

WAC 284-30-940 Environmental claim mediation program. The commissioner has found and hereby defines it to be an unfair act or practice or an unfair method of competition for an insurer to fail to participate in good faith in nonbinding mediation requested by an insured concerning the existence, terms, or conditions of a lost policy, or regarding coverage for an environmental claim.

(1) The insured may request in writing that the insurer participate in nonbinding mediation.

(2) Upon request from an insured for nonbinding mediation, an insurer shall provide an insured with information concerning an environmental claim mediation program. The information shall include, but need not be limited to, a description of how an insured can efficiently commence a mediation program.

(3) The purposes of mediation shall include, but need not be limited to, the following:

(a) To assist the parties in resolving disputes concerning whether or not a general liability insurance policy applicable to the environmental claim was issued to the insured by the insurer or concerning the relevant terms, conditions, and exclusions of the policy;

(b) To determine whether the entire claim, or a portion thereof, can be settled by agreement of the parties;

(c) If the claim cannot be settled, to determine whether one or more issues can be resolved to the satisfaction of the parties; or

(d) To discuss any other methods of streamlining or reducing the cost of litigation.

(4) Mediation shall be conducted pursuant to mediation rules similar to those of the American Arbitration Association, the Center for Public Resources, the Judicial Arbitration and Mediation Service, RCW 7.70.100, or any other rules of mediation agreed to by the parties.

(5) Unless otherwise agreed, information provided and statements made by either party in a mediation shall be kept confidential by the parties and used only for purposes of the mediation in accordance with RCW 5.60.070.

(6) Insureds and insurers shall have representatives present, or available by telephone, with authority to settle the matter at all mediation sessions.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 48.02.060, 48.30.010, 48.01.030, 48.05.280, 48.15.100 and 48.15.170. WSR 95-09-014 (Order R 94-30), § 284-30-940, filed 4/10/95, effective 5/11/95.]