

Risk-Based Capital Preamble

History of Risk-Based Capital by the NAIC

A. Background

1. The NAIC, through its committees and working groups, facilitated many projects of importance to state insurance regulators, the industry and users of statutory financial information in the early 1990s. That was evidenced by the original mission statement and charges given to the Capital Adequacy (E) Task Force (CADTF) of the Financial Condition (E) Committee.
2. From the inception of insurance regulation in the mid-1800s, the limitation of insurance company insolvency risk has been a major goal of the regulatory process. The requirement of adequate capital has been a major tool in limiting insolvency costs throughout the history of insurance regulation. Initially, the states enacted statutes requiring a specified minimum amount of capital and surplus for an insurance company to enter the business or to remain in business.
3. Fixed minimum capital requirements were largely based on the judgment of the drafters of the statutes and varied widely among the states. Those fixed minimum capital and surplus requirements have served to protect the public reasonably well for more than a century. However, they fail to recognize variations in risk between broad categories of key elements of insurance, nor do they recognize differences in the amount of capital appropriate for the size of various insurers.
4. In 1992, the NAIC adopted the life risk-based capital (RBC) formula with an implementation date of year-end 1993. The formula was developed for specific regulatory needs. Four major categories were identified for the life formula: asset risk; insurance risk; interest rate risk; and all other business risk. The property/casualty and health formulas were implemented in 1994 and 1998, respectively. The focus of these two formulas is: asset risk; underwriting risk; credit risk; and business risk (health).
5. The total RBC needed by an insurer to avoid being taken into conservatorship is the Authorized Control Level RBC, which is 50% of the sum of the RBC for the categories, adjusted for covariance. The covariance adjustment is meant to take into account that problems in all risk categories are not likely to occur at the same time.
6. The mission of the CADTF was to determine the amount of capital an insurer should be required to hold to avoid triggering various specific regulatory actions. The RBC formula largely consists of a series of risk factors that are applied to selected assets, liabilities or other specific company financial data to establish the threshold levels generally needed to bear the risk arising from that item.

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7. To carry out its mission, the CADTF was charged with carrying out the following initiatives:
 - Evaluate emerging “risk” issues for referral to the RBC working groups/subgroups for certain issues involving more than one RBC formula.
 - Monitor emerging and existing risks relative to their consistent or divergent treatment in the three RBC formulas.
 - Review and evaluate company submissions for the schedule and corresponding adjustment to total adjusted capital (TAC).
 - Monitor changes in accounting and reporting requirements resulting from the adoption and continuing maintenance of the *Accounting Practices and Procedures Manual* and the *Valuation Manual* to ensure that model laws, publications, formulas, analysis tools, etc., supported by the CADTF continue to meet regulatory objectives
8. The RBC forecasting and instructions were developed and are now maintained in accordance with the mission of the CADTF as a method of measuring the threshold amount of capital appropriate for an insurance company to avoid capital specific regulatory requirements based on its size and risk profile.

B. Purpose of Risk-Based Capital

9. The purpose of RBC is to identify potentially weakly capitalized companies. This facilitates regulatory actions that, in most cases, ensure policyholders will receive the benefits promised without relying on a guaranty association or taxpayer funds. Consequently, the RBC formula calculates capital level trigger points that enable regulatory intervention in the operation of such companies.
10. RBC instructions, RBC reports and adjusted report(s) are intended solely for use by the commissioner/state in monitoring the solvency of insurers and the need for possible corrective action with respect to insurers and are considered confidential. All domestic insurers are required to file an RBC report unless exempt by the commissioner. There are no state permitted practices to modify the RBC formula and all insurers are required to abide by the RBC instructions.
11. Comparison of an insurer’s TAC to any RBC level is a regulatory tool that may indicate the need for possible corrective action with respect to the insurer and is not intended as a means to rank insurers generally. Therefore—except as otherwise required under the provisions of *Risk-Based Capital (RBC) for Insurers Model Act* (#312) or the *Risk-Based Capital (RBC) for Health Organizations Model Act* (#315)—the making, publishing, disseminating, circulation or placing before the public, or causing, directly or indirectly to be made, published, disseminated, circulated or place before the public, in a newspaper, magazine or other publication, or in a form of a notice, or in any other way, an advertisement, announcement or statement containing an assertion, representation or statement with regard to the RBC levels of any insurer or of any component derived in the calculation by any insurer is prohibited

C. Objectives of Risk-Based Capital Reports

12. The primary responsibility of each state insurance department is to regulate insurance companies in accordance with state laws, with an emphasis on solvency for the protection of policyholders. The ultimate objective of solvency regulation is to ensure that policyholder, contract holder and other legal obligations are met when they come due and that companies maintain capital and surplus at all times and in such forms as required by statute.

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To support this role, the RBC reports identify potentially weakly capitalized companies in that each insurer must report situations where the actual TAC is below a threshold amount for any of the several RBC levels. This is known as an “RBC event” and reporting is mandatory. The state regulatory response is likely to be unique to each insurer, as each insurer’s risk profile will have some differences from the average risk profile used to develop the RBC formula factors and calculations.

There are several RBC levels with different levels of anticipated additional regulatory oversight following the reporting of an RBC event. Company Action Level (CAL) has the least amount of additional regulatory oversight, as it envisions the company providing to its regulator a plan of action to increase capital or reduce risk or otherwise satisfy the regulator of the adequacy of its capital. Regulatory Action Level (RAL) is the next higher level, where the regulator is more directly involved in the development of the plan of action. Authorized Control Level (ACL) anticipates an even higher amount of regulatory action in implementing the plan of action.

D. Critical Concepts of Risk-Based Capital

13. Over the years, various financial models have been developed to try to measure the “right” amount of capital that an insurance company should hold.¹ “No single formula or ratio can give a complete picture of a company’s operations, let alone the operation of an entire industry. However, a properly designed formula will help in the early identification of companies with inadequate capital levels and allow corrective action to begin sooner. This should ultimately lower the number of company failures and reduce the cost of any failures that may occur.”
14. Because the NAIC formula develops threshold levels of capitalization rather than a target level, it is impractical to use the RBC formula to compare the RBC ratio developed by one insurance company to the RBC ratio developed by another. Comparisons of amounts that exceed the threshold standards do not provide a definitive assessment of their relative financial strength. For this reason, Model #312 and Model #315 prohibit insurance companies, their agents and others involved in the business of insurance using the company’s RBC results to compare competitors.
15. The principal focus of solvency measurement is the determination of financial condition through an analysis of the financial statements and RBC. However, protection of the policyholders can only be maintained through continued monitoring of the financial condition of the insurance enterprise. Operating performance is another indicator of an enterprise’s ability to maintain itself as a going concern.
16. The CADTF and its RBC working groups are charged with evaluating refinements to the existing NAIC RBC formula and considering improvements and revisions to the various RBC blanks to: 1) conform the RBC blanks to changes made in other areas of the NAIC to promote uniformity (when it is determined to be necessary); and 2) oversee the development of additional reporting formats within the existing RBC blanks as needs are identified.

¹ Report of the Industry Advisory Committee to the Life Risk-Based Capital (E) Working Group, p. 6; Nov. 17, 1991.

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17. The CADTF and its RBC working groups will monitor and evaluate changes to the annual financial statement blanks and the *Purposes and Procedure Manual of the NAIC Investment Analysis Office* to determine if assets or, specifically, investments evaluated by the NAIC Securities Valuation Office are relevant to the RBC formula in determining the threshold capital and surplus for all insurance companies or whether reporting available to the regulator is a more appropriate means to addressing the risk. The CADTF will consider different methods of determining whether a particular risk should be added as a new risk to be studied and selected for a change to the applicable RBC formula, but due consideration will be given to the materiality of the risk to the industry, as well as the very specific purpose of the RBC formulas to develop regulatory threshold capital levels.