

24 March 2020

Information for Consumers: Coverage under Insurance Policies in the context of COVID-19

The MFSA is monitoring developments in relation to the spread of Coronavirus (“COVID-19”) pandemic. In this respect, the MFSA is working closely with authorised insurance companies to understand and assess the potential impact of COVID-19 on the interests of their clients, as well as to ensure their fair treatment. In this regard, on the 20 March 2020, the MFSA also issued a [Circular to insurance undertakings highlighting its expectations](#).

This Information Update aims to draw your attention to the following matters arising out of COVID-19 which may affect you as a consumer of insurance products:

1. General Information

You need to be aware that any changes in the terms and conditions relating to your insurance policies issued prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 (which was declared a pandemic by World Health Organisation on 11 March 2020) cannot apply retrospectively or mid-term during the policy period.

In addition, your attention is drawn to the fact that new policies issued may include amendments and, or exclusions, which cater for risks arising due to COVID-19.

It is also recommended that you always make reference to the policy wording, including terms and conditions, as well as policy exclusions for coverage accordingly.

Furthermore, as a policy holder, you may have encountered changes in your circumstances, due to COVID 19. This may have an impact on your current insurance policies, such as your home contents or a travel policy. You may wish to contact your insurance company to discuss these changes and the effect they have on the policies which you hold.

2. Travel Insurance

Holiday has been Cancelled

If your holiday has been cancelled, you would need to contact your travel agent or your travel provider regarding a refund or re-booking for another date. In this regard, you should also refer to the [press release issued by the Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority \(MCCAA\)](#).

COVID-19 Exclusions

Travel Insurance Policies issued prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 may have not included any exclusions with respect to COVID-19. If, in the future, you request to purchase a Travel Policy you will need to confirm with your Insurance company the coverage that is being offered in this respect.

Self-Isolation

If your holiday stay had to be extended due to any mandatory conditions imposed by the relevant country of your stay, whereby you are *inter alia* required to self-isolate (for instance, extended hotel accommodation), it is advisable that you contact your insurance provider.

Travel or Holiday Planning

Anyone planning to travel needs to refer to the travel guidelines and restrictions issued by the Government of Malta through the following [link](#), which may be amended from time to time.

You will need to speak to your insurance company and discuss the cover that will best suit your needs. There may be instances where cover relating to COVID-19 is not available. If you are travelling against Government advice, your travel insurance may not be valid unless it is essential travel.

3. Health Insurance

Under certain circumstances your active policies which offer health insurance coverage may allow for a claim arising due to COVID-19, that is, for the purposes of treatment of COVID-19, insofar as this falls within the limits established by the terms and conditions of your policy.

4. Home insurance

You may have changed or will be changing the location from which you perform certain activities and where you keep certain items or possessions. For instance, you may need to use your home as a workplace and have work-related assets at your home or residence.

This may raise certain concerns with respect to the cover under your current policy and therefore, it is recommended that you contact your insurance company and confirm accordingly.

5. Event cancellation

If an event that you were due to attend has been cancelled, you will need to contact the ticket operator or the event organisers who may reschedule the event or offer a refund.

6. Product suspension

Some insurance companies are considering or have stopped selling certain new insurance policies to customers. The Authority is not able to prevent firms from removing products from the market for new clients.

If you are looking for an insurance coverage, we suggest you speak directly to an authorised insurance company or insurance intermediary to ensure that the policy you intend to purchase covers all your demands and needs. Entities regulated by the MFSA are listed in the Financial Services Register, which can be accessed from [here](#).

7. Monthly Payment Premiums

If you have an insurance policy for which premium payments are performed monthly and if, for any reason, you are encountering a financial difficulty, it is advisable that you contact your insurance company at your earliest and explain your particular situation to them.

8. Renewing your Insurance Policy

If your insurance policy is due for renewal, contact your insurance company to allow enough time to renew accordingly.

Please be aware that upon renewal of your relevant policy, claims in connection with COVID-19 may be excluded. Discuss this accordingly with your insurance provider.

9. Scams

At this stage, you also need to be aware of any scams related to COVID-19 which may be made in various forms and could potentially be directed towards the distribution of insurance policies.