

When the FMA shows up:

Why evidence beats effort for insurance brokers

Audits are inevitable. The outcome isn't.

You can give excellent advice and still fail an FMA monitoring visit if you can't prove it. When the FMA arrives, they won't just look at outcomes, they'll examine your evidence. Can you instantly produce complete, consistent, immutable records for the past 7+ years?

The FMA monitoring notification arrives. You have days to produce complete records for selected clients, going back 7+ years. Every nature and scope document. Every advice record with rationale. Every disclosure. Every piece of evidence showing you met the Code of Professional Conduct for Financial Advice Services.

Can your team deliver that with confidence? Or would you be racing against the clock?

What happens when the FMA actually shows up

When the FMA starts a monitoring visit to your brokerage, the clock starts ticking the moment their request lands.

The documentation demands

They want comprehensive records typically spanning 7+ years: client files, nature and scope documents, advice records with detailed rationale, disclosure statements, complaints records, and proof you met your duties under the Financial Markets Conduct Act and the Code. They'll review your document management systems, interview staff, and check whether what you actually do matches what your procedures say you do.

The reality check

Missing documents? Incomplete advice rationale? Records that might have been edited after the fact? These are potential compliance failures that could trigger enforcement action.

What starts as a documentation request can escalate to:

- Mandatory compliance consultants monitoring your operations (at your expense)
- Additional licence conditions restricting how you can operate
- Licence suspension (you stop trading immediately)
- Licence cancellation (permanent closure)
- Financial penalties reaching hundreds of thousands of dollars
- Bans preventing you from providing financial advice
- Public enforcement actions destroying your reputation
- Professional liability insurance premiums skyrocketing or coverage denied entirely
- Clients leaving as word spreads

Some brokerages won't recover. It may not have been because their advice was bad, but because they couldn't demonstrate it was good.

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The 5 gaps FMA monitoring visits find

Since the new financial advice regime began in 2021, FMA monitoring has intensified. Here's where most visits identify issues:

Editable file notes: Records that can be altered after creation undermine your credibility

Missing advice rationale: Can't prove why you recommended what you did

Slow retrieval: Taking days to find 7-year-old records, signals weak systems

Inconsistent filing: Critical documents missing because there's no enforced structure

No proof of Code compliance: You met your duties, but can't demonstrate it

These gaps may exist because generic document storage like shared drives, email folders, basic cloud storage, wasn't built for regulatory scrutiny.

How to reduce your risk of failing an FMA monitoring visit

The fastest way to lower monitoring risk is to build audit-readiness into your daily operations.

Use JAVLN Officetech to:

Make your records uneditable

Lock file notes, advice rationale, and key records at the point of creation. Once created, they cannot be altered - full stop. This creates a tamper-proof audit trail with timestamps for every action. When the FMA questions a file note from 2019, you can prove it hasn't been touched since the day it was written. This eliminates the "he said, she said" risk that destroys credibility during monitoring visits.

Capture everything, consistently

MS365 integration ensures emails and documents are saved to the correct client folder. Guided filing ensures nature and scope documents, advice records, disclosures, and correspondence are always present and structured identically across every client. Centralised templates keep your outbound communications compliant by default. No more missing documents because someone forgot to save an email or filed it in the wrong place.

Build quality assurance into workflows

Run quarterly file audits using built-in reporting and compliance checklists. Use task templates and customisable workflows to enforce critical steps across your entire team. Identify and remediate gaps proactively, before the FMA finds them during a monitoring visit. What used to take a compliance officer days now takes hours.

Prove Code compliance

Pair JAVLN Platform with Officetech to retain multi-quote comparisons, documented advice rationale, and clear remuneration disclosure. Evidence that client objectives drove every recommendation, stored immutably. When the FMA asks "how did you demonstrate you put clients' interests first?", you don't explain it. You show it.

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Retrieve in minutes, not days

Text-based search across all documents means finding any record instantly, not just filenames, but words inside documents. Structured filing with 7-year automatic retention, cloud access from anywhere, and enterprise-grade security (SOC 2 Type 2 compliance) align with FMA expectations. Response time becomes your advantage.

The JAVLN advantage: Audit-ready by design

JAVLN Officetech is purpose-built as the compliance and efficiency backbone for insurance brokers:

Uneditable documentation – Records can't be altered after creation, providing bulletproof evidence

Complete audit trail – Every action tracked and timestamped automatically

Guided filing – Prevents missing critical documents the FMA expects

Instant retrieval – Text-based search finds any document in seconds

7-year retention – Meet record-keeping obligations by default

SOC 2 Type 2 security – Enterprise-grade protection aligned to FMA expectations

Template management – Consistent, compliant communications across all staff

Think about this scenario: Same monitoring request, different outcomes

Without JAVLN Officetech:

The FMA requests complete documentation for a client from 5 years ago. Your team spends 2 days searching email archives, shared drives, old servers and paper files. Some documents are missing. Advice rationale is incomplete or appears to have been edited. Nature and scope documents are inconsistent.

The monitoring visit uncovers systematic gaps.

Result: Enforcement action, licence conditions, mandatory compliance consultant, and public register notation.

With JAVLN Officetech:

Same request arrives. You search the client name and open their complete file - nature and scope documents, advice records with rationale, all quote comparisons, correspondence, instructions, remuneration disclosures - all timestamped with an uneditable audit trail showing nothing was altered. You generate a comprehensive response package within 90 minutes.

The FMA sees a well-governed, systematised operation with enterprise-grade controls.

Result: Clean monitoring outcome, commendation on document management practices.