

Market Conduct Final Examination Report

BRL FINANCIAL GROUP, L.L.C.

Florida Company Code: 31817

November 3, 2022



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Company Operations.....	2
Purpose and Scope of the Examination	3
Complaint Statistics	3
Examination Procedures	4
Findings.....	5
Recommendations.....	6
Conclusion	6
Examination Final Report Submission	6

Executive Summary

A market conduct examination of BRL Financial Group, L.L.C., (“BRL Financial” or “Company”) was performed to ascertain the Company’s compliance with the applicable provisions of the Florida Insurance Code as required by Section 627.834, Florida Statutes (“F.S.”).

Company Operations

BRL Financial is a domestic Premium Finance Company licensed to offer premium finance agreements in Florida on April 12, 2017. BRL Financial finances 12-month personal and commercial lines insurance policies written through an unaffiliated agency. BRL Financial typically issues refunds directly to the policyholder rather than through the insurance agent who would be responsible for issuing the refund to the consumer.

Total Premiums Receivable in Florida during the examination scope period was as follows:

Year	Total Premiums Receivable in Florida (Per Schedule A of the Annual Report)
2021	\$200,548
2020	\$217,164
2019	\$190,469

Section 627.828(1), F.S. requires premium finance companies to maintain a net worth of \$35,000 or a net worth of \$10,000 if a surety bond or other acceptable collateral in the amount of \$35,000 as is approved by the Florida Office of Insurance Regulation. The Company met the requirements of Section 627.828(1), F.S. by reporting the following statutory net worth:

Year	Statutory Net Worth as of December 31 st (Per the Balance Sheet of the Annual Report)
2021	\$104,005
2020	\$ 87,138
2019	\$ 57,276

Section 627.836(2), F.S. requires premium finance companies to file an annual report with the Florida Office of Insurance Regulation and remit the annual report filing fee to the Florida Department of Financial Services (“DFS”) by March 1st of each year. The Company’s filing and remittance history during the examination scope period was as follows:

Year	Date Annual Report Filed with OIR	Date Annual Report Filing Fees Remitted to DFS
2021	04/22/2022	04/26/2022
2020	09/22/2021	09/27/2021
2019	04/08/2021	04/12/2021

Finding 1: The examiners determined that in six instances out of six filings reviewed, an error percentage of 100%, the Company did not timely file the annual reports or the annual report filing fees by March 1st of each year, as required by Section 627.836(2), F.S.

Purpose and Scope of the Examination

The Florida Office of Insurance Regulation (“OIR”) has primary responsibility for the regulation, compliance and enforcement of statutes related to the business of insurance premium financing and the monitoring of industry markets. Due to this responsibility, OIR conducted a market conduct examination of BRL Financial pursuant to Section 627.834(1), F.S. The examination scope period was from January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2021. The examination was performed by members of OIR’s Property and Casualty Market Regulation business unit.

The purpose of a market conduct examination is to review the premium finance company’s operating practices to determine if they comply with the applicable provisions of the Florida Insurance Code, rules related to the business of insurance premium financing, the provisions contained within a premium finance contract issued by the Company or orders issued by OIR. A common element of all market conduct examinations is to evaluate a premium finance company’s business practices to promote the protection of insurance-buying consumers and to hold entities regulated by OIR accountable when issues or violations are found.

The examination began April 1, 2022 and ended August 16, 2022. The last examination of BRL Financial was completed as of December 31, 2018. That examination concluded the Company’s records were in good standing.

Complaint Statistics

As of December 31, 2021, DFS Division of Consumer Services reported receiving zero complaints related to premium finance agreements issued by BRL Financial to consumers during the examination scope period.

Complaints Reported to DFS by Consumers	
Year	Number of Complaints
2021	0
2020	0
2019	0

Examination Procedures

The conduct of this examination and the procedures, statistical sampling and examination processes used were consistent with and in accordance with those standards and procedures contained in the *Market Regulation Handbook* promulgated by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (“NAIC”).

In preparation for the examination, the Company was requested to provide the total number, or universe, of premium finance agreements entered into during the examination’s scope period. The Company was also requested to identify premium finance agreements that were cancelled or received a refund from an insurer prior to the end of the premium finance agreement’s contract term. The Company reported entering into a total of 684 premium finance agreements during the examination scope period. Of the 684 premium finance agreements, 42 premium finance agreements were either cancelled or received a refund from the insurer or premium finance company prior to the end of the agreement’s term.

To facilitate a thorough review of the Company’s premium finance agreements and corresponding documentation, the total universe of premium finance agreements was divided into two categories: Premium Finance Agreements and Cancellations and Refunds. Each of the two categories were evaluated for compliance with the Florida Insurance Code.

The Company reported the universe of premium finance agreements for each category as follows:

- 642 Premium Finance Agreements; and
- 42 Cancellations and Refunds.

For purposes of this examination, the two categories were defined as follows:

- Premium Finance Agreements: The initial premium finance agreement entered into during the examination scope period that completed the full term of the agreement (the premium finance agreement was not cancelled midterm or the consumer was not eligible for a refund); and
- Cancellation and Refunds: The initial premium finance agreements entered into during the examination scope period that were either cancelled prior to the end of the agreement’s term or were eligible for a refund from an insurer or the premium finance company.

The NAIC’s *Market Regulation Handbook* provides guidance regarding sampling methods utilized during market conduct examinations. A minimum confidence level of 95% is used to make inferences when a universe population is greater than 200 and permits those results to be extrapolated to the population of all premium finance agreements. The examiners reviewed a total of 155 randomly selected premium finance agreements. The number of randomly selected premium finance agreements in each sample is consistent with the recommended sample size for non-claims in the NAIC’s *Market Regulation Handbook*’s Acceptance Samples Table. Based on the total universe of BRL Financial premium finance agreements subject to this examination, the total sample size required to achieve a 95% confidence level in both categories was determined to be 155.

The 155 randomly selected premium finance agreements consisted of:

- 113 premium finance agreements; and
- 42 cancellations and refunds.

In reviewing materials for this report, the examiners relied on records and information provided by the Company.

Findings

Premium Finance Agreements

This portion of the examination focused on the Company's use of approved forms and rates and evaluated specific statutory components required by the Company in the execution of premium finance agreements, including but not limited to finance charges, service fees, late and non-sufficient fund fees, and products financed. To determine the Company's adherence to these statutory requirements, the examiners reviewed and analyzed each sampled premium finance agreement to determine if the agreement was executed in compliance with the Florida Insurance Code.

Finding 2: The examiners determined that in six instances out of 113 premium finance agreements reviewed, an error percentage of 5.31%, the premium finance agreements did not contain borrower signatures, as required by Section 627.839(1), F.S.

Company Response: The Company agreed with the finding and stated the missing signatures are the result of an electronic signature software that failed to insert borrower signatures on remotely executed agreements.

Cancellations and Refunds

This portion of the examination focused on the Company's premium finance agreements entered into during the examination scope period that were either cancelled prior to the end of the agreement's term or were eligible for a refund from an insurer to determine compliance with the Florida Insurance Code. The review evaluated specific statutory components pertaining to cancellations and refunds.

Finding 3: The examiners determined that the Company did not have a Motor Vehicle Insurance 30-Day Notice of Unreturned Premiums from Insurers form filed with or approved by OIR, as required by Rule 69O-196.010(4), F.A.C. The examiners confirmed that none of the 42 agreements reviewed for cancellations and refunds required a 30-day notice of unreturned premiums to the insured and the Company did not use an unapproved form during the examination scope period.

Company Response: The Company agreed with the finding.

Subsequent Event: The Company filed a Motor Vehicle Insurance 30-Day Notice of Unreturned Premiums from Insurers form for approval. The form was approved by OIR on October 31, 2022.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were compiled from the Findings contained within this report, and observations noted during the examination. The Company is to provide a written report to OIR of actions taken on each Recommendation within 60 days of the Company's receipt of the Final Examination Report.

It is recommended that the Company:

- Ensure that all annual reports are filed with OIR and all annual report filing fees are remitted to DFS by March 1st of each year; and
- Ensure that all premium finance agreements contain borrower signatures.

Conclusion

This market conduct examination of BRL Financial was designed to review and evaluate whether the Company's handling of premium finance agreements was in compliance with the provisions of the Florida Insurance Code. During the examination, OIR identified findings and made recommendations for remediation to be implemented by the Company.

This examination report and the observations contained therein are the result of a factual, data-driven analysis of the Company's premium finance agreements and practices related to the cancellation and refund of premiums to consumers. This report contains a number of recommendations for improvement that should be implemented by the Company. It does not document what regulatory or administrative action may be taken by the Office. Any such action taken as a result of this market conduct examination will be the subject of a separate Order issued by the Office.

Examination Final Report Submission

The Office hereby issues this Final Report based upon information from the draft report, additional research conducted by the Office, and additional information provided by the Company.



www.FLOIR.com

J. Edwin Larson Building
200 E. Gaines Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399
Phone: (850) 413-3140