

OII TIP GUIDE TO: Insurance Rating Services

When faced with making major purchases, smart consumers comparison shop, ask questions and even conduct extensive online research. Research should be part of insurance selection process too. Factors to consider when shopping for insurance should include service, price, claims payment history and the company's financial condition.

To assist consumers in obtaining information regarding a company's financial standing, a number of organizations rate the financial condition of insurance companies. Many rating services provide this information free of charge (or with registration), making it easier than ever for consumers to do their homework. Contact info on some of these rating companies is provided below.

Rating the raters

Each rating service establishes its own set of standards and has a unique rating or "grading" system, preventing easy comparisons between rating companies. For instance, an A+ rating may be the highest rating with one service, while it's the fifth highest with another. Be sure to review the rating information of the services you choose.

Insurance rating services

A.M. Best

Ambest Rd.
Oldwick, NJ 08858
908.439.2200

Demotech, Inc.

2715 Tuller Parkway
Dublin, OH 43017
800.354.7207

Fitch Ratings

1 State Street Plaza
New York, NY 10004
212.908.0500

Moody's Investors Services

7 World Trade Center at 250 Greenwich St.
New York, NY 10007
877.772.5436

Standard and Poor's Corporation

55 Water St.
New York, NY 10041
877.772.5436