

Insights & Updates

New Jersey | Spring 2021



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Children getting their own auto insurance policy

Your children probably will need to get an auto policy in their name if a vehicle is titled in their name. You always want the owner as the named insured so that insurable interest is certain when a claim is made for damage to the vehicle. If the insurer puts the child's vehicle on the parent's policy without knowledge of the true owner, there might be complications in settling a claim. In an ideal world, all vehicles in the household will be titled and insured under the same name, regardless of who is the principal household operator. Coverages will be consistent, and—in most cases—premiums will be the lowest.

However, if your children's vehicle is titled in their name and they insure the vehicle on their own, you will want them to purchase the same liability limits that you have, so that there are no gaps in

protection for all residents in the home. You will have your policy's limits available when you drive your child's vehicle or maintain it (e.g., when you repair the brakes), but siblings will have only the limits on your child's policy. While there are legal theories outside of driving and maintaining the children's vehicles that could make you liable, a New Jersey policy should provide coverage for them. Additional gaps, though, could manifest themselves if your policy is not a standardized auto policy, but rather an insurer's independent policy form.

We recommend that you become informed by our agency before you title a vehicle to your children. There may be a good reason to do it, but there can be unexpected consequences. Give us a call today to learn more about your child's auto policy.



Home security: Are you a believer?



A burglary happens
once every
26 seconds.

The average loss
of a burglary is
\$2,799.

Burglaries usually
happen in the
middle of the day.

Burglaries are more
frequent during
the summer.

More burglaries
happen on
rural properties
than **urban.**

It's important to invest in a home security system to protect yourself, your family, your pets and your valuables from an intruder. But, myriad homeowners do not own a home security system, and for various reasons.

Here are some myths about home security that may make you think twice:

Myth: Home security is too expensive.

The real: While there are some upfront costs for home security, such as installation and equipment, the average homeowner with home security spends about \$30 per month on his security system. That's only a dollar a day to protect you, your favorite people and pets, and your belongings.

Myth: A dog will suffice.

The real: Dogs can help alert you if there's an intruder. They even could protect you. But they also could get hurt, and they can't call 911 for you. It's better to use a home security system.

Myth: An intruder could just cut the line.

The real: Actually, many newer security systems are wireless, so intruders can't cut the line. This also means that you don't need a landline to have a home security system, and you're more likely to remain protected if your power goes out.

Myth: You don't need a home security system because you live in a safe neighborhood.

The real: Neighborhoods always are safe until they aren't. Haven't you noticed how, whenever something scary happens, people say, "This is the last place you'd expect something like this to happen."?

Myth: Anything stolen can be replaced.

The real: Sure, material possessions are replaceable. But the psychological and emotional effects of a break-in are devastating. There's no guarantee that your sense of safety ever will be replaced.

Myth: Burglars aren't deterred by home security systems.

The real: Actually, 60% of convicted burglars said they would look for another house if they saw signs of a home security system, and 50% said they would stop an attempted break-in if they found evidence after they started their burglary.

Myth: Home security is hard to use.

The real: Today's systems require little to no wiring, which means there's not much a homeowner needs to do to install the system. It's simple and common for a homeowner to purchase and install a home security system in a single day. Many newer ones are wireless and connect to your smart phone—you'll be able to monitor and control your security system when you're not home. They also are removable, so if you move, you can take it with you.

Myth: Having a home security system doesn't affect homeowners insurance.

The real: Actually, most homeowners insurance companies offer a 2-15% discount on homeowners insurance policies if you can provide proof of the home security system.

Contact our office today to learn more about how a home security system can benefit you and your homeowners policy.

What you don't know about floods may hurt you



Melting snow and spring rains mean that there can be a lot of water accumulating, which can cause flooding—even in areas that haven't been prone to flood in the past. Remember, even if you live in a “1-in-a-500-years” flood zone, this could be the year your area floods. In fact, 20% of all flood claims come from outside high-risk flood zones.

We want you to know that a standard homeowners policy will protect your home and your property in the event of theft, fire and similar damage. However, most homeowners policies exclude water damage caused by flooding or mudslides. So, you will need additional coverage.

Don't panic. You can purchase a flood policy to cover your losses from this type of water damage. However, keep in mind, there is 30-day waiting period before flood coverage goes into effect. So, the time to think about this type of insurance is now.

To help you make an informed decision, here are some facts about flood insurance that you need to know:

1. If you take out a loan to buy a house in a high-risk flood area, your mortgage lender will require you to purchase flood insurance for the life of the loan.

2. Flood insurance premiums are calculated using the house's age, style, elevation and location. In the past, flood rates were set nationally for years, so they didn't differ between insurance companies. However, in addition to government-backed insurers, there now are private flood insurers that will allow us to shop around for you and perhaps find lower rates than the national rates established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
3. Coverage amounts can vary depending on the value of your house and its contents, but there is no coverage for your land.
4. Coverage will insure your house's structure, foundation, electrical and plumbing systems, cabinetry, HVAC systems, built-in appliances, and carpeting. Debris removal also may be available.
5. Contents coverage will cover: furniture, clothes, curtains, area rugs, electronics, small appliances, and certain valuables.
6. What's not covered: Other structures on the premises other than a garage; finished walls, floors, ceilings or

personal belongings in a basement; and living expenses while flood damage is being repaired.

The perfect time to prepare for a disaster is well before it happens.

Further steps...

In addition to having the necessary insurance policies, make sure you also have the supplies on hand that will help you weather any storm. These include the following: battery-powered radios and flashlights, water, nonperishable food, first-aid supplies, plywood, security fencing, tarps, mops and sandbags.

The perfect time to prepare for a disaster is well before it happens. Call our agency today. We are happy to review your insurance policies with you to make sure you have the coverage you need when you need it.



Spring cleaning your insurance policies

Spring is a great reminder to review your insurance policies and consider adjusting them to your current needs. When you adjust your policies, you can trim costs and ensure that you are covered in the event of a claim.

Many policyholders purchase policies and then forget they're even there, assuming they're covered if something happens. But if you review your policies each year, you'll gain a sharper understanding of your coverage and be more aware of when your insurance needs a change.

For example, is your child planning to get his driver's license later this year? Or is your partner expecting a child? What are your professional plans for the year? Are you planning to make any big purchases? Consider what your year is going to look like and don't wait for these changes to occur to ask questions about your coverage. You can talk to us any time to discuss impending changes that might affect your insurance coverage. You want to make sure you're the most prepared, just in case.

Give us a call today to discuss your current policy coverage and how your plans for 2021 might affect you. We can answer any questions you have about additional coverage, or help you adjust your current coverage to trim costs. We look forward to hearing from you!

News from our agency

We won't let you down

When times get hard, we won't let you down.

We realize that the COVID-19 pandemic has changed your day-to-day life drastically. We want you to know that not everything has changed. We are—and always will be—right here for you to guide you when things get hard. Let's talk about your current insurance coverages or discuss additional coverages you may need.

Give us a phone call or send us an email. Any time. You are essential to us.

