

Missouri officials ban Chicago auto insurer

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ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

06/13/2009

The Missouri Insurance Department is forbidding the Universal Casualty Company from writing new insurance policies in the state, following a rash of consumer complaints. The Chicago-based company writes auto insurance and collects \$5.9 million in premiums a year in Missouri.

The department says the company is slow to respond to claims and refuses to send insurance adjusters to inspect damage, relying instead on car owners to send in photos and police reports. Universal makes “low ball” settlement offers and sometimes refuses to pay claims without conducting a reasonable investigation, the insurance regulators say. A company spokesman declined comment.

The Insurance Department reports receiving 63 complaints against the firm this year, 13 times the number it would expect from a company its size. The company will be allowed to continue servicing existing policies.