



**A.M. BEST Rating
Services, Inc.**

**RATED COMPANY
GUIDE TO PROPER USE**

**of a Best's Credit Rating, Best's Financial Size Category,
Best's Credit Reports, Rating Rationale, Press Release and
BestMark**

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This document outlines the proper use of A.M. Best Rating Services, Inc.'s (A.M. Best) proprietary information, specifically a Best's Credit Rating (BCR), Best's Financial Size Category (FSC), Best's Credit Report, BestMark, Best's Rating Reports, Rationales and Press Releases. It is intended as a guide and does not supersede any existing contracts or licensing agreements.

All queries regarding the use of proprietary information or to obtain a letter of consent should be directed to:

Mailing Address: A.M. Best Rating Services, Inc.
Office of Intellectual Property
Ambest Road
Oldwick, New Jersey 08858
USA

Phone +1 908-439-2200, extension 5644

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I. Use of a Best's Credit Rating:

Best's Credit Ratings (BCR) include Financial Strength Ratings (FSR), Issuer Credit Ratings (ICR) and Issue Credit Ratings (IR). A.M. Best publicly discloses BCRs on its website, which are used by rated companies, insurance professionals, distributors, consumers and other financial market participants around the world. BCR is a registered trademark of A.M. Best Company, Inc.

A company rated by A.M. Best can request its distribution channel(s) be permitted to display its BCR. A.M. Best will grant these requests as long as the distribution channel (e.g., agent or broker) is licensed by and/or has a contractual right to sell policies for that company. Please contact the Office of Intellectual Property to obtain a letter of consent.

Companies have the option of displaying only the FSR, only the ICR or IR, or the FSR along with the ICR and/or IR. In general, a BCR can be communicated verbally and/or in print or electronic format. Any use must be in accordance with the following guidelines:

All references to BCRs should include:

- proper attribution, whether referenced in print, on the internet or verbally on the radio, television or internet;
- proper use: "ABC Company has a Best's Credit Rating of A+" or "ABC Company is rated A+";
- a print/date stamp, and wherever possible, the phrase: "For the latest rating, access www.ambest.com" when it appears in *print media* (e.g., brochures, magazines, newspapers); publishing in a dated periodical (e.g., newspapers, magazines, and professional journals) typically satisfies this guideline; and/or,



- an effective date, and wherever possible, the phrase (with the appropriate hyperlink), “For the latest rating, access www.ambest.com” when a BCR appears in *electronic media* (e.g., internet, intranet).

Acceptable representations of a BCR are the latest assigned letter rating, with or without its Rating Category. The Rating Category can be presented with or without parentheses. For example, FSRs may be displayed as follows:

- rated A+ by A.M. Best
- rated A+ (Superior) by A.M. Best
- A.M. Best: “A+”
- A.M. Best (A+)
- A.M. Best A+ rating
- A+ Superior
- A+ (Superior)
- A+ (Superior) by A.M. Best
- A+ Superior from A.M. Best
- A+ by A.M. Best
- “A+” A.M. Best
- A.M. Best Rating “A” (Excellent) to “A+” (Superior) with Positive Outlook
- A+ A.M. Best rated insurer

If the rated company displays its ICR or IR, on a rated security, acceptable representations would be the same as those for FSR above using the ICR or IR “aaa” scale. Additionally, the appropriate Rating Category on the “aaa” scale would need to be substituted.

It is not necessary to present the Rating Category with the letter rating. However, the Rating Category cannot be presented without the letter Rating Symbol. In addition, it is recommended that the rating modifier, for example “u” (under review), or the outlook be included when displaying a BCR.

For companies rated by A.M. Best and their agents/brokers, any copy/language to be used in connection with the display of a BCR should be submitted to the Office of Intellectual Property for review and approval.

A company rated by A.M. Best may:

- communicate a BCR verbally and/or in print or electronic format, in accordance with the guidelines noted above;
- display its BCR (in accordance with the guidelines above) in different media:
 - electronic (e.g., intranet, internet)
 - print (e.g., annual reports, advertisements and marketing literature)
 - broadcast (e.g., radio, television, cable and internet);
- compare and contrast its BCR with the BCRs of its competitors during client sales presentations; and/or,

- request that its agents and/or brokers—those who are licensed by and have a contractual right to sell policies for the company—also be permitted to use its BCR as defined above.

An agent or broker may:

- communicate a BCR verbally and/or in print or electronic format in accordance with the guidelines noted above: and/or
- use the ratings, as defined above, of companies rated by A.M. Best with whom they are licensed and have a contractual right to sell policies upon receipt of a letter/email of consent from an appropriate representative of the rated company and the issuance of a letter of consent by A.M. Best to post the rating to an agent or broker's website or inclusion in a brochure.

II. Use of Best's Financial Size Category:

A.M. Best assigns a Best's Financial Size Category (FSC) to each letter-rated company. The FSC is designed to provide a convenient indicator of the size of a company in terms of its most recent cross-checked submission of year-end, first-, second- or third-quarter regulatory surplus and related accounts. Best's FSC is based on reported policyholders' surplus plus conditional or technical reserve funds, such as the asset valuation reserve, other investment and operating contingency funds and miscellaneous voluntary reserves reported as liabilities.

The FSC is represented by Roman numerals ranging from Class I (smallest) to Class XV (largest). The FSC is not part of the BCR and does not have to be displayed alongside the rating.

Acceptable representations of the FSC:

- Financial Size Category of Class XV
- FSC of Class XV
- XV

When displaying the BCR and FSC together, the BCR and the FSC must be kept distinct. For example:

- A+ (Superior), Financial Size Category XV
- A+ (Superior), FSC XV
- A+ (Superior) from A.M. Best (XV Financial Size Category)
- A.M. Best rating of A+ (Superior), Financial Size Category of XV
- Rated A+ (Superior) by A.M. Best with a Financial Size Category of XV

An improper representation would be to insert the FSC between the BCR and the Rating Category. Additionally, the rated company may substitute its ICR for its FSR and utilize the appropriate Rating Category on the "aaa" scale if a Rating Category is being included.

III. Use of Best's Credit Reports, Best's Rating Reports and Rating Rationale:

The rated company is provided a copy of its Best's Credit Report, which includes its financial performance, BCR, key performance indicators and detailed analysis. The Best's Credit Report may not be copied for internal or external use. In addition, The Best's Credit Report may not be posted on a company's website or intranet site without first completing a licensing agreement with A.M. Best.

A company may not post its rating rationale to its website. A company can, however, use its rating rationale as long as it is:

- not a select portion that changes the context of the copy; and/or,
- accompanied by its FSR.

The rated company also has the option of a preprinted Best's Rating Report, produced in English and other languages. The Best's Rating Reports and Best's Credit Reports are also available in an online PDF version. To request information on Best's Rating Reports, contact A.M. Best's Rating Report Services at +1 908-439-2200, ext. 5117 or email Rating.Reports@ambest.com.

Should a company's BCR change, it should promptly cease distribution of any Best's Rating Report that contains the outdated rating and contact A.M. Best's Ratings Reports Services team at rating.reports@ambest.com. An agent or broker may be provided a preprinted Best's Rating Report for redistribution to clients by the rated company; however, the report may not be copied.

IV. Use of a Best's Press Release:

A.M. Best issues rating announcements through its website. However, in some cases a secondary republication of the rating announcements is completed via press release which is disseminated through BusinessWire; our A.M. Best website (www.ambest.com/press and <http://www3.ambest.com/ratings/pressrelease.asp>); BestWire, Best's News Service; and via email to preferred publishers. All BCRs are maintained at www.ambest.com and can be verified using rating search tools.

A rated company can display its BCR by using the A.M. Best press release in the following ways:

- Link back to the A.M. Best website for the full press release/rating disclosure;
- Redistribute or post the title of the A.M. Best press release with a link back to the A.M. Best website for the full press release/rating disclosure;
- Redistribute copies of the complete A.M. Best press release (in print or electronic format). Post an electronic copy of the A.M. Best press release on the rated company's website. In all cases of redistribution and/or website posting, the press release cannot be modified and must be presented in its entirety, including the A.M. Best copyright notice at the end of the press release.
- Extract direct quotes from the press release for use in company materials, like the annual report, marketing materials, etc., but not a select portion that changes the context of the copy.

Please contact the Public Relations staff with any questions.

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V. Use of BestMark:

BestMark provides insurers with an easily recognized image to depict the assigned level of financial strength. This image is customized with an individual company's assigned FSR symbol and can be used in print and electronically for offline or online activities.

In print, BestMark is a visual image to consumers and other interested parties showing the company has undergone A.M. Best's rigorous rating process and has been assigned a BCR. Permission for use of BestMark in print can be obtained by contacting A.M. Best's Office of Intellectual Property, which will provide a letter of consent.

When used in the electronic world, BestMark has added value as an interactive image, linking a rated company's website visitors to its insurer capsule page. Linkage to the capsule page is part of the basic complimentary service, which can be obtained by completing a simple, free online agreement (<http://www.ambest.com/ratings/icon/about.asp>).

A company rated by A.M. Best may:

- use the BestMark in print; a letter/email of consent from A.M. Best will follow the request;
- use the BestMark in electronic format (e.g., internet or intranet) after completing a free online agreement; and/or,
- request its agents and/or brokers—who are licensed by and have a contractual right to sell policies for that company—also be permitted to use its BestMark.

An agent or broker may have limited rights to use, convey or otherwise promote the BestMark of a company with which a contractual arrangement is maintained. Upon receipt of a letter/email of consent from an appropriate representative of the rated company, the issuance of a letter of consent by A.M. Best can be completed. Requests should be made directly to the rated company, which then can contact A.M. Best.