

Risk Management – CPLIC Claims Handling Guidelines

AUTOMOBILE LIABILITY CLAIMS

This guideline and suggested report format should be considered if there are no specific instructions given to you by your client.

1. **Acknowledgment:**

All auto cases should be acknowledged via email or mailed acknowledgment letter. The handling adjuster and file number should also be provided.

2. **Contact:**

Contact with the insured and claimant should be made within 24 hours after receipt of assignment. Contact should be made by telephone, scheduling an in-person meeting as required/ necessary.

3. **Investigation Required:**

Most assignments received usually have specific instructions as to what your client would like you to accomplish. If not, use your good judgment to undertake the appropriate investigation necessary, analyze any coverage issues, determine liability, and finally to confirm and document all injury claims.

4. **Use of Experts/Consultants:**

If required, experts/consultants can enhance any complex claim issue. Always obtain permission from your principal before retaining an expert.

5. **Reporting and Communication:**

For full-caption auto reports, the attached preliminary report format should be considered. Your goal should be to get the preliminary report to your client either by U.S. Mail or Email within 15 days of receipt. Status reports should follow every 30 days thereafter.

6. **Attorney Involvement:**

In your claims investigation, you could be dealing with either plaintiff attorneys, defense attorneys or coverage attorneys. However, unless your company is a Third Party Administrator (TPA), all decisions on the selection and scope of work usually comes from your principal.

7. **Conclusion:**

Once your basic investigation is complete, determine from your principal if they want you to continue to monitor the file or close out your handling.

8. **Billing Procedures:**

Most auto files should be billed at periodic intervals. Remember, two \$400.00 invoices usually sit better with your client than one \$800.00 invoice.

9. **Final Comments:**

The key to a successful relationship with your clients is that they know what they expect from you. If you are unsure of the scope of investigation or do not understand the preliminary instructions, re-contact your client for clarification. Remember, if a file starts out properly, it usually ends with a good result. However, if a file starts off improperly, it usually stays that way and an account could be lost.

Casualty

Preliminary Report – Full Caption Format

FACTS IN BRIEF	A three to four sentence description of the accident.
COVERAGE	Policy number, limits, deductible and policy dates. An indication that coverage is in order and proper. If there is a coverage question, then a separate caption should be made titled COVERAGE QUESTION, then very briefly explain the coverage issue.
POLICE REPORT	Summarize findings of officer and cite applicable vehicle code by number.
DIAGRAM & PHOTOS	Indicate that the diagram and photos are attached. Comment on anything significant. Mount and give description of each photo.
INSURED'S STATEMENT	A brief version of the insured's account of the accident. Also comment on the insured – the manner in which questions were answered and overall appearance.

Casualty

Preliminary Report – Full Caption Format (cont.)

INSURED'S VEHICLE	Indicate the cost of repairs, shop doing repair work and photos, if taken.
CLAIMANT CONTACT	Name, address, phone, occupation, marital status. The claimant's version of the accident, injury and disability involved. Give a brief impression of the claimant. Each BI claimant should be summarized.
PROPERTY DAMAGE	Indicate amount of repairs, A.C.V. and how we are controlling L.O.U., if any, as well as an estimation of the necessary repair time.
PACIFIC COAST INDEX	We are attaching Pacific Coast Index material (card or index form).
WITNESS	Identify witness and give a brief description of the witness' version. Comment on his/her veracity.
LIABILITY & THEORY OF DEFENSE	Clearly state whether you consider this to be a case of adverse liability, little or no liability, or are reserving comments until we have completed the investigation. With regard to comparative negligence, give an appropriate liability percentage. We should clearly indicate what our theory of defense will be, as well as the elements of that defense.
RESERVES	All reports must have a recommended reserve. The format is as follows: John Doe BI: \$2,500.00 John Doe PD: \$750.00 Felix Doe BI: \$1,000.00 etc.
FURTHER HANDLING	Indicate your plans for all future investigation necessary to complete the file.
ENCLOSURES	List all in order. A uniform, logical sequence of arrangement is recommended.