written (DPW) and direct claims incurred (DCI) for automobile insurance. The total value for DPW in the Province increased by 8.12% from 2008 to 2009 while total DCI increased by 4.47%.

TABLE 2 2009 MARKET VOLUME AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE (000s \$)				
	2009	2008	Change	% Change
Direct Premiums Written (DPW)	318,128	292,301	25,827	8.12
Direct Claims Incurred (DCI)	187,854	179,458	8,396	4.47

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Table 3 contains a two-year comparative review of the automobile insurance market, showing year over year relative changes of the DPW and DCI (excluding claims expenses) incurred by the three premium classifications, Third Party Liability, Personal Accident and Other. The Other category includes coverages such as Collision, Comprehensive, Specified Perils and All Perils.

TABLE 3 2009 MARKET VOLUME BY CLASS AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE (000s \$)					
		2009	2008	\$ change	% change
Third Party Liability	DPW	207,520	190,405	17,115	8.25
Third Party Liability	DCI	119,098	118,623	475	0.40
Personal Accident	DPW	24,220	22,764	1,456	6.01
Personal Accident	DCI	11,112	12,284	-1,172	-10.55
Other	DPW	86,388	79,132	7,256	8.40
Other	DCI	57,644	48,581	9,063	15.72

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REGULATORY ACTIVITIES

Filings

During the year the Board issued 17 Automobile Insurance Orders in relation to Category 2 rate filings for rate increases or the establishment of new rates.

The Board also received 40 Category 1 filings representing no change or reductions in rates to insureds. Pursuant to legislative provisions, these filings are not subject to prior approval and may be implemented no sooner than 30 days following filing with the Board.

Included in the 40 Category 1 filings were a number of revisions to underwriting guidelines, risk classification systems and declination rules. These filings are not subject to prior approval but the Board may prohibit an insurer from using a ground or risk classification system that is found to violate provisions in legislation or regulations.

Compliance Audit Program

The Board has established a compliance audit program whereby the rates and rating practices of the regulated insurance companies are reviewed. The compliance audit program is designed to ensure that insurers writing business in the Province are charging rates that have been approved by the Board in accordance with the *Automobile Insurance Act* and the *Insurance Companies Act*. The audit program also ensures that agents and brokers of the insurer are interpreting the underwriting guidelines of the insurer correctly and that insureds of similar risk characteristics are being rated correctly.

Due to other demands on staff the Board did not conduct any compliance audits during the current year. With the hiring of additional staff in 2011 the Board intends to commence a number of compliance audits during 2011-2012.

Complaints

During the year the Board received a limited number of complaints and inquiries. These complaints and inquiries were generally in relation to rating practices of insurers and/or agents.

Expenses

The expenses of the Board in relation to insurance operations for 2010-2011 were budgeted at \$536,043. These costs were assessed against insurers, with the approval of the Minister pursuant to Section 59 of the *Automobile Insurance Act*, at a rate of 1.685 mils on the direct automobile insurance premiums written in the Province by the market. A five-year summary of assessments and mil rates is shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4 2006 - 2011 ASSESSMENTS AND MIL RATES		
Year	Assessments	Mil Rate
2010 - 2011	\$536,043	1.685
2009 - 2010	\$760,689	2.602
2008 - 2009	\$641,937	2.387
2007 - 2008	\$501,463	1.982
2006 - 2007	\$539,250	2.050

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