

**§ 58-8-25. Dividends to policyholders.**

(a) Any participating or dividend-paying company, stock or mutual or foreign or domestic, that writes other than life insurance or workers' compensation insurance and employers' liability insurance in connection therewith, may declare and pay a dividend to policyholders from its unassigned surplus, as reflected in the company's most recent annual or quarterly statement filed with the Commissioner under G.S. 58-2-165, which shall include only its surplus in excess of any required minimum surplus. No such dividend shall be paid unless it is fair and equitable and for the best interest of the company and its policyholders. In declaring any dividend to its policyholders, any such company may make reasonable classifications of policies expiring during a fixed period, upon the basis of each general kind of insurance covered by those policies and by territorial divisions of the location of risks by states, except that in fixing the amount of dividends to be paid on each general kind of insurance, the dividends shall be uniform in rate and applicable to the majority of risks within that general kind of insurance, and exceptions may be made as to any class or classes of risk and a different rate or amount of dividends paid on the class or classes if the conditions applicable to the class or classes differ substantially from the condition applicable to the kind of insurance as a whole. Every such company shall have an equal rate of dividend for the same term on all policies insuring risks in the same classification. The payment of dividends to policyholders shall not be contingent upon the maintenance or renewal of the policy. All dividends shall be paid to the policyholder unless a written assignment of those dividends is executed. Neither the payment of dividends nor the rate of the dividends may be guaranteed by any company, or its agent, before the declaration of the dividend by the board of directors of the company. The holders of policies of insurance issued by a company in compliance with the orders of any public official, bureau or committee, in conformity with any statutory requirement or voluntary arrangement, for the issuance of insurance to risks not otherwise acceptable to the company, may be established as a separate class of risks.

(b) Any participating or dividend-paying company, stock or mutual or foreign or domestic, that writes workers' compensation insurance and employers' liability insurance in connection therewith may declare and pay a dividend to policyholders from its unassigned surplus, as reflected in the company's most recent statement filed with the Commissioner under G.S. 58-2-165, which shall include only its surplus in excess of any required minimum surplus. No such dividend shall be paid unless it is fair and equitable and for the best interest of the company and its policyholders. In declaring any dividend to its policyholders, any such company may make reasonable classifications of policies expiring during a fixed period. The payment of dividends to policyholders shall not be contingent upon the maintenance or renewal of the policy. All dividends shall be paid to the policyholder unless a written assignment of those dividends is executed. Neither the payment of dividends nor the rate of the dividends may be guaranteed by any company, or its agent, before the declaration of the dividend by the board of directors of the company. The holders of policies of insurance issued by a company in compliance with the orders of any public official, bureau, or committee, in conformity with any statutory requirement or voluntary arrangement, for the issuance of insurance to risks not otherwise acceptable to the company, may be established as a separate class of risks. (1899, c. 54, s. 35; Rev., s. 4741; C.S., s. 6351; 1935, c. 89; 1945, c. 386; 1947, c. 721; 1955, c. 645; 1983, c. 374, ss. 2, 3; 2001-223, s. 9.2.)