



Reserved Names Auction Process

Introduction

Prior to the launch of .INSURANCE in May 2016, fTLD Registry Services (fTLD) reserved numerous domains from being available for registration. After consultation with fTLD's Advisory Council and Board of Directors in 2019, we are now allocating select .INSURANCE domains from our list of Registry Operator Reserved Names. The purpose for allocating these domains is to raise awareness about .INSURANCE by having them accessible on the internet.¹

To ensure a fair, equitable, and transparent auction, fTLD has engaged Innovative Auctions Limited (IAL)² to conduct the process. fTLD is responsible for qualifying organizations to bid on domains of interest and collecting bid deposits and winning bids. IAL runs the auction as an independent auction facilitator. IAL will only share a limited and well defined amount of information³ with fTLD.

The auction will be held in two phases. In the **Selection Phase** of the auction, bidders can place bids on the below 12 premium domains. The five (5) domains with the lowest bids will be eliminated from the auction. The seven (7) domains that receive the highest bids in the **Selection Phase** will then be offered in the **Allocation Phase** of the auction. The reserve price for each domain is \$7,500 US.

Domains that do not receive sufficiently high bids in the **Selection Phase** will return to fTLD Registry's reserved domains list and will not be available for a minimum of one year. It is therefore important that bidders interested in a domain participate in the **Selection Phase** to ensure the best chance their desired domain is offered in the **Allocation Phase**.

Business.INSURANCE
Casualty.INSURANCE
Cyber.INSURANCE
Fire.INSURANCE
Flood.INSURANCE

¹ See the below Domain Registration and Use Requirements.

² Innovative Auctions Limited is the firm that conducted nearly all the private auctions to resolve contention among gTLD applications for the same string during ICANN's 2012 round of new gTLDs. More information is available at <https://www.innovativeauctions.com/>.

³ IAL will inform fTLD of the seven (7) domains from the Selection Phase that will proceed to the Allocation Phase. IAL will also inform fTLD of the identity of the winning bidders and the bid amounts of the winning bids. In the event a winning bidder defaults on completing the domain registration process, IAL will inform fTLD of the second highest winning bidder's name and amount.

Homeowners.INSURANCE
Hurricane.INSURANCE
Malpractice.INSURANCE
Marine.INSURANCE
Mortgage.INSURANCE
Pet.INSURANCE
Renters.INSURANCE

Auction Schedule

- February 7: Last day to submit Verification Applications and bid deposits to participate in the Selection Phase.
- February 18-20: **Selection Phase** - Bids accepted for the 12 domains.
- February 24: fTLD announces the seven (7) domains, with the highest bids, that will proceed on to the **Allocation Phase**.
- March 4: Last day to submit Verification Applications and bid deposits for bidders who did not participate in the **Selection Phase**.
- March 16-18: **Allocation Phase** - Bids accepted for the seven (7) domains. **Selection Phase** bidders may participate, but only to increase their bids.
- March 19: IAL shares auction results with fTLD and fTLD communicates outcome individually to each bidder. Registration Tokens are provided to prevailing bidders.

Application Process

- All bidders must be pre-verified by fTLD as eligible by completing the Verification Application accessible here: <https://register.insurance/get-started/>. Bidders must include all the domains of interest in one application. Qualification will take place separately for each domain of interest.
- Applications can be submitted at anytime, and verification must be completed, prior to the desired auction phase. Only verified bidders will be invited by IAL to participate in the auction, and they will only be able to bid on the domains they are qualified for.
- Bidders must submit a minimum bid deposit to fTLD before their Verification Application will be considered. The minimum bid deposit is \$2,000 US for each domain of interest included in the application. If, at fTLD's discretion, a bidder does not meet the criteria for any of their domains of interest in their application, fTLD will refund the deposit for such domain(s), in full. Bidders are limited to submit bids adding up to 10 times⁴ the bid deposit. A bidder whose bid deposit exceeds \$10,000 US, multiplied by the number of domains the bidder is qualified for, may bid without limit on those domains. Bid deposits must be submitted in accordance with the remittance instructions available here: <https://register.insurance/docs/BDRI.pdf>.

Qualification Rules

- Bidders must meet fTLD's Organization (Registrant) Eligibility Requirements accessible here: <https://www.register.insurance/eligibility/>. As noted in the Application Process

⁴ A bid deposit of \$6,000 US would permit bids totaling up to \$60,000 US.

above, fTLD will pre-verify and authorize eligible bidders to participate in the auction, on a per-domain basis.

- Bidders must provide and/or distribute an insurance product or service associated with the domain name (e.g., bidders must provide and/or distribute marine insurance to participate in the auction for **Marine.INSURANCE**).

Settlement of Winning Bids

- Winning bidders must remit, and fTLD must receive, the winning bid amount within five (5) business days of fTLD's notification to the bidder.
- Winning bidders must register the domain within ten (10) business days of fTLD's acknowledgement of receipt of the bid amount and issuance of the Registration Token.
- Failure to meet the above specified timelines, in fTLD's sole discretion, will result in: (1) the right to register being waived; (2) the auction fee returned, less the full bid deposit amount; and (3) the domain made available to the second highest bidder or returned to fTLD Registry's reserved names list, at fTLD's discretion.

Domain Registration and Use Requirements

- The initial registration term is limited to one (1) year.
- Domains are subject to premium pricing⁵.
- Domain must resolve to an [fTLD-compliant](#) .INSURANCE website within six (6) months of the registration date⁶ or registrant forfeits the right to renew the domain. An informational website⁶ is one way to meet the resolution requirement. Domain redirection, parked pages, and the like do not meet the resolution requirement. Domain name resolution must be maintained throughout the life of the registration.
- Domains may not be transferred during the initial term of registration. Domain transfers after the initial term may only be made to organizations that meet the previously defined Qualification Rules.

Auction Rules

The auction will be facilitated by IAL, an independent party providing auction services. IAL will prepare the online auction system in such a way that it supports enforcement of the rules in this section, and will act as auctioneer, enforcing these rules in its processes.

Bidders can bid in the auction with confidence that their bids will only be disclosed to fTLD pursuant to the Information Policy described in this document.

The auction will be held in two phases:

The purpose of the **Selection Phase** is to determine which of the domains offered has sufficient interest so that fTLD is comfortable committing to selling the domain in the auction. None of the

⁵ Check with an [fTLD-Approved Registrar](#) for its price.

⁶ See [www.Allstate.INSURANCE](#) and [www.Progressive.INSURANCE](#) for examples of meeting the resolution requirement.

domains will sell in the selection phase; however, bids placed are binding, and might win after the allocation phase.

In the **Allocation Phase**, fTLD is committed to selling a domain offered if a bid is received that meets the reserve price. Only the seven (7) domains with the highest bids in the selection phase will be available for bidding in the allocation phase. The highest bidder for a domain in the allocation phase wins.

Domains that do not receive sufficiently high bids in the selection phase will return to fTLD Registry's reserved names list and will not be available for a minimum of one year. It is therefore important that bidders interested in a domain participate in the selection phase to ensure the best chance their desired domain is offered in the allocation phase.

Before the Auction

Before the auction starts, each qualified bidder will receive credentials for logging into the auction system. Bidders are obligated to maintain strict confidentiality of their credentials and are responsible for any action taken by anyone who might have gained knowledge of the credentials.

Bidders are required to log into the system before the auction has started to ensure that they have access to the system and to verify their bidding limit, which is determined based on the bid deposit, as follows:

1. If a bidder's bid deposit exceeds \$10,000 US multiplied by the number of domains the bidder is qualified for, the bidder may place bids without an upper limit in the auction for any and all of the domains the bidder is qualified for. For example, a bidder who is qualified to bid for three (3) domains and submits a deposit of \$30,001 US can place bids as high as it wishes, for all three (3) domains.
2. Otherwise, the limit is equal to 10 times the amount of the bidding deposit. For example, a bidder who submits a deposit of \$6,000 US may place bids adding up to \$60,000 US.

If a bidder believes that its bidding limit determined by the system is incorrect, the bidder must contact the auction manager immediately, and provide evidence of the deposit placed, so that the auction manager can resolve the discrepancy.

Bid Placement Procedure in both Phases of the Auction

Both phases of the auction will be held online, and bids can be placed over the internet in the secure online bidding system.

For each phase, the auctioneer will announce, well in advance, the start and end time of the bid submission period. Bidders can submit bids only during the bid submission period. A bid consists of a domain and the dollar amount the bidder offers to pay for the domain. The dollar amount can be \$0 US, in which case the bid is also referred to as a "withdrawal".

A bid is invalid if:

- It is lower than the reserve price, but not a withdrawal
- It causes the bidder's bidding limit to be exceeded

The auction system will check if a bid that was entered is valid, and reject invalid bids immediately.

During the bid submission period, each bidder can submit bids for each domain as many times as it wishes. All bids that are in place at the end of the bid submission period of either of the two phases are binding. Placement of these bids obligates the bidder to pay the price of the bid if it wins.

Selection Phase

By placing bids in the selection phase of the auction, bidders can influence which domains will be offered in the allocation phase. At the end of the selection phase, the auction system determines, for each domain, the amount of the highest bid for that domain, and ranks the domains in order of this highest bid amount. Ordering of domains with identical highest bids will be determined at fTLD's sole discretion. Only the seven (7) domains, with the highest bids in the selection phase, will be offered in the allocation phase. fTLD is obligated to sell each of these seven (7) domains, if it receives a bid that meets or exceeds the reserve price.

Allocation Phase

Bidding in the allocation phase of the auction works the same way as in the selection phase, with one exception: If a bidder has placed a binding bid for a domain in the selection phase, then during the allocation phase, the bidder can not withdraw this bid and cannot place a bid that is lower than the amount of its binding bid from the selection phase.

Winner Determination

At the end of the bid submission period, the auction system determines the highest bid for each of the domains offered. If there is more than one highest bid, the winner is determined by random draw, facilitated by the auction system. Each winner will pay the price of their winning bid.

Information policy

Bids will be treated as highly confidential, and information related to bids will only be disclosed in a way that is consistent with the information policy described in this section.

1. Disclosures during the bid submission period of either stage

The following information will be disclosed to each bidder:

- for each domain, the bidder's own currently binding bid

The following information will be disclosed to fTLD:

- for each domain, the number of bidders that have submitted a valid bid, as well as the amount of the highest bid, but not the identity of the bidder for any of the bids

2. Disclosures after the conclusion of the selection phase

The following information will be disclosed publicly:

- The list of domains offered in the allocation phase

The following information will be disclosed to each bidder:

- The amount of its own binding bids

The following information will be disclosed to fTLD:

- The amount of the highest bids for each domain, but not the identity of the corresponding bidder

3. Disclosures after the conclusion of the allocation phase

The following information will be disclosed to each bidder:

- Which domains, if any, it won, and for what price

The following information will be disclosed to fTLD:

- The amount of the highest bid and the identity of the winner
- If the winner defaulted, the amount of the second highest bid, and the identity of the bidder