

BUSINESS INTERRUPTION DURING COVID-19

A BRIEF GUIDE TO BUSINESS INTERRUPTION COVERAGE



Businesses across Wisconsin have been impacted by closures and losses related to the COVID-19 public health emergency. In order to help address questions related to business interruption insurance coverage, the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance (OCI) compiled this list of Frequently Asked Questions to help answer some of your questions. If you would like additional information, please contact us at ocicomplaints@wisconsin.gov. We will do our best to assist you.

WHAT IS BUSINESS INTERRUPTION COVERAGE?

Business interruption coverage provides coverage if the business premises, vital business equipment, or other business property becomes unusable because of a fire, explosion, or similar covered property peril (a specific cause of damage). It can help cover losses the business suffers while it is not operating normally.

HOW DO I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT MY BUSINESS INTERRUPTION COVERAGE?

Business interruption coverage is typically part of your Business Owners Policy (BOP), although it may have been purchased as an endorsement to your fire policy. The business interruption coverage language should list the specific types of events that it covers. You can also contact your insurance agent or broker for an explanation of your policy and coverage.

DOES BUSINESS INTERRUPTION COVERAGE PROVIDE COVERAGE IF MY BUSINESS IS IMPACTED BY COVID-19?

Generally, business interruption coverage requires physical injury or physical damage to the property to be activated. Some Business Owner Policies might have specific exclusions for viral infections such as COVID-19. We encourage business owners to consult their policy and insurance agent to see if their policy provides any business interruption coverage in the event of a communicable disease, virus, bacteria, pandemic, etc. If you are unsure whether you have the right coverage, we encourage you to file a claim with your insurer.

I HAVE BEEN DENIED BUSINESS INTERRUPTION COVERAGE FOR COVID-19. WHAT CAN I DO?

If after reviewing your policy and consulting with your insurance agent or broker you believe you have been improperly denied coverage, we encourage you to visit our website, <https://ociaccess.oci.wi.gov/complaints/public/>, to learn more about our complaint process. Our staff are always ready to help consumers and businesses with insurance issues.

ARE THERE ANY RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO HELP BUSINESSES IMPACTED BY COVID-19?

Yes, both state and federal resources are available to support businesses that have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) has compiled a list of some of those resources at <https://wedc.org/programs-and-resources/covid-19-response/>, including information about the Small Business 20/20 Program that provides grants of up to \$20,000 to assist targeted businesses with cash-flow challenges resulting from COVID-19. The WEDC page is updated as new resources become available, so please be sure to visit the site if you would like more information.

