

SAY GOODBYE TO LEGAL FEES LEGAL EXPENSE INSURANCE



By Helen Xenidis, Account Executive, FCA Insurance Brokers

It's a classic Catch-22: There's no lawyer in the family, and the solicitor who handled your last home purchase specializes in real estate. The contractor you hired to do some renovations has not lived up to his promises, but just consulting a lawyer, let alone starting legal action, will cost more than the original job was worth. Your frustration grows because you know you're in the right.

You're not alone. For many, the prospect of undertaking legal action is more than daunting. Win or lose, the amount of time required, and the detailed knowledge necessary to navigate various courts and processes discourage all but the most dedicated. Disputes needing legal intervention are all too common. How often do you hear of someone contending with a leasing company, or a garage operator following major repairs? Individuals charged with a traffic offense frequently engage expensive paralegal services just to defend that single incident. Businesses, too, encounter countless situations where suppliers don't honour contracts, or customers fail to pay.

All too often, because of anticipated costs, we may not even seek critical professional advice and just let situations go.

Fortunately, some Insurers and brokers are now offering products called Legal Expense Insurance (LEI) to address some of these needs. LEI is common in the UK and in Europe, but relatively new in Canada. Policyholders know the costs of pursuing or defending routine legal action will be covered, and have the security of consistent access to legal guidance.

Some situations routinely covered for consumers are:

- Traffic ticket defense
- Accident fault-determination, loss valuation disputes
- Employment issues
- Consumer contract disputes (ie. health clubs, phone contracts)
- Property and tax protection

Businesses can obtain coverage for:

- Employment and contract disputes
- Property tax and statutory license protection
- Debt recovery

One key feature is unlimited access to legal guidance. Even when a particular dispute might not be covered, policyholders may still access advice and legal services at referral rates.

There are, of course, some limitations to the available policies, and various options to consider. The best way to determine whether a Legal Expense policy is for you is to consult with another professional advisor — your insurance broker. He or she will work on your behalf to find which product, and which options, best suit your needs and ensure that your insurance choices deliver on their primary purpose: peace of mind.

For more information on Legal Expense Insurance, please contact Helen Xenidis at hxenidis@fcainsurance.com, or visit www.fcainsurance.com.

Founded in 1919, Firstbrook, Cassie & Anderson Ltd. is one of Canada's leading independent insurance brokerages, providing security and value through innovative custom insurance solutions. Licenced across Canada, the firm is headquartered in Toronto with two branch offices, and offers full international capacity.

Photo by Ha4ipuri | Dreamstime.com