

1 **THE STATE SENATE**
2 **Thursday, February 10, 2005**

3 **Senate Bill No. 621**

4 SENATE BILL NO. 621 - By: RILEY of the Senate and ASKINS of the
5 House.

6 An Act relating to insurance; amending 36 O.S. 2001, Section
7 1250.8, as amended by Section 1, Chapter 358, O.S.L. 2003
8 (36 O.S. Supp. 2004, Section 1250.8), which relates to the
9 Unfair Claims Settlement Practices Act; making insurer
10 responsible for certain towing and storage fees; providing
11 exceptions; requiring certain request for information;
12 authorizing access to certain records and reports; stating
13 what is sufficient notice; defining term; and providing an
14 effective date.

15 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

16 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 36 O.S. 2001, Section 1250.8, as
17 amended by Section 1, Chapter 358, O.S.L. 2003 (36 O.S. Supp. 2004,
18 Section 1250.8), is amended to read as follows:

19 Section 1250.8 A. If an insurance policy or insurance contract
20 provides for the adjustment and settlement of first party motor
21 vehicle total losses, on the basis of actual cash value or
22 replacement with another of like kind and quality, one of the
23 following methods shall apply:

24 1. An insurer may elect to offer a replacement motor vehicle
25 which is a specific comparable motor vehicle available to the
26 insured, with all applicable taxes, license fees, and other fees
27 incident to the transfer of evidence of ownership of the motor
28 vehicle paid, at no cost to the insured other than any deductible

1 provided in the policy. The offer and any rejection thereof shall
2 be documented in the claim file; or

3 2. An insured may elect a cash settlement based upon the actual
4 cost, less any deductible provided in the policy, to purchase a
5 comparable motor vehicle, including all applicable taxes, license
6 fees and other fees incident to a transfer of evidence of ownership,
7 or a comparable motor vehicle. Such cost may be determined by:

8 a. the cost of a comparable motor vehicle in the local
9 market area when a comparable motor vehicle is
10 available in the local market area,

11 b. one of two or more quotations obtained by an insurer
12 from two or more qualified dealers located within the
13 local market area when a comparable motor vehicle is
14 not available in the local market area, or

15 c. the cost of a comparable motor vehicle as quoted in
16 the latest edition of the National Automobile Dealers
17 Association Official Used Car Guide or monthly edition
18 of any other nationally recognized published
19 guidebook.

20 B. If a first party motor vehicle total loss is settled on a
21 basis which deviates from the methods described in subsection A of
22 this section, the deviation shall be supported by documentation
23 giving particulars of the condition of the motor vehicle. Any

1 deductions from such cost, including, but not limited to, deduction
2 for salvage, shall be measurable, discernible, itemized and
3 specified as to dollar amount and shall be appropriate in amount.
4 The basis for such settlement shall be fully explained to a first
5 party claimant.

6 C. If liability for motor vehicle damages is reasonably clear,
7 insurers shall not recommend that third party claimants make claims
8 pursuant to the third party claimants' own policies solely to avoid
9 paying claims pursuant to such insurer's insurance policy or
10 insurance contract.

11 D. Insurers shall not require a claimant to travel unreasonably
12 either to inspect a replacement motor vehicle, obtain a repair
13 estimate or have the motor vehicle repaired at a specific repair
14 shop.

15 E. Insurers shall, upon the request of a claimant, include the
16 deductible of a first party claimant, if any, in subrogation
17 demands. Subrogation recoveries shall be shared on a proportionate
18 basis with a first party claimant, unless the deductible amount has
19 been otherwise recovered. No deduction for expenses shall be made
20 from a deductible recovery unless an outside attorney is retained to
21 collect such recovery. The deduction shall then be made for only a
22 pro rata share of the allocated loss adjustment expense.

1 F. If an insurer prepares an estimate of the cost of automobile
2 repairs, such estimate shall be in an amount for which it reasonably
3 may be expected that the damage can be repaired satisfactorily. An
4 insurer shall give a copy of an estimate to a claimant and may
5 furnish to the claimant the names of one or more conveniently
6 located repair shops, if requested by the claimant.

7 G. If an amount claimed is reduced because of betterment or
8 depreciation, all information for such reduction shall be contained
9 in the claim file. Such deductions shall be itemized and specified
10 as to dollar amount and shall be appropriate for the amount of
11 deductions.

12 H. An insurer or its representative shall not require a
13 claimant to obtain motor vehicle repairs at a specific repair
14 facility. An insurer or its representative shall not require a
15 claimant to obtain motor vehicle glass repair or replacement at a
16 specific motor vehicle glass repair or replacement facility. An
17 insurer shall fully and promptly pay for the cost of the motor
18 vehicle repair services or products, less any applicable deductible
19 amount payable according to the terms of the policy. The claimant
20 shall be furnished an itemized priced statement of repairs by the
21 repair facility at the time of acceptance of the repaired motor
22 vehicle. Unless a cash settlement is made, if a claimant selects a
23 motor vehicle repair or motor vehicle glass repair or replacement

1 facility, the insurer shall provide payment to the facility or
2 claimant based on a competitive price, as established by that
3 insurer through market surveys or by the insured through competitive
4 bids at the insured's option, to determine a fair and reasonable
5 market price for similar services. Reasonable deviation from this
6 market price is allowed based on the facts in each case.

7 I. An insurer shall not use as a basis for cash settlement with
8 a first party claimant an amount which is less than the amount which
9 an insurer would pay if repairs were made, other than in total loss
10 situations, unless such amount is agreed to by the insured.

11 J. An insurer shall not force a claimant to execute a full
12 settlement release in order to settle a property damage claim
13 involving a personal injury.

14 K. All payment or satisfaction of a claim for a motor vehicle
15 which has been transferred by title to the insurer shall be paid by
16 check or draft, payable on demand.

17 L. In the event of payment of a total loss to a third party
18 claimant, the insurer shall include any registered lienholder as
19 copayee to the extent of the lienholder's interest. If an insurer
20 accepts liability for a claim, the insurer is responsible for
21 wrecker and storage fees for the total loss vehicle or a pro rata
22 share of the wrecker and storage fees for the total loss vehicle if
23 the loss limits of the insurance policy have been exceeded. An

1 insurer shall pay wrecker and storage fees for the total loss
2 vehicle or include the licensed wrecker service as a copayee on the
3 payment for the total loss vehicle, except when:

4 1. A receipt from the licensed wrecker service indicating full
5 payment has been received by the licensed wrecker service is in
6 possession of the insurer or the agent of the insurer; or

7 2. The wrecker service fails to provide notice by mail to an
8 insurer within seven (7) business days of receipt of information
9 confirming the insurer of an obvious total loss vehicle. In order
10 to determine the identity of the insurer of an obvious total loss
11 vehicle, the wrecker service shall, within three (3) business days
12 of the tow date, or, in the case of a vehicle with a missing or
13 unidentifiable vehicle identification number (VIN), when the vehicle
14 is identified, request the Oklahoma Tax Commission or other
15 appropriate motor license agent to furnish the name of the insurer.
16 The wrecker service shall also be allowed access to pertinent
17 records of the Tax Commission and law enforcement records of
18 accident reports for the purpose of determining such information of
19 the insurer of the vehicle. Inspecting, photographing or inquiring
20 about the claimant's vehicle by the insurer at the wrecker service
21 within seven (7) business days of the tow date shall serve as
22 sufficient notice by the wrecker service as required by this
23 paragraph. For the purposes of this paragraph, "obvious total loss"

1 means that the vehicle has sufficient damage such that a reasonable
2 and prudent layperson could expect the vehicle to be deemed a total
3 loss.

4 M. As used in this section, "total loss" means that the vehicle
5 repair costs plus the salvage value of the vehicle meets or exceeds
6 the actual cash value of the motor vehicle prior to the loss, as
7 provided in used automobile dealer guidebooks.

8 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2005.

9 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS AND LABOR, dated 2-7-05 -
10 DO PASS, As Coauthored.