

# Your duty to take reasonable care not to make a misrepresentation

Your policy or the policy you are applying for is a consumer insurance contract and the duty below applies to you.

## About this application and your duty

When you apply for life insurance, we conduct a process called underwriting. It's how we decide whether we can cover you, and if so on what terms and at what cost.

We will ask questions we need to know the answers to. These will be about your personal circumstances, such as your health and medical history, occupation, income, lifestyle, pastimes, and current and past insurance. The information you give us in response to our questions is vital to our decision.

## The duty to take reasonable care

**When applying for insurance, there is a legal duty to take reasonable care not to make a misrepresentation to the insurer before the contract of insurance is entered into.**

A misrepresentation is a false answer, an answer that is only partially true, or an answer which does not fairly reflect the truth.

The duty also applies when extending or making changes to existing insurance, and reinstating insurance.

## If you do not meet your duty

If you do not meet your legal duty, this can have serious impacts on your insurance. Your cover could be avoided (treated as if it never existed), or its terms may be changed. This may also result in a claim being declined or a benefit being reduced.

Please note that there may be circumstances where we later investigate whether the information given to us was true. For example, we may do this when a claim is made.

## Guidance for answering our questions

You are responsible for the information provided to us.

When answering our questions, please:

- think carefully about each question before you answer. If you are unsure about any question, we are here to help and you can contact us,
- answer every question,
- answer truthfully, accurately and completely. If you are unsure about whether you should include information, please include it,
- review your application carefully before it is submitted. If someone else helped prepare your application (for example, your adviser), please check every answer (and if necessary, make any corrections) before the application is submitted, and
- you must not assume that we will contact your doctor for any medical information. If you are unsure about whether you should include information or not, please include it.

Your duty to take reasonable care not to make a misrepresentation continues until the time your insurance cover starts. The duty applies when you answer questions in your application and whenever we obtain more information from you.

## If you need help

It's important that you understand this information and the questions we ask. Ask us or your adviser for help if you need help understanding the process of buying insurance or answering our questions.

If you're having difficulty due to a disability, understanding English or for any other reason, we're here to help and can provide additional support for anyone who might need it. If you want, you can have a support person you trust with you.

## What can we do if the duty is not met?

If the person who answers our questions does not take reasonable care not to make a misrepresentation, there are different remedies that may be available to us. These are set out in the Insurance Contracts Act 1984 (Cth). These are intended to put us in the position we would have been in if the duty had been met.

For example we may:

- avoid the cover (treat it as if it never existed);
- vary the amount of the cover; or
- vary the terms of the cover.

Whether we can exercise one of these remedies depends on a number of factors, including:

- whether the person who answered our questions took reasonable care not to make a misrepresentation. This depends on all of the relevant circumstances;
- what we would have done if the duty had been met – for example, whether we would have offered cover, and, if so, on what terms;
- whether the misrepresentation was fraudulent; and
- in some cases, how long it has been since the cover started.

Before we exercise any of these remedies, we will explain our reasons, how to respond and provide further information, including what you can do if you disagree.