

GUIDE TO BEST'S FINANCIAL STRENGTH RATINGS

A Best's Financial Strength Rating is an independent opinion of an insurer's financial strength and ability to meet its ongoing insurance policy and contract obligations. The rating is based on a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative evaluation of a company's balance sheet strength, operating performance and business profile.

Best's Financial Strength Ratings

	Rating	Descriptor	Definition
Secure	A++, A+	Superior	Assigned to companies that have, in our opinion, a superior ability to meet their ongoing insurance obligations.
	A, A-	Excellent	Assigned to companies that have, in our opinion, an excellent ability to meet their ongoing insurance obligations.
	B++, B+	Good	Assigned to companies that have, in our opinion, a good ability to meet their ongoing insurance obligations.
Vulnerable	B, B-	Fair	Assigned to companies that have, in our opinion, a fair ability to meet their ongoing insurance obligations. Financial strength is vulnerable to adverse changes in underwriting and economic conditions.
	C++, C+	Marginal	Assigned to companies that have, in our opinion, a marginal ability to meet their ongoing insurance obligations. Financial strength is vulnerable to adverse changes in underwriting and economic conditions.
	C, C-	Weak	Assigned to companies that have, in our opinion, a weak ability to meet their ongoing insurance obligations. Financial strength is very vulnerable to adverse changes in underwriting and economic conditions.
	D	Poor	Assigned to companies that have, in our opinion, a poor ability to meet their ongoing insurance obligations. Financial strength is extremely vulnerable to adverse changes in underwriting and economic conditions.
	E	Under Regulatory Supervision	Assigned to companies (and possibly their subsidiaries/affiliates) that are publicly placed under a significant form of regulatory supervision, control or restraint - including cease and desist orders, conservatorship or rehabilitation, but not liquidation - that prevents conduct of normal, ongoing insurance operations.
	F	In Liquidation	Assigned to companies that are publicly placed in liquidation by a court of law or by a forced liquidation.
	S	Suspended	Assigned to rated companies when sudden and significant events impact operations and rating implications cannot be evaluated due to a lack of timely or adequate information; or in cases where continued maintenance of the previously published rating opinion is in violation of evolving regulatory requirements.

Rating Modifiers

Modifier	Descriptor	Definition
u	Under Review	Indicates the rating may change in the near term, typically within six months. Generally is event driven, with positive, negative or developing implications.
pd	Public Data	Indicates rating assigned to insurer that chose not to participate in A.M. Best's interactive rating process. (Discontinued in 2010)
s	Syndicate	Indicates rating assigned to a Lloyd's syndicate.

Rating Outlooks

Indicates potential direction of a Best's Financial Strength Rating over an intermediate term, generally defined as 12 to 36 months.

Positive	Indicates possible rating upgrade due to favorable financial/market trends relative to the current rating level.
Negative	Indicates possible rating downgrade due to unfavorable financial/market trends relative to the current rating level.
Stable	Indicates low likelihood of a rating change due to stable financial/market trends.

Under Review Implications

Indicates the potential direction of a Best's Financial Strength Rating that is in Under Review status based on information currently available.

Positive	Indicates there is a reasonable likelihood the company's rating will be raised as a result of A.M. Best's analysis of a recent event.
Negative	Indicates there is a reasonable likelihood the company's rating will be lowered as a result of A.M. Best's analysis of a recent event.
Developing	Indicates there is uncertainty as to the final rating outcome, but there is a reasonable likelihood the company's rating will change as a result of A.M. Best's analysis of a recent event.

Not Rated Designation

NR: Assigned to companies that are not rated by A.M. Best.

Rating Disclosure

A Best's Financial Strength Rating opinion addresses the relative ability of an insurer to meet its ongoing insurance obligations. The ratings are not assigned to specific insurance policies or contracts and do not address any other risk, including, but not limited to, an insurer's claims-payment policies or procedures; the ability of the insurer to dispute or deny claims payment on grounds of misrepresentation or fraud; or any specific liability contractually borne by the policy or contract holder. A Best's Financial Strength Rating is not a recommendation to purchase, hold or terminate any insurance policy, contract or any other financial obligation issued by an insurer, nor does it address the suitability of any particular policy or contract for a specific purpose or purchaser. In arriving at a rating decision, A.M. Best relies on third-party audited financial data and/or other information provided to it. While this information is believed to be reliable, A.M. Best does not independently verify the accuracy or reliability of the information. For additional details, see A.M. Best's *Terms of Use* at www.ambest.com.

Best's Financial Strength Ratings are distributed via press release and/or the A.M. Best website at www.ambest.com and are published in the *Best's Credit Rating Actions* section of *Best's Journal*TM. Best's Financial Strength Ratings are proprietary and may not be reproduced without permission. Copyright © 2014 by A.M. Best Company, Inc.

Version 102414

