

§2441. Minimum policy language simplification standards

1. Delivery. In addition to any other requirements of law, no policy forms, except as stated in section 2440, shall be delivered or issued for delivery in this State on or after the dates the forms must be approved under this Act unless:

A. The text achieves a minimum score of 50 on the Flesch reading ease test or an equivalent score on any other comparable test as provided in subsection 3; [PL 1979, c. 267, §2 (NEW).]

B. It is printed, except for specification pages, schedules and tables, in not less than 10-point type, one-point leaded; [PL 1979, c. 267, §2 (NEW).]

C. The style, arrangement and overall appearance of the policy give no undue prominence to any portion of the text of the policy or to any endorsements or riders; and [PL 1979, c. 267, §2 (NEW).]

D. It contains a table of contents or an index of the principal sections of the policy, if the policy has more than 3,000 words printed on 3 or fewer pages of text, or if the policy has more than 3 pages regardless of the number of words. [PL 1979, c. 267, §2 (NEW).]

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2. Test score measured. For the purposes of this section, a Flesch reading ease test score shall be measured by the following method:

A. For policy forms containing 10,000 words or less of text, the entire form shall be analyzed. For policy forms containing more than 10,000 words, the readability of two 200-word samples per page may be analyzed instead of the entire form. The samples shall be separated by at least 20 printed lines; [PL 1979, c. 267, §2 (NEW).]

B. The number of words and sentences in the text shall be counted and the total number of words divided by the total number of sentences. The figure obtained shall be multiplied by a factor of 1.015; [PL 1979, c. 267, §2 (NEW).]

C. The total number of syllables shall be counted and divided by the total number of words. The figure obtained shall be multiplied by a factor of 84.6; [PL 1979, c. 267, §2 (NEW).]

D. The sum of the figures computed under paragraphs B and C subtracted from 206.835 equals the Flesch reading ease score for the policy form; [PL 1979, c. 267, §2 (NEW).]

E. For purposes of this subsection, paragraphs B, C and D, the following procedures shall be used:

(1) A contraction, hyphenated word or numbers and letters, when separated by space, shall be counted as one word;

(2) A unit of words ending with a period, semicolon, or colon, but excluding headings and captions, shall be counted as a sentence; and

(3) A syllable means a unit of spoken language consisting of one or more letters of a word as divided by an accepted dictionary. Where the dictionary shows 2 or more equally acceptable pronunciations of a word, the pronunciation containing fewer syllables may be used; and [PL 1979, c. 267, §2 (NEW).]

F. The term "text" as used in this subsection shall include all printed matter except the following:

(1) The name and address of the insurer; the name, number or title of the policy; the table of contents or index; captions and subcaptions; specification pages, schedules or tables; and

(2) Any policy language which is drafted to conform to the requirements of any federal law, regulation or agency interpretation; any policy language required by any collectively bargained agreement; any medical terminology; any words which are defined in the policy; and any policy language required by law or regulation; provided, the insurer identifies the language or

terminology excepted by this paragraph and certifies, in writing, that the language or terminology is entitled to be excepted by this subparagraph. [PL 1979, c. 267, §2 (NEW).]
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3. Test approval. Any other reading test may be approved by the superintendent for use as an alternative to the Flesch reading ease test if it is comparable in result to the Flesch reading ease test. [PL 1979, c. 267, §2 (NEW).]

4. Filings. Filings subject to this Act shall be accompanied by a certificate signed by an officer of the insurer stating that it meets the minimum reading ease score on the test used or stating that the score is lower than the minimum required but should be approved in accordance with section 2443. To confirm the accuracy of any certification, the superintendent may require the submission of further information to verify the certification in question.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, rating organizations may act on behalf of their members and subscribers in complying with the requirements of this subsection. A member or subscriber shall be responsible for the actions of a rating organization on behalf of that member or subscriber under this subsection in the same manner as if the member or subscriber had acted on its own behalf.

[PL 1979, c. 267, §2 (NEW).]

5. Scoring. At the option of the insurer, riders, endorsements, applications and other forms made a part of the policy may be scored as separate forms or as part of the policy with which they may be used.

[PL 1979, c. 267, §2 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1979, c. 267, §2 (NEW).

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