

complaint

Miss J complains that Admiral Insurance Company Limited withdrew a discount on her motor insurance policy premium when a black box wasn't fitted to her car in time.

background

Miss J took out a policy with Admiral and was given a discount on the basis a black box would be installed into the car. But it wasn't fitted in the specified time. Admiral says Miss J cancelled the installation of the black box and it won't offer the discount to her again. Miss J says the problems and delays with the black box installation were caused by Admiral's representatives. She thinks something was installed in the car. She wants the box fitted or the £234 extra premium she's been charged repaid as compensation

Our adjudicator recommended that this complaint should be upheld. He considered that the evidence provided didn't show Miss J wanted to cancel the policy. She's said she wanted it. There's also no reason why she wouldn't want it as it provided a benefit to her. A black box in the car may also reduce the risk for Admiral. The fairest outcome is for Admiral to offer the black box benefit to Miss J for the remainder of the policy term and reapply the discount that would've been applied.

Admiral doesn't agree and has asked for an ombudsman review.

my findings

I've considered all the available evidence and arguments to decide what's fair and reasonable in the circumstances of this complaint.

I agree with the adjudicator's conclusions for broadly the same reasons.

Two attempts were made to install the black box. On the first attempt the fitter went to the wrong address and on the second Miss J's car was blocked in despite her calling the police. I don't think Miss J can reasonably be held responsible for either of these problems. I've also seen nothing to show that Miss J cancelled the black box after this second installation attempt as is suggested.

I don't think on balance that Admiral's acted fairly by removing and refusing to reinstate the black box discount as it's done. I also think on balance that Miss J wanted to take advantage of the black box discount.

So, I think its reasonable for Miss J to be put back in the position she would've been in if the black box benefit hadn't been arbitrarily denied to her by Admiral. Admiral should therefore arrange for the black box to be fitted as soon as possible at a time and place convenient to Miss J, restore the appropriate black box discount and refund to her the £254 extra premium its taken. I also think Miss J has been caused some unnecessary upset and inconvenience by Admiral's handling of this matter. I think this warrants a modest award of compensation. Taking into account all the circumstances and the level of awards we make, I think a payment of £75 is fair for this.

If Miss J accepts my decision I would urge her to cooperate fully with Admiral so that the black box is fitted to her car as soon as is reasonably possible ideally within 30 days.

my final decision

For the reasons I've discussed above my decision is that I uphold this complaint and I require Admiral Insurance Company Limited:

1. Assuming a black box hasn't already been fitted to Miss J's car, to arrange for one to be fitted to it as soon as is reasonably possible at a time and place convenient to Miss J;
2. To restore the appropriate black box discount to Miss J's policy and to refund to her the £254 extra premium its taken; and
3. To pay Miss J £75 compensation.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss J to accept or reject my decision before 9 November 2015.

Stephen Cooper
ombudsman