

The below Insights E-mail is part of a continuing series designed to highlight key products and services to our readers. This sponsored Insights E-mail was written and edited by *Risk & Insurance*® on behalf of our marketing partner.

## Account adjusters pivotal to large loss claims process

When it comes to large losses, experiencing a fair, impartial claims adjusting process is critical for both insurance carriers and their insureds.

As an insured, you need to recover quickly and be compensated fairly post-loss. As a carrier, when using an independent adjusting firm, you want to be sure they are objective with the insured but, at the same time, keep your financial interests in focus.

In either case, working with an unfamiliar claims adjuster on large loss claims, whether they are employed directly by a carrier or are part of an independent third party firm, can turn contentious. For one thing, it is highly unlikely that the insured or insurer have met, or have any relationship with the adjuster who will evaluate the amount or extent of a property loss. There also is a good chance that a random adjuster will have little specific knowledge of an insured's business or industry.

Within the commercial property and casualty (P&C) industry, however, there is a solution. Most excess and surplus lines carriers do not employ staff adjusters and therefore hire independent adjusting firms to act as an extension of their claims department in the field. Insureds and their brokers can specifically request in their market submission that an independent property adjusting company (or even a specific adjuster from within that company, often referred to as an account adjuster) be named in their property insurance policies.

According to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania-based Joe Slane, Executive General Adjuster (EGA) and Managing Director of the Specialty Loss Group at Engle Martin & Associates Inc., a leading national independent loss adjusting and claims management provider headquartered in Atlanta, working with an Engle Martin adjuster who has been written into the policy offers several advantages.

First, having an account adjuster you know in advance of a loss, someone you have an established business relationship with, will benefit both insured and insurer because it means a more efficient, effective claims adjusting process.

"At Engle Martin, for example, we match up our EGAs with clients based on claims experience and expertise within an industry and familiarity with loss exposures," Slane said. "We also focus on understanding an insured's individual business and risk management philosophies before any claims might occur."

Slane explained that because it is a possibility that an insured will change carriers due to market or risk conditions, having an ongoing relationship with specific account adjusters will facilitate a consistent claims process.

Engle Martin's Specialty Loss Group, consisting of the firm's Executive General Adjusters, is dedicated to managing high-value, complex losses from a variety of commercial business segments. Slane explained that Engle Martin's elite nationwide team of 22 highly credentialed and experienced EGAs is the backbone of the Specialty Loss Group's account adjuster strategy.

Slane himself is a claims veteran with more than 24 years of commercial claims experience, including 11 years with Engle Martin. Slane's focus is to coordinate the team's expertise and ensure high quality service to Engle Martin clients.

He explained that while adjusters technically have a fiduciary responsibility to carriers, the reason Engle Martin enjoys such a solid reputation across the P&C industry is their dedication to complex adjustments, superior communications, and being fair and impartial when adjusting high-value losses.



“Our EGAs are the highest level adjusters within our organization, the cream of the crop industry-wide,” he said. “The brokers and risk managers who oversee large accounts know about our positive reputation, and that we have proven to be attentive and reliable with our accounts.”

Slane outlined several advantages in using the Engle Martin Specialty Loss Group’s account adjusters:

- Engle Martin has established positive working relationships with a multitude of property and casualty insurance companies.
- Insureds will be informed who their adjuster is before a loss, allowing a relationship to be in place ahead of time.
- Engle Martin account adjusters work hard to understand an insured’s business processes and key risk management initiatives.
- To ease the loss adjustment process, Engle Martin’s team has advanced knowledge of the policy that the underwriters have written.



**Joe Slane**  
**Director – Specialty Loss**  
**Group and Executive**  
**General Adjuster**

Slane says the last point is especially important when there are several carriers involved with a single large loss claim, often the case in the P&C industry.

“Sometimes there are as many as four or five carriers on a large claim,” he said. “Having a single, highly experienced account adjuster greatly simplifies the claim process in those situations. And that works to everyone’s benefit.”

Slane explained that brokers say they favor having a consistent, knowledgeable adjuster to manage claims for their large clients. Risk managers are pleased when they know their adjuster speaks in their terminology and understands their company and industry.

For example, if a company in the glass container industry suffers a serious loss, Slane or one of the Engle Martin EGAs will already know key factors of the business such as how their furnaces work, how their machines operate, what their production processes entail, etc.

“The account adjuster’s technical expertise in knowing the insured’s process pre-loss is instant credibility,” he said. “We speak their language and that decreases the burden on the insured because there is less of a learning curve for the adjuster.”

Whether it is a CAT claim arising out of a large-scale event such as a natural disaster, or a daily claim that happens in the business world, Engle Martin account adjusters deliver the same fluid relationship throughout the year, both before and after a claim, regardless of the severity.

In the end, Slane said brokers, carriers and insureds all benefit equally from an Engle Martin account adjuster, a true professional who understands not only the economic and human pain after suffering a large loss, but also how to be fair and impartial when adjudicating those critical claims.