

# Top tips when making an insurance claim

## What should you do, or not do, when making a claim on your insurance policy?

**CLAIMING.** Making an insurance claim can be stressful at the best of times but, if you want your policy to pay out, it's important to get it right from the outset. This applies whether we are talking about an amateur radio insurance policy or a general household one, the process is similar.

The claims process isn't that well known (after all you don't expect to have to claim on a policy that often), but this lack of familiarity can lead to misunderstandings and often dissatisfaction with the outcome if a claim gets turned down unexpectedly by an insurer. Here are just a few of the most important things to bear in mind when making a claim.

**ACT QUICKLY.** All policies contain details of when to notify a claim and this forms part of the contract of insurance. Failure to comply with the notification timescale can invalidate a policy. Best advice is to notify the broker/insurer immediately you become aware of a claim or a circumstance has arisen that could give rise to a claim. Remember that if an item has been stolen or your property has suffered malicious damage you need to report it, immediately, to the police as this will be a condition of most policies.

**PROVIDE DETAIL PROMPTLY.** Notifying the claim involves submitting a degree of information. Beware that without this detail the claim can't be fully validated. One repeater group had a claim last year for storm damage to a mast and antenna; they notified their broker fairly promptly of the claim but failed to provide any of the necessary detail including

- Date of incident
- Location of incident
- Supporting evidence including photos and purchase receipts
- Details of any action that had been taken to minimise the loss
- Engineer's report to substantiate cause of damage and viability of repair.



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Several months later none of the details were forthcoming and this length of delay prejudiced the client's position to the point where the insurer could refuse to deal with the claim. One of the benefits of having an insurance broker to represent the client means that the broker might still be able to negotiate a settlement with the insurer, but this is by no means a foregone conclusion.

**BE CLEAR.** Check your cover and submit the claim under the correct heading. Be clear on what your policy *does* and *does not* cover before you take out the policy so that a claim is submitted appropriately. For example, out of all the claims for radio equipment that have crossed my desk, at least half of them have been storm damage. Insurers will be guided by the Met Office for determining if there was a 'storm' in the locality at the time of the damage; if the weather that caused the damage to the equipment at the time isn't classed as a storm by the Met Office then that claim will likely not be met as a 'storm' claim. Whilst this in itself can cause some frustration, perhaps more baffling is that if the same claim is instead resubmitted as accidental damage, the claim is likely to be considered. The remedy here is to ensure that you have an 'All Risks' policy in the first place and, if you can, check the Met Office records before submitting a claim for storm damage.

Historically, property was insured against specified perils such as fire, lightning, explosion, earthquake, storm, flood, theft

and other events specified in the policy. However, over the years it has become common for policies to be arranged on an 'All Risks' basis. All Risks does not mean that the insured property is actually insured against every conceivable eventuality but rather it is insured against all risks other than those that are specifically excluded, as defined in the policy.

**SUM INSURED.** Be aware that the sum insured must be adequate to replace the damaged/lost equipment with brand new equipment. If the sum insured is inadequate then insurers will apply 'Average', which is the technical name given to reducing the claim settlement to reflect under insurance.

**GATHER EVIDENCE.** Keep receipts as proof of purchase. If your equipment has been damaged try and take photos at the time of the damage to show what's happened as well as the general scene to show, for example, the weather conditions or fire damage etc.

**PROTOCOL.** Contact your broker / insurer before calling out someone to fix your equipment. Depending upon the circumstances and the amount of the claim, your insurer may require two estimates for repair or replacement costs. If your fixed base station transceiver has been damaged, say by a power spike, it may not be practical to send the radio to more than one specialist firm for quotation. As in the case for making prompt notification of claims, contact your broker or insurer as soon as possible to discuss your particular circumstances as it may be possible to agree that only one estimate is required.

**TIMESCALES.** Claims can take time to validate, negotiate and agree settlement. Do not expect claims to be agreed and paid immediately. The more paperwork is made available to substantiate a claim and values being claimed, the quicker it will be to bring the claim to a conclusion. Typically, allow around 1 month from start to finish to settle a claim but this timescale is not definitive and more complex claims by their very nature may take longer to deal with.

Amateur radio is a highly technical and specialised hobby with very specific cover needs. Navigating these tricky technical areas of an insurance policy can be baffling, but a specialist broker is there to manage the process on your behalf. South West Broking is recognised by the RSGB as a specialist insurance broker who can provide advice and guidance when seeking this type of insurance.

If you have any other questions feel free to get in touch – we're here to help. You can contact us on 01454 806 503 or by e-mail to julian@southwestbroking.co.uk