

Post-pandemic travel



80% of business travelers feel that without the in-person element something is significantly lacking.

74% of business travelers think they are less effective because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Travelers are **50% more** likely to travel for business than for recreation.

Business operations have begun to accept the lasting effects of COVID-19 on travel. Globally, most companies recognize that business travel will not simply revert to pre-pandemic habits. Companies are reassessing the value of work trips. In many instances, old practices of day travel for an hour work meeting have been realized as unnecessary, especially with the emergence of web conferencing not only as an essential tool, but often the preference.

Typically, business insurance plans cover both domestic and international trips. Travel insurance includes emergency medical expense coverage, trip cancellation/interruption coverage due to work reasons and involuntary job loss, 24/7 travel assistance services, and more. Coverage varies based on the company and plan selected. More than anything, travel insurance offers customers peace of mind.

Companies can offer employees what is known as accidental death & dismemberment insurance coverage. AD&D insurance can assist financially if a serious accident occurs and can even offer supplement payments to disability insurance.

Business travel will appear much different on the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic. Those who once were accustomed to commercial-traveler

lifestyles and living out of suitcases will find that they will not just resume pre-pandemic business travel. According to Bill Gates, at least 50% of business travel has been permanently eliminated, as has 30% of days spent in the office working. Aside from travel restrictions imposed, changes to business travel reflect the concerns about contracting COVID-19. Plus, most business travelers anticipate significant business travel budget trimmings to occur as a way for companies to reduce overall expenditures.

One positive outcome of the pandemic was that the travel managerial compensation has increased by 11% each year since 2020. Initially, the 2020 onset of COVID-19 capsized the travel management industry. This included layoffs, transfers, outsourcing, and adjustments of responsibilities. Those who remain in the travel management role have been compensated generously. Travel management and hotels grappled with labor shortages. Finding, training, and retaining employees is still an area that the industry is looking for effective solutions in.

Are you thinking of resuming travel for your employees? Give our agency a call, we can review your travel-related insurance policies to help you determine the coverage you may need to help keep your employees protected while they are on the road.



What's EPLI got to do with it?

Employment Practices Liability Insurance protects a business when it is acting as an employer. Broadly, it provides an employer with liability coverage against claims by workers who allege that the employer violated their rights. Specifically, it provides protection to employers in a variety of increasingly common situations, such as:

Discrimination. Discrimination occurs when an employer takes an adverse action against a worker based on a worker's protected characteristic (e.g., age, religion, or sexual orientation). There were more than 61,000 discrimination charges filed with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 2021. Employers paid over \$483 million in discrimination settlements in 2021.

Retaliation. Retaliation is the claim that an employer took some adverse action against a worker due to that worker exercising some protected right (e.g., filing a sexual-harassment claim). According to the EEOC, retaliation

claims accounted for more than half of the claims filed with the agency in 2021.

Website access. The Americans With Disabilities Act requires businesses to make their facilities accessible to those with disabilities. Guidance from the U.S. Department of Justice, as well as courts around the country, makes clear that the

Nearly 3,000 website accessibility lawsuits were filed in 2021.

ADA's accessibility requirements include ensuring that a business's website can be accessed by all. Nearly 3,000 website accessibility lawsuits were filed in 2021. That represents more than a 150% increase since 2017.

Overtime violations. Under current law, all employees must be paid overtime for any hours they work over 40. There is an

exception for employees who are paid on a salary basis; earn a salary that is at least \$35,568; and perform certain duties for the employer. The U.S. Department of Labor has announced that it is revising its regulation related to overtime pay and it likely will increase the salary threshold for the qualifying overtime exemption.

This potential change, coupled with the increase in remote work, could create massive headaches for employers who lack an efficient way to track employee hours or lack a clear policy on overtime work. As a result, those employers that run into issues are likely to face a wage-and-hour claim.

Whether it is a claim of discrimination, retaliation or a wage and hour, a business owner will not find insurance coverage for these claims in a commercial general liability policy. Business owners looking to protect themselves in situations such as these, and others (e.g., sexual harassment), should consider an EPLI policy. Have questions? Contact our office.



What is company vehicle insurance?

According to Harvard Health Watch, humans devote 38,000 hours of their lives to driving. A business that owns vehicles needs to obtain a commercial auto policy for its company vehicles. When employees use their own vehicles in the business of the employer, the business also needs a commercial auto policy for the exposure created by the employees.

Typically, company vehicle insurance premiums include bodily injury liability, property damage liability, combined single limit, medical payments: no-fault or personal injury, uninsured motorist, comprehensive physical damage, and collision. Commercial auto policies cover any permissive operator of the business-owned vehicles, but the insurance

company is going to want driving information for regular operators of the vehicles.

You need to review your specific commercial auto needs to see which limits are best for your business. Give our agency a call, we can help you navigate your insurance needs.

News from our agency

Make sure you're covered

Businesses have a lot of insurance scenarios to contemplate. Some insurance coverage may come to mind readily, while others may not. It's better to know and be prepared for a claim, rather than discover that you are not fully protected.

We are more than happy to review your business's insurance policies—even policies that you may have with another agency—to help determine if there are any gaps in your business's coverage. Give our office a call. As a valued customer, we want to offer you this in return.



Your Business

New Jersey | Spring/Summer 2023



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

In this issue

- 2 Post-pandemic business travel
- 3 What's EPLI got to do with it?
- 4 What is company vehicle insurance?
- 4 News from our agency

New Jersey now has a minimum level of liability insurance requirement

New Jersey business owners need to be aware of some new insurance requirements with which they must comply.

A new law—passed in 2022—requires all businesses in New Jersey to carry at least a minimum level of liability insurance. Under the new law (N.J.S.A. Section 40A:10A-1), business owners or the owner(s) of a rental unit(s), must maintain a liability insurance policy in an amount not less than \$500,000 for combined property damage and bodily injury to or death of one or more persons. The type of insurance policy that must be purchased is not specified in the law, only that the policy provides liability insurance for negligent acts and omissions. If a policy provides the requisite limits for property damage and bodily injury, businessowners policies or commercial general liability policies should satisfy the requirements.

The owner of a multifamily home, which is four or fewer units, one of which is owner-occupied, shall maintain liability insurance for negligent acts and omissions in an amount of no less than \$300,000 for combined property damage and bodily injury to or death of one or more persons in any one accident or occurrence.

Local municipalities have been empowered by the law to ensure compliance, as well as to provide an enforcement mechanism for this new requirement. Businesses will be required to register a certificate of insurance with the municipality in which the business or rental unit(s) is located, to demonstrate compliance with the insurance requirement. The certification of insurance will be required to be registered on an annual basis. There are several provisions of the law that empower municipalities to take certain steps, but do not require them to do so. For example, municipalities are authorized—but not required—to establish a reasonable administrative fee for the certificate of registration. In addition, municipalities are permitted—but not required—to collect a fine of between \$500 and \$5,000 for failure to comply with this law. Because the law is so new, many municipalities have not adopted policies or procedures yet. So, business owners would be wise to contact their local municipal government to determine what, if any, policy or procedure has been put in place.

If you want to see what types of policies may help you comply with the law, give us a call. We are happy to discuss your options with you.

