



NEW YORK STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL SERVICES  
ONE STATE STREET  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10004

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In the Matter of the Applications  
and/or Licenses of

**ASSURANT CLAIMS ADJUSTERS INC.,**  
and **STEPHEN L. RIVERS,**  
individually and as sublicensee,

Respondents.

**CITATION**

**VIDEOCONFERENCE  
HEARING**

Docket No. 2021-0034-C  
Event Number: 161 827 1781  
Event Password: 5NMp6SGwV3c

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**TO THE ABOVE-NAMED RESPONDENTS:**

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE THAT** you are cited to appear on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2022, at 10:00 AM to show cause why all licenses issued to you by the New York State Department of Financial Services (“Department”) should not be suspended or revoked, and why all pending applications for licensure or renewal thereof should not be denied, or a monetary penalty imposed, by reason of the charge(s) and specification(s) hereinafter set forth. The Hearing will be held via videoconference, via Webex. **The Event Number for this Hearing is 161 827 1781, and the Event Password is 5NMp6SGwV3c.**

Pursuant to the First Amendment to Part 2 of Title 23 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York (23 NYCRR §2.19), you may object to having the Hearing conducted via videoconference by sending a written notice of the objection to the hearing officer by first class mail or overnight mail to Videoconference Coordinator, Office of General Counsel, New York State Department of Financial Services, One State Street, New York, NY 10004, or via electronic mail to VideoHearings@dfs.ny.gov. The written notice of objection must be received at least five business days before the date set for the hearing. A copy of 23 NYCRR §2.19 is attached to this Citation.

You are instructed to go to the Department’s website, at [https://www.dfs.ny.gov/reports and publications/public hearings](https://www.dfs.ny.gov/reports_and_publications/public_hearings), to learn how the hearing will be conducted and what you will need to do in order to appear at your

Videoconference Hearing. **At least 48 hours prior to your hearing, you will need to conduct a test to ensure that you can connect to the Videoconference Hearing. Instructions for testing can be found at [https://www.dfs.ny.gov/reports\\_and\\_publications/public\\_hearings](https://www.dfs.ny.gov/reports_and_publications/public_hearings). If you wish to introduce any documents at the Hearing, you must email them at least 24 hours prior to the start of the Hearing to [VideoHearings@dfs.ny.gov](mailto:VideoHearings@dfs.ny.gov), and include a brief description of each document and your Event Number. You may also request disclosure of the evidence that the Department will introduce at the Hearing by sending an email to [VideoHearings@dfs.ny.gov](mailto:VideoHearings@dfs.ny.gov). Include in your request your name, the date of the Hearing, and your Event Number.**

If you have any questions with regard to connecting or are unable to connect to your Videoconference Hearing, call the Department Help Desk at 212-709-7777 or email [ServiceDesk@dfs.ny.gov](mailto:ServiceDesk@dfs.ny.gov).

## CHARGE I

### **RESPONDENTS HAVE DEMONSTRATED UNTRUSTWORTHINESS AND/OR INCOMPETENCE TO ACT AS INSURANCE ADJUSTERS WITHIN THE MEANING OF SECTION 2110(a)(4) OF THE INSURANCE LAW.**

#### Specification A

1. On or about August 27, 2019, the Department received a complaint from Joseph A. Jones, alleging that claim funds paid by the insurer were distributed to Respondent Stephen L. Rivers and Respondent Stephen L. River's construction company, Restoration Management Plus Inc., which was under contract to clean and restore the complainant's home from damage sustained in a fire, but the restoration job had not yet been completed.

#### Specification B

2. On or about February 3, 2020, the Department received a complaint from Suzette Edmonds Irish, alleging that Respondent Stephen L. Rivers never disclosed he would have the dual roles of Public Adjuster and contractor through his construction company Restoration Management Plus. Inc., and that Respondent Stephen L. Rivers had received claim funds from the insurer and failed to complete the restoration work on her home.

#### Specification C

3. On or about February 16, 2020, the Department received a complaint from Patricia Toro, alleging that Respondent Stephen L. Rivers, who was hired by her tenants, the insureds, to restore their permanent residence after a fire, and that fourteen months later, the work remained uncompleted.

Specification D

4. On or about October 15, 2020, the Department received a complaint from Jane Wright, alleging that Respondent Stephen L. Rivers, whom the complainant had hired as a Public Adjuster and his firm Restoration Management Plus Inc. as the contractor, received claim funds from the insurer but failed to complete the restoration work on her home.

Specification E

5. On or about July 12, 2021, in relation to the matter set forth in paragraph 4 above, Respondent Stephen L. Rivers' construction company, Restoration Management Plus Inc., was found guilty of Deceptive Trade Practices Prohibited following an administrative hearing conducted at the Consumer Protection Bureau – Enforcement, City of Yonkers, and was ordered by the Administrative Law Judge to pay a \$500.00 fine and to issue a refund to complainant Jane Wright in the amount of approximately \$129,749.51 within 30 days.

Specification F

6. Respondent Stephen L. Rivers has failed to pay the refund ordered by the Yonkers Consumer Protection Bureau Administrative Law Judge cited in paragraph 5 above, in violation of Section 2110(a)(5) of the Insurance Law.

Specification G

7. Respondent Stephen L Rivers and his construction company, Restoration Management Plus Inc., were, after an administrative hearing at the Nassau County, New York Department of Consumer Affairs, found to have willfully committed violations of the Nassau County Administrative Code, including but not limited to §21-11.9 (1) for having abandoned or willfully failed to perform, without justification, a home improvement contract or project engaged in or undertaken by a contractor, and were ordered to pay fines in the amount of \$4,500.00 and to reimburse the complainant Mary Bell \$175,000.00 on or before June 10, 2022.

Specification H

8. In connection with the matters set forth in paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 4 above, Respondent Stephen L. Rivers delayed the settlement of a claim and corresponding restoration of a dwelling on multiple occasions, in violation of Section 2108(s)(1) of the Insurance Law.

Specification I

9. In connection with the matters set forth in paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 4 above, Respondent Stephen L. Rivers acted as both the public adjuster and the contractor, adjusting the claim and repairing damage in connection with the same claim, without having a written memorandum disclosing his financial interest or ownership in

Restoration Management Plus Inc., in violation of Section 2108(s)(2)(B) of the Insurance Law.

Specification J

10. Respondent Stephen L. Rivers failed to pay state income tax due to the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance (“DTF”) for the periods ending on or about December 31, 2008, December 31, 2009, December 31, 2010, December 31, 2011, December 31, 2012, December 31, 2015, and December 31, 2016.

11. As a result of the foregoing, tax warrants were filed against Respondent Stephen L. Rivers in the office of the clerk of Nassau County, New York by the DTF on or about June 7, 2016 and June 16, 2017.

12. As of January 6, 2022, Respondent Stephen L. Rivers has an arrearage in taxes due to New York State pursuant to Article 22 of the New York Tax Law, for personal income taxes, in the amount of approximately \$9,697.84, which includes interest and penalties.

Specification K

13. Respondent Stephen L. Rivers provided materially incorrect and untrue information within the meaning of Section 2110(a)(2) of the Insurance Law on Respondent Stephen L. Rivers renewal application for a public adjuster’s license pursuant to Section 2108 of the Insurance Law, submitted to the Department on or about October 17, 2018, by failing to answer in the affirmative in response to Question 7, which asked “Have you been notified by any jurisdiction to which you are applying of any delinquent tax obligation that is not the subject of a repayment agreement?”

Specification L

14. Respondent Stephen L. Rivers provided materially incorrect and untrue information within the meaning of Section 2110(a)(2) of the Insurance Law on Respondent Stephen L. Rivers renewal application for a public adjuster’s license pursuant to Section 2108 of the Insurance Law, submitted to the Department on or about December 31, 2020, by failing to answer in the affirmative in response to Question 7, which asked “Have you been notified by any jurisdiction to which you are applying of any delinquent tax obligation that is not the subject of a repayment agreement?”

Specification M

15. Respondents Assurant Claims Adjusters Inc. and Stephen L. Rivers provided materially incorrect and untrue information within the meaning of Section 2110(a)(2) of the Insurance Law on Respondent Assurant Claims Adjusters Inc.’s original application for a public adjuster’s license pursuant to Section 2108 of the Insurance Law, submitted to the Department on or about July 30, 2019, by failing to answer in the affirmative in response to Question 7(d), which asked “Has the business

entity or any officer/director/partner/member/manager named in 3 or 4 ever been notified by any jurisdiction to which the business entity is applying of any delinquent tax obligation that is not the subject of a repayment agreement?"

## **CHARGE II**

### **RESPONDENTS IMPROPERLY WITHHELD, MISAPPROPRIATED OR CONVERTED MONIES RECEIVED IN THE COURSE OF BUSINESS WITHIN THE MEANING OF SECTION 2110(a)(5) OF THE INSURANCE LAW.**

16. The allegations set forth above in paragraph 6 of this Citation are repeated and realleged as if fully set forth herein.

## **CHARGE III**

### **RESPONDENTS HAVE FAILED TO ACT ON BEHALF AND IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF AN INSURED WITHIN THE MEANING OF SECTION 2108(S)(1) OF THE INSURANCE LAW.**

17. The allegations set forth above in paragraph 8 of this Citation are repeated and realleged as if fully set forth herein.

## **CHARGE IV**

### **RESPONDENTS FAILED TO DISCLOSE IN A WRITTEN MEMORANDUM A FINANCIAL OR OWNERSHIP INTEREST IN AN ENTITY PERFORMING SERVICES, WORK, OR REPAIRS WITHIN THE MEANING OF SECTION 2108(S)(2)(B) OF THE INSURANCE LAW.**

18. The allegations set forth above in paragraph 9 of this Citation are repeated and realleged as if fully set forth herein.

## **CHARGE V**

### **RESPONDENTS FAILED TO PAY STATE INCOME TAX WITHIN THE MEANING OF SECTION 2110(A)(14) OF THE INSURANCE LAW.**

19. The allegations set forth above in paragraphs 10, 11, and 12 of this Citation are repeated and realleged as if fully set forth herein.

**CHARGE VI**

**RESPONDENTS PROVIDED MATERIALLY INCORRECT, MATERIALLY MISLEADING, MATERIALLY INCOMPLETE AND/OR MATERIALLY UNTRUE INFORMATION IN LICENSE APPLICATIONS WITHIN THE MEANING OF SECTION 2110(A)(2) OF THE INSURANCE LAW.**

20. The allegations set forth in paragraphs 13, 14, and 15 of this Citation are repeated and realleged as if fully set forth herein.

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE THAT:**

(A) According to the records of the Department, Respondent Stephen L. Rivers is currently licensed as a public adjuster pursuant to Section 2108 of the Insurance Law and was sublicensee of Respondent Assurant Claims Adjusters Inc., which was licensed as a public adjuster pursuant to Section 2108 of the Insurance Law by and through Respondent Stephen L. Rivers until said license expired as of December 31, 2020. Respondent Assurant Claims Adjusters Inc. was under investigation by the Department regarding the foregoing matters prior to the expiration of the aforementioned public adjuster's license.

(B) This Citation is issued pursuant to Section 2110 of the Insurance Law and Sections 304-a, 305 and 306 of the Financial Services Law, and notice of this hearing is given to Respondents in accordance with Section 304 of the Financial Services Law.

(C) Respondents' attention is directed to a statement in plain language, attached hereto, entitled "Summary of Hearing Procedures", summarizing the provisions of Title 23, Part 2 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York (23 NYCRR 2). This statement contains important information concerning your rights and the Department's hearing procedures and should be read carefully. A copy of 23 NYCRR §2.19 is attached hereto; a copy of the balance of 23 NYCRR 2 will be furnished upon request.

(D) Should Respondents fail to appear at the time and place fixed for the hearing or any adjourned date thereof, the hearing will proceed as scheduled and the disciplinary action, if any, may result in the imposition of a monetary penalty or in the suspension or revocation of any licenses and/or the denial of all pending applications for licenses or renewal thereof.

Dated: New York, NY  
March 16, 2022





NEW YORK STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL SERVICES  
ONE STATE STREET  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10004

## SUMMARY OF HEARING PROCEDURES

(Summary of Hearing Procedures for Adjudicatory Proceedings Before the Department of Financial Services as Set Forth in Title 23, Part 2 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York (23 NYCRR 2), and as Required by Section 301(3) of the State Administrative Procedure Act)

1. The Hearing will be conducted and administered in compliance with the State Administrative Procedure Act and the Financial Services Law, and will be held before an impartial hearing officer who will make a Report of findings, conclusions, and recommendations to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee.
2. You must be ready, and prepared with your evidence, to present your case on the hearing date.
3. You may be represented by an attorney at the hearing.
4. Interpreter services shall be available for deaf persons, upon advance request, at no charge. Such request should be made as soon as possible by contacting the Department attorney who signed the Citation/Notice of Hearing.
5. You may file a written answer to the Citation/Notice of Hearing. If you do so, it should be delivered at least two days before the hearing date to the Department attorney who signed the Citation/Notice of Hearing. You will have a full opportunity at the hearing to dispute or explain any charges made against you in the Citation/Notice of Hearing whether or not you file an answer.
6. You may present evidence and have witnesses testify at the hearing. If you believe a Witness will not appear voluntarily and you do not have an attorney representing you, you may request the hearing officer to furnish you with a subpoena to compel the witness' attendance. If the hearing officer issues the subpoena, the service of the subpoena upon the witness and payment of all required fees is your responsibility.
7. You may request a hearing officer's report and an opportunity to comment on it in writing before the Superintendent acts on the report. The request must be made to the hearing officer on the record prior to close of the hearing.
8. Prior to the commencement, a hearing may be postponed upon your request upon a written application to the Department official who issued the Citation/Notice of Hearing. The application may be granted upon a showing of good cause at the discretion of the Department official who issued the Citation/Notice of Hearing.

9. A hearing in progress may be adjourned by the hearing officer at your request for good cause shown or upon consent of all parties. If you request that a hearing in progress be adjourned for good cause shown, you must present documentary evidence as the hearing officer deems appropriate. The factors to be considered in determining good cause shown include but are not limited to the illness of a party, witness, or attorney, the temporary absence of a witness, the opportunity to obtain an attorney, the actual engagement of an attorney in a court proceeding, and the number and nature of previous requests for adjournment.
10. If you do not appear at a hearing requested upon the denial of an application for a license, your request will be deemed withdrawn.
11. If you do not appear or are not represented at the hearing on a Citation, the hearing will take place as scheduled and a decision on the charges will be made. The decision may result in the revocation or suspension of your licenses and the denial of any pending applications, and such other action as may be permitted by law, including the imposition of monetary fines.
12. If you do not appear at a hearing, the hearing may be reopened upon a written application, if you satisfy the hearing officer that there are valid reasons for your failure to appear or your failure to request an adjournment or postponement and you have a meritorious case. If you do appear at the hearing, the hearing may be reopened on written request to the hearing officer if you can show newly discovered evidence or other compelling reason for such reopening. The application to reopen must be made within one hundred and twenty (120) days from the effective date of the Superintendent's or the Superintendent's designee's decision.
13. Once a decision is made against you, you may, if you wish, take an appeal to the courts. This appeal must be made within four months from the date the decision was effective. It should be emphasized that your right to take an appeal is not connected in any way with your right to reopen the hearing as described in paragraph 12 and an application to reopen does not extend your time to take an appeal to the courts.

**NEW YORK STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL SERVICES  
FIRST AMENDMENT TO 23 NYCRR 2**

**RULES GOVERNING THE PROCEDURES FOR ADJUDICATORY PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE  
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL SERVICES**

I, Adrienne A. Harris, Acting Superintendent of Financial Services of the State of New York, pursuant to the authority granted by Sections 102, 201, 202, 302 and 305 of the Financial Services Law and Section 301 of the State Administrative Procedure Act, do hereby promulgate the First Amendment to Part 2 of Title 23 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York, to take effect upon the filing of the Notice of Emergency Adoption with the Secretary of State, to read as follows:

**(ALL MATTER IS NEW)**

**Section 2.19 is added to read as follows:**

**§ 2.19 Hearings conducted by videoconference.**

(a) At the discretion of the Department official who issued the notice of action or proposed action, a hearing held pursuant to this Part may be conducted by videoconference. When a hearing is conducted by videoconference, none of the parties nor the hearing officer need to be physically present at the same location.

(b) All provisions of this Part that are not inconsistent with the specific provisions of this section shall apply to hearings conducted by videoconference. For purposes of § 2.14(b) of this Part, the term *hearing room* shall mean videoconference when a hearing is conducted by videoconference.

(c) A respondent or applicant may object to conducting the hearing by videoconference by sending a written notice of the objection to the hearing officer by first class mail, overnight mail or electronic mail to an address or email address designated by the Department and posted on the Department's website. The written notice of objection must be received by the hearing officer at least five business days before the time set for the hearing.

(d) In the event that the hearing officer receives a timely written objection to conducting the hearing by videoconference in accordance with subdivision (c) of this section, the hearing officer may determine that the hearing shall not be conducted by videoconference and shall be conducted with the respondent or applicant and the hearing officer physically present at the same location, when in the judgment of the hearing officer:

(1) the respondent's or applicant's due process rights would best be served by conducting a hearing in-person; or

(2) there are circumstances presented by the respondent or applicant that make proceeding with the hearing by videoconference fundamentally unfair or impractical.

**Statement of the Reasons for the Emergency Measure  
First Amendment to 23 NYCRR 2**

COVID-19 has spread to hundreds of millions of people worldwide, with more than 2.8 million confirmed cases and over 57,000 deaths in New York State since March 2020. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”), the Delta variant of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, is the predominant variant of the virus in the United States. The Delta variant is a more transmissible and contagious form of the virus, may cause more severe symptoms, and appears to be behind the increase in cases and hospitalizations due to COVID-19 infections across the nation, including this state. Additionally, the Omicron variant, a new variant of SARS-CoV-2, has also been detected in the United States. The CDC reports that the United States designated Omicron as a “variant of concern” on November 30, 2021. Given the public health implications related to COVID-19, it is essential that the Department of Financial Services (“Department”) promulgate regulations that implement protective measures, whenever possible, to help stop its spread.

This amendment adds a new section 2.19 to 23 NYCRR Part 2, specifying that the Department may conduct administrative hearings by videoconference at the Department’s discretion. This is being done so that the parties and hearing officers do not have to be physically present at the same location during hearings. A hearing officer will determine, upon a timely objection filed by a party, if a hearing held by videoconference would either impinge upon the party’s due process rights, or would be fundamentally unfair or impractical, according to section 2.19(d) of the regulation.

The Department is taking special precautions during this unprecedented health crisis to minimize the spread of COVID-19 by, among other things, reducing the number of individuals who may enter the Department’s offices at any given time. Therefore, conducting an administrative hearing by videoconference protects the safety of those participating in, or witnessing the hearing, by avoiding personal contact. This will help limit the spread of COVID-19. Thus, it is imperative that this amendment be promulgated on an emergency basis for the public’s general welfare and the preservation of public health.



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Adrienne A. Harris  
Acting Superintendent of Financial Services

Dated: December 20, 2021



## Department of Financial Services

**KATHY HOCHUL**  
Governor

**ADRIENNE A. HARRIS**  
Acting Superintendent

### CERTIFICATION

I, Adrienne A. Harris, Acting Superintendent of Financial Services, do hereby certify that the foregoing is the First Amendment to Part 2 of Title 23 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York, entitled “Rules Governing the Procedures for Adjudicatory Proceedings Before the Department of Financial Services”, signed by me on December 20, 2021, pursuant to the authority granted by Sections 102, 201, 202, 302, and 305 of the Financial Services Law and Section 301 of the State Administrative Procedure Act to take effect upon the filing of the Notice of Emergency Adoption with the Secretary of State of New York.

Pursuant to Section 202(6) of the State Administrative Procedure Act, this amendment is being promulgated as an emergency measure for the preservation of the general welfare and public health. A statement of the specific reasons for the finding of the need for emergency action is attached.

Adrienne A. Harris  
Acting Superintendent of Financial Services

Dated: December 20, 2021