

§ 58-33-56. Notification to Commissioner of termination.

(a) An insurer or authorized representative of the insurer that terminates the appointment, employment, contract, or other insurance business relationship with a producer or limited representative shall notify the Commissioner within 30 days after the effective date of the termination, using a form prescribed by the Commissioner, if the reason for termination is for or related to one of the causes listed in G.S. 58-33-46(a) or the insurer has knowledge the producer or a limited representative was found by a court, government body, or self-regulatory organization authorized by law to have engaged in any of the activities in G.S. 58-33-46(a). Upon the written request of the Commissioner, the insurer shall provide additional information, documents, records, or other data pertaining to the termination or activity of the producer or limited representative.

(b) An insurer or authorized representative of the insurer that terminates the appointment, employment, or contract with a producer or limited representative for any reason that is not for or related to one of the causes listed in G.S. 58-33-46(a) shall notify the Commissioner within 30 days after the effective date of the termination, using a form prescribed by the Commissioner. Upon written request of the Commissioner, the insurer shall provide additional information, documents, records, or other data pertaining to the termination.

(c) The insurer or the authorized representative of the insurer shall promptly notify the Commissioner in a form acceptable to the Commissioner if, upon further review or investigation, the insurer discovers additional information that would have been reportable to the Commissioner in accordance with subsection (a) of this section had the insurer then known of its existence.

(d) Within 15 days after making the notification required by subsections (a), (b), and (c) of this section, the insurer shall notify the producer or limited representative using a form prescribed by the Commissioner. If the producer or limited representative is terminated for cause for any of the reasons listed in G.S. 58-33-46(a), the insurer shall provide a copy of the notification to the producer or limited representative at the producer's or limited representative's last known address by certified mail, return receipt requested, postage prepaid, or by overnight delivery using a nationally recognized carrier.

(e) Within 30 days after the producer or limited representative has received the original or additional notification, the producer or limited representative may file written comments concerning the substance of the notification with the Commissioner. The producer or limited representative shall, by the same means, simultaneously send a copy of the comments to the reporting insurer, and the comments shall become a part of the Commissioner's file and accompany every copy of a report distributed or disclosed for any reason about the producer or limited representative as permitted under subsection (h) of this section.

(f) In the absence of actual malice, neither an insurer, the authorized representative of the insurer, a producer, a limited representative, the Commissioner, an organization of which the Commissioner is a member, nor the respective employees and agents of such persons acting on behalf of such persons shall be subject to civil liability as a result of any statement or information provided pursuant to this section.

(g) In any action brought against a person that may have immunity under subsection (f) of this section for making any statement required by this section or for providing any information relating to any statement that may be requested by the Commissioner, the party bringing the action shall plead specifically in any allegation that subsection (f) of this section does not apply because the person making the statement or providing the information did so with actual malice. Subsections (f) and (g) of this section do not abrogate or modify any existing statutory or common law privileges or immunities.

(h) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter, any documents, materials, or other information in the control or possession of the Commissioner or any organization of which G.S. 58-33-56

the Commissioner is a member that is (i) furnished by an insurer, producer, limited representative, or an employee or agent thereof acting on behalf of the insurer, producer, or limited representative under this section, or (ii) obtained by the Commissioner in an investigation under this section shall be confidential by law and privileged, shall not be subject to or public records under G.S. 58-2-100 or Chapter 132 of the General Statutes, shall not be subject to subpoena, and shall not be subject to discovery in any civil action other than a proceeding brought by the Commissioner against a person to whom such documents, materials, or other information relate. However, the Commissioner is authorized to use the documents, materials, or other information in the furtherance of any regulatory or legal action brought as a part of the Commissioner's duties. Neither the Commissioner nor any person who received documents, materials, or other information while acting under the authority of the Commissioner shall be permitted or required to testify in any civil action other than a proceeding brought by the Commissioner against a person to whom such documents, materials, or other information relate concerning any such documents, materials, or information.

(i) In order to assist in the performance of the Commissioner's duties under this Article, the Commissioner may:

- (1) Share documents, materials, or other information, including the confidential documents, materials, or information described in this section, with other state, federal, and international regulatory agencies, with the NAIC, its affiliates or subsidiaries, and with state, federal, and international law enforcement authorities. The Commissioner may condition such sharing on an agreement by the recipient to maintain the confidentiality and privileged status of the document, material, or other information;
- (2) Receive documents, materials, or information, including otherwise confidential and privileged documents, materials, or information from other state, federal, and international regulatory agencies, from the NAIC, its affiliates or subsidiaries, and from state, federal, and international law enforcement authorities, and may agree to maintain the confidential and privileged status of the document, material, or other information received under the laws of the jurisdiction that is the source of the document, material, or information; and
- (3) Enter into agreements governing sharing and use of information consistent with this subsection.

(j) No waiver of any applicable privilege or claim of confidentiality in the documents, materials, or information shall occur as a result of disclosure to the Commissioner under this section or as a result of sharing as authorized in subsection (i) of this section.

(k) Nothing in this Article prohibits the Commissioner from releasing final, adjudicated actions including for cause terminations that are open to public inspection under G.S. 58-2-100, to a database or other clearinghouse service maintained by the NAIC, its affiliates, or subsidiaries of the NAIC.

(l) An insurer, the authorized representative of the insurer, producer, or limited representative that fails to report as required under this section or that is found to have reported with actual malice by a court of competent jurisdiction may, after notice and hearing, have its license suspended or revoked and may be fined in accordance with G.S. 58-2-70. (2001-203, s. 18; 2018-120, s. 4.4; 2022-46, s. 13(a).)