AN ACT Relating to insurance adjusters; and amending RCW 1

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

Sec. 1. RCW 48.17.010 and 2012 c 211 s 4 are each amended to
read as follows:

The definitions in this section apply throughout this title
unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Adjuster" means any person who, for compensation as an
independent contractor or as an employee of an independent
contractor, or for fee or commission, investigates or reports to the
adjuster's principal relative to claims arising under insurance
contracts, on behalf solely of either the insurer or the insured)
either investigates and negotiates settlement relative to insurance
claims, or applies the factual circumstances of an insurance claim to
the insurance policy provisions, or both, arising under property and
casualty insurance contracts. An attorney-at-law who adjusts
insurance losses from time to time incidental to the practice of his
or her profession or an adjuster of marine losses is not deemed to be
an "adjuster" for the purpose of this chapter. A salaried employee of
an insurer or of a managing general agent is not deemed to be an
"adjuster" for the purpose of this chapter, except when acting as a
crop adjuster. An appraiser or umpire functioning under the appraisal clause in an insurance contract is not deemed to be an "adjuster" for the purpose of this chapter.

(a) "Independent adjuster" means an adjuster representing the interests of the insurer.

(b) "Public adjuster" means an adjuster employed by and representing solely the financial interests of the insured named in the policy.

(c) "Crop adjuster" means an adjuster, including (i) an independent adjuster, (ii) a public adjuster, and (iii) an employee of an insurer or managing general agent, who acts as an adjuster for claims arising under crop insurance. A salaried employee of an insurer or of a managing general agent who is certified by a crop adjuster program approved by the risk management agency of the United States department of agriculture is not a "crop adjuster" for the purposes of this chapter. Proof of certification must be provided to the commissioner upon request.

(d) For the purposes of this chapter:

(i) "Appraiser" means a person selected by the insurer or the insured to place a value on or estimate the amount of loss under an appraisal clause in an insurance contract.

(ii) "Umpire" means a person selected by the appraisers representing the insurer and the insured, or, if the appraisers cannot agree, by the court, who is charged with resolving issues that the appraisers are unable to agree upon during the course of an appraisal.

(2) "Business entity" means a corporation, association, partnership, limited liability company, limited liability partnership, or other legal entity.

(3) "Crop insurance" means insurance coverage for damage to crops from unfavorable weather conditions, fire or lightning, flood, hail, insect infestation, disease, or other yield-reducing conditions or perils provided by the private insurance market, or multiple peril crop insurance reinsured by the federal crop insurance corporation, including but not limited to revenue insurance.

(4) "Home state" means the District of Columbia and any state or territory of the United States or province of Canada in which an insurance producer or adjuster maintains the insurance producer's or adjuster's principal place of residence or principal place of
business, and is licensed to act as an insurance producer or adjuster.

(5) "Insurance education provider" means any insurer, health care service contractor, health maintenance organization, professional association, educational institution created by Washington statutes, or vocational school licensed under Title 28C RCW, or independent contractor to which the commissioner has granted authority to conduct and certify completion of a course satisfying the insurance education requirements of RCW 48.17.150.

(6) "Insurance producer" means a person required to be licensed under the laws of this state to sell, solicit, or negotiate insurance. "Insurance producer" does not include title insurance agents as defined in subsection (16) of this section or surplus line brokers licensed under chapter 48.15 RCW.

(7) "Insurer" has the same meaning as in RCW 48.01.050, and includes a health care service contractor as defined in RCW 48.44.010 and a health maintenance organization as defined in RCW 48.46.020.

(8) "License" means a document issued by the commissioner authorizing a person to act as an insurance producer or title insurance agent for the lines of authority specified in the document. The license itself does not create any authority, actual, apparent, or inherent, in the holder to represent or commit to an insurer.

(9) "Limited line credit insurance" includes credit life, credit disability, credit property, credit unemployment, involuntary unemployment, mortgage life, mortgage guaranty, mortgage disability, automobile dealer gap insurance, and any other form of insurance offered in connection with an extension of credit that is limited to partially or wholly extinguishing the credit obligation that the commissioner determines should be designated a form of limited line credit insurance.

(10) "NAIC" means national association of insurance commissioners.

(11) "Negotiate" means the act of conferring directly with, or offering advice directly to, a purchaser or prospective purchaser of a particular contract of insurance concerning any of the substantive benefits, terms, or conditions of the contract, provided that the person engaged in that act either sells insurance or obtains insurance from insurers for purchasers.

(12) "Person" means an individual or a business entity.
(13) "Sell" means to exchange a contract of insurance by any means, for money or its equivalent, on behalf of an insurer.

(14) "Solicit" means attempting to sell insurance or asking or urging a person to apply for a particular kind of insurance from a particular insurer.

(15) "Terminate" means the cancellation of the relationship between an insurance producer and the insurer or the termination of an insurance producer's authority to transact insurance.

(16) "Title insurance agent" means a business entity licensed under the laws of this state and appointed by an authorized title insurance company to sell, solicit, or negotiate insurance on behalf of the title insurance company.

(17) "Uniform application" means the current version of the NAIC uniform application for individual insurance producers for resident and nonresident insurance producer licensing.

(18) "Uniform business entity application" means the current version of the NAIC uniform application for business entity insurance license or registration for resident and nonresident business entities.

Sec. 2. RCW 48.17.150 and 2010 c 67 s 5 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The commissioner shall by rule establish minimum continuing education requirements for the renewal or reissuance of a license to an insurance producer.

(2) The commissioner may by rule establish minimum continuing education requirements for the renewal or reissuance of a license to a crop adjuster, an independent adjuster, and a public adjuster.

(3) The commissioner shall require that continuing education courses will be made available on a statewide basis in order to ensure that persons residing in all geographical areas of this state will have a reasonable opportunity to attend such courses.

(4) The continuing education requirements must be appropriate to the license for the lines of authority specified in RCW 48.17.170 or by rule.

Sec. 3. RCW 48.17.410 and 2007 c 117 s 20 are each amended to read as follows:

An adjuster shall have authority under an adjuster's license only to either investigate ((or report)) and negotiate settlement relative
to insurance claims, or apply the factual circumstances of an insurance claim to the insurance policy provisions, or both, to the adjuster's principal upon claims as limited under RCW 48.17.010(1) on behalf only of the insurers if licensed as an independent adjuster, or on behalf only of insureds if licensed as a public adjuster. An adjuster licensed concurrently as both an independent and a public adjuster shall not represent both the insurer and the insured in the same transaction.

Sec. 4. RCW 48.17.420 and 2010 c 67 s 7 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) An insurance producer or title insurance agent may from time to time act as an adjuster on behalf of and as authorized by an insurer for which an insurance producer or title insurance agent has been appointed as an agent and investigate and report upon claims without being required to be licensed as an adjuster. An insurance producer or title insurance agent must not act as a crop adjuster or investigate or report upon claims arising under crop insurance without first obtaining a crop adjuster license or, if a salaried employee of an insurer or of a managing general agent, without first being certified by a crop adjuster proficiency program approved by the risk management agency of the United States department of agriculture.

(2) Except for losses arising under crop insurance, a license by this state is not required of a nonresident independent adjuster, for the adjustment in this state of a single loss, or of losses arising out of a catastrophe common to all such losses from which the governor proclaims a state of emergency, if the nonresident independent adjuster registers with the commissioner as an emergency adjuster and includes:

(a) The nonresident independent adjuster's name;
(b) The nonresident independent adjuster's contact information;
(c) The nonresident independent adjuster's home state and license number;
(d) The single loss or specific proclamation from the governor that details the emergency; and
(e) The insurers the nonresident independent adjuster is representing.

(3) An emergency adjuster:
(a) Must not operate longer than one hundred eighty days, unless extended by the commissioner;

(b) Is subject to all the disciplinary provisions and penalties of this title and Title 284 WAC; and

(c) Is subject to the jurisdiction of the courts of the state of Washington concerning civil liability for all acts in any way related to the emergency adjuster's actions in Washington state.

(3) For losses arising under crop insurance, a license by this state is not required of a nonresident crop adjuster, for the adjustment in this state of a single loss, or of losses arising out of a catastrophe common to all such losses, if the nonresident crop adjuster is:

(a) Licensed as a crop adjuster in another state;

(b) Certified by the risk management agency of the United States department of agriculture; or

(c) A salaried employee of an insurer or of a managing general agent who is certified by a crop adjuster proficiency program approved by the risk management agency of the United States department of agriculture.

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