

Insights and Updates



16 West Elizabeth Avenue ♦ PO Box 1100 ♦ Linden, NJ 07036
(908) 862-4047p ♦ (908) 862-0308f

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Stay insured when you rent or hire a vehicle

People may put a significant amount of effort into adequately insuring their personal vehicles, but they frequently make quick assumptions about coverage of rented or hired vehicles. However, it is important to confirm that such insurance coverage is in place before renting a vehicle or taking a ride in a hired car.

When it comes to renting a vehicle, your own insurance should cover you and the other drivers in your household (certain conditions may apply, so talk to us first). The important thing to remember is to name the other drivers who may drive the rental car before taking the keys, even if it means there will be an additional cost. While New Jersey doesn't have specific limits, it's important to know that some states like New York and California do. New York prevents rental companies from charging the additional driver fee for spouses and caps the fee at \$3 for other named drivers. California prohibits car rental companies from charging additional driver fees for up to three additional drivers. Various states around the country have similar limitations and, if you are listing your spouse as the additional driver, then your automobile insurance should cover them. However, underage driver fees may still apply, so beware of including your teenager as an additional driver on your vacation.

Prior to renting a vehicle, also check with your credit card company to see if it has coverage available. Major credit

card companies often provide rental reimbursement coverage that goes beyond what is available from your automobile insurer.

Other tips about rental car coverage include: if you choose to purchase rental insurance from a rental company, it would not involve coverage on your own personal auto policy in the event of a loss. Additionally, if you're renting a vehicle outside the territories permitted on your personal auto policy, your policy will not provide coverage.

You can research rental companies in advance to learn their policies, and if you do not have automobile insurance at home, come talk to us about options to cover you while renting a vehicle. Be careful—rental companies can seem authoritative and convincing about purchasing their insurance. We can help you get the coverage you need.

Skipping the car rental to rely on ride-hailing companies does not mean you can ignore the insurance of your ride. Check the insurance provided by the company online before you start booking rides to ensure coverage for passengers—even if the driver does not have additional insurance. Always book and pay for rides through the company's application. Even if the driver offers a better rate for cash, this may leave you without coverage. You can talk to us about any coverage from your own policies or available coverage

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to protect yourself and your family as passengers in a ride-hailing vehicle.

Depending on where you go, you may decide to rent an electric scooter or a bicycle. While your health insurance would cover any injuries to yourself should you fall off a scooter or bike, there would be limits to the liability coverage available. Your personal liability coverage on a homeowners policy most likely includes accident coverage for a traditional bicycle, but excludes any vehicle with a motor. Automobile insurance limits coverage to vehicles with four wheels, leaving you exposed if you rent an electric scooter, motorbike or motor tricycle. If you or your family have any interest in renting electric bikes or scooters, give us a call to discuss coverage options to protect all of you.

Don't find yourself without coverage. Accidents happen. Stop in or give us a call so you can better understand your coverage and understand the coverage provided from rental and for-hire vehicle services.



Protect your jewelry with insurance

Jewelry is a popular gift for engagements, anniversaries, birthdays, Christmas and Valentine's Day. It's one of the most meaningful gifts—and the most valuable—that someone might receive. It's imperative that these precious pieces are protected from all sorts of troubling incidents, such as damage, or loss—even theft.

Here are some tips to keep your jewelry protected and preserved:

1. Never wear your jewelry to bed. Sheets and blankets can get caught on the prongs that hold gemstones into place on rings, necklaces, earrings, etc. When this happens, the prongs loosen, making your gemstone more susceptible to falling out.
2. Remove your jewelry before swimming, showering, or applying lotion. Over time, exposure to chlorine, body washes and hair products, and lotion can create build up in the prongs, or in the crevices of chains. This can tarnish your jewelry, or even cause the jewelry to break.
3. When you are not wearing your jewelry, find creative places to hide it. Simply place your jewelry in a sock and put it in the back of your sock drawer. Or, place your precious stones in the pocket of an old jacket. Thieves are unlikely to search your clothes for your expensive jewelry. Be sure to store your necklaces in such a way so that they don't get tangled and damaged.
4. Use a home safe. Home safes usually are locked with a combination or a key, and are difficult to break into. Find a good place to hide it and your jewelry will be safe.
5. Invest in a jewelry insurance policy. Jewelry insurance policies are important because accidents happen; theft happens. If you find yourself in an unfortunate situation that has resulted in damaged or stolen jewelry, make sure you have an insurance policy that covers these valuables for the agreed value—the amount of money for which you have insured the jewelry.

A common misconception is that homeowners insurance fully covers jewelry, but you need an endorsement on your homeowners policy to get complete protection. Come talk to us about insuring your jewelry. Tell us all of the high-valued items you wish to insure—some items maybe need an appraisal in order to be covered. Don't wait—jewelry damage and theft happens. If it happens to you, you'll want to be covered.





Protect your house when you rent it out to others

Renting out your house to others can be lucrative. Millions of people take advantage of various house/apartment sharing services (e.g., Airbnb, HomeAway, FlipKey or MIMDU) each year. These companies match hosts who want to rent their dwellings or rooms out for a short period of time with guests. While most of these transactions end well, there have been some horror stories (e.g., property damage, accidents, or people who use the house for criminal acts), which should give you pause before deciding to rent out your house or apartment.

Should a guest damage your house or property, or get injured during his or her stay, these house-sharing companies offer some insurance protections. Some companies provide up to \$1 million for bodily injury or property damage. However, this may be excess insurance, which means that it doesn't pay until after the host's homeowners liability insurance limit is exhausted—if this coverage is

available—or after the host tries to get reimbursement from the guest, who is responsible for the damages.

Remember, it's difficult to determine how your homeowners or renters policy

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will respond to a claim caused during a house-sharing experience without the aid of an insurance professional. Property coverage depends on the type of property, location of that property, and the circumstances of the guest's occupancy. Liability coverage depends on what part of the house is rented, and how often and how many people are involved.

Further, if your insurance company discovers you are using your property for a commercial purpose, it may not renew your policy. However, there is a good chance your insurer will offer an endorsement to cover this activity more fully.

In addition to the insurance implications, renting out your house for short periods of time might be illegal in your area. Many municipalities prohibit this practice.

Before you decide to participate in house-sharing services, check your insurance policy and review the insurance coverages offered by the house-sharing company with which you are partnering. Don't forget to review your municipality's laws regarding house rentals. Equally important: Give our agency a call. We can review everything with you to help ensure you have the insurance coverages you need.



Pop quiz: What is the most common natural disaster in the United States?

The answer is flooding.

If your home sustained damage due to a flood, would you have coverage? You might be thinking—of course I would have coverage. I have a homeowners policy. You aren't alone in thinking that, but you would be wrong. A common misconception is that a standard homeowners policy will cover damage caused by a flood.

Generally, a homeowners policy will provide coverage only for water damage that is sudden, like when a pipe bursts. Usually, there is coverage for water damage from wind-driven rain (e.g., if strong winds cause damage to your roof and allow water to seep in).

What a homeowners policy will not cover is water damage caused by water that originates outside, nor will it cover damage caused by water or water-borne material that backs up through sewers or drains, or that overflows

or is discharged from a sump pump or related equipment. Damage from water or water-borne material below the surface of the ground is excluded, including water that seeps or leaks through a building or foundation.

If you don't have coverage under a homeowners policy, you can find coverage under a flood insurance policy.

A flood insurance policy specifically provides coverage for the peril of flood. It will provide coverage for coastal flooding, river flooding, flash flooding or groundwater flooding. Additionally, damage caused by a sewer back-up or seepage will be covered by a flood insurance policy, as long as the back-up or seepage is directly related to a flood.

Don't mistake your homeowners policy for coverage from flooding. Contact our office today to learn more about the difference between homeowners and flood insurance.



News from our agency

Are you covered?

When it comes to protecting the things that matter most to you—your home, your jewelry, your life—it's important that you consider what types of insurance will cover you best, and you need to know ahead of time the tricky nuances to your policies that might leave you unprotected.

Are you going to rent or hire a vehicle in the near future? Do you have coverage in the event of a flood or jewelry theft? Is your property available for rent? If you answered "Yes" to any of these questions, give our office a call to learn about your coverage—and what other unique coverage you may need.

Don't find yourself unprotected. We are here to help.

