

## **Irdai to hasten online approvals**

### ***Aims to clear products within a month; advisory panels constituted for promoting e- commerce***

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) plans to make the approval process for online products simpler and faster.

With a separate process for filing applications on these, it says it is trying to ensure they do not undergo the same rigorous process as offline products to get approved, and are approved within 30- 40 days.

An insurance product first goes to the regulator, which approves the features and pricing, after which it can be brought to the market for sale.

“Offline products take at least four to six months to be approved. The same process might not be viable for an online insurance market, where customers look for new products and riders on a regular basis. Hence, the portfolio requires to be updated every few months,” said the head of products in a mid- size life insurance company.

For customers, too, the proposal form would get simpler, with fewer questions, so that the turnaround time to buy insurance is considerably reduced. The regulator has also constituted two groups, one in life insurance and one in general insurance, to explore opportunities in ecommerce.

It is also expected to clarify on the presently grey area of digital signatures.

In a circular, the regulator has said it is inclined to facilitate the promotion of e- commerce in the insurance space, also with the idea of aiding the government’s Digital India project.

The two groups will look at ecommerce opportunities in insurance, recommend technological solutions, suggest regulatory and other facilitation for growth of e- commerce in insurance and so on.

The life group has Sandeep Bakshi, of ICICI Prudential Life, a Life Insurance Corporation of India representative, Pramod Khanna of Hero Corporate Services, Jignesh Gandhi of NSDL Insurance Repositories and Gautam Kumar, deputy director, Irdai, as convenor.

The general insurance group would have Tapan Singhal, chief executive ( CEO), Bajaj Allianz General Insurance; a New India Assurance representative, Tarun Samant, CEO of Tata Motors Insurance Brokers; S V Ramanan, CEO, CAMS Insurance Repository, and N MBehara, deputy director, Irdai, will be convenor.

Life insurers said reforms in the sector are needed. “ The online market is distinct from offline space. Based on customer feedback, we should be allowed to tweak product pricing and features in online products,” said a chief executive.

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