

INSURANCE UPDATE

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Auto-Owners
INSURANCE

LIFE • HOME • CAR • BUSINESS

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It's that time of year again! As snow comes and goes, many of us may experience ice dams building up in our gutters or on low-sloping roof areas. Unfortunately, this means that a blockage has been created and the water from the melting snow on your roof has no place to go. This can potentially cause the water to back up under your shingles.

Oftentimes the melting snow, water and ice finds a way into your home, causing damage to your walls, ceilings or insulation. Typically there is minimal, if any, damage to the shingles on your roof. However, it may be necessary to incur costs to remove snow or ice in the area above the interior damages to prevent any further damage. As your policy requires you to mitigate damages, a reasonable cost to do so may be covered under your applicable building coverage. In the event of a covered loss, be sure to work with your contractor and claim representative to determine a reasonable cost for this service, and always obtain an invoice to present for reimbursement (subject to your policy limits and deductible).

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A Good Investment for Their Future

Purchasing life insurance for children has many advantages, and is important in protecting their insurability at a young age.

Life insurance is generally purchased for final expenses and replacement income. Even though children do not have an income to replace, the death benefit can be used to pay for unpaid medical bills, memorial services and other final expenses.

Life insurance premiums are typically less expensive for children than comparable insurance for adults. The underwriting process for children's life insurance is less strict, making obtaining life insurance much easier and faster than life insurance for adults. Usually all that is required is an application, with no medical tests, blood work or urine tests necessary.

There are many different types of life insurance products for children on the market. Some can have premiums paid in full over a certain period of time, as opposed to paid on for the life of the insured. Other products guarantee future insurability by allowing the insured to purchase additional insurance in the future without additional underwriting.

Permanent life insurance, such as whole life and universal life, is the most common type of life insurance for children. Permanent life insurance builds cash value on a tax-deferred basis. While the primary purpose of life insurance is a death benefit, that cash value can be used for emergency funds, education expenses, retirement savings, and much more. The cash value can also be borrowed from the policy through policy loans.

By looking past the mortality aspect, you can see the benefit of purchasing children's life insurance to guarantee a child's future insurability. With low-cost premiums and minimal underwriting, the application process is easy, quick and affordable. The decision to purchase life insurance on a child is a great investment for their future.



Estimating Ice Dams *CONTINUED*

We cannot control the weather, but we can take steps to identify ice dams and prevent them from causing damage to our homes:

- Keep your gutters and the areas near your downspouts clear so water is unobstructed when channeled away from your roof.
- Consistently check your attic and the tops of exterior walls for moisture or water stains.
- Safely remove excess snow and icicles from the edge of your roof, if possible.
- Long-term prevention of ice dams includes proper insulation in your attic and applying an ice and water shield membrane under your shingles.

Preventing Slips, Trips & Falls

Slips, trips and falls are one of the leading causes of general industry work-related accidents. Surprisingly, they rank second behind motor vehicles in accidental deaths. They have the possibility to cause major injury to your employees, customers and guests. You and your employees can take simple actions to avoid slip, trip and fall accidents.

Statistics:

- Slips, trips and falls cause 15% of all workplace deaths (OSHA).
- In 2014, slips, trips and falls accounted for 27% of the total lost workday injuries reported (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).
- 22% of slip and fall incidents resulted in more than 31 days away from work (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).

Main Causes of Slips, Trips and Falls:

- Spills
- Walkway surfaces that are in disrepair
- Weather-related conditions
- Inappropriate footwear
- Poor housekeeping
- Stairs
- Unsuitable floor coverings
- Uneven walking surfaces
- Low visibility due to inadequate lighting
- Human factors and behavioral issues

Prevention Measures:

- Have spill kits and warning signs readily available where necessary.
- Use slip-resistant floor treatments in areas that are commonly wet.
- Ensure entry areas and walking surfaces are properly maintained.
- Stow or cover all electrical cords, cables, hoses and other trip hazards.
- Wear appropriate non-slip shoes or work boots.
- Use handrails when going up or down stairs.
- As a regular part of your safety program, perform routine inspection and maintenance of the workplace.
- Report and investigate all slip, trip and fall incidents promptly.
- Educate your employees on “best practices” for slip, trip and fall prevention.



With winter on its way, it is important that you are prepared for inclement weather. To reduce the possibility of injury, wear proper footwear when walking on snow or ice. Good rubber treads, taking shorter steps and walking at a slower pace can improve traction and balance. Avoid carrying items so hands are free to move for stabilization, and use mats in walking areas subject to water or snow accumulation. Finally, don't forget to salt and maintain walkways and parking lots.

Personal Automobile Plus: Additional Coverages and Enhancements

If you're looking to beef up coverages on your automobile policy at a reasonable rate, the Personal Automobile Plus package* from Auto-Owners Insurance can be purchased at \$30 for a semi-annual policy or \$60 for an annual policy. To be eligible for the package, at least one of your cars or motorcycles must be insured for bodily injury liability, property damage liability and either comprehensive or collision coverages.

The package enhances coverages that are already available:

- Personal property coverage – increases coverage from \$200 to \$500.
- Increased transportation costs** - increases coverage from \$25 to \$100.
- Loss of use by theft coverage** – increases coverage from up to \$20 per day/\$600 in one occurrence to provide up to \$50/\$1,500.
- Non-owned trailer physical damage coverage** – increases coverage from \$500 to \$1,000.
- Supplementary payments coverage – increases coverage from \$250 to \$500 for bail bonds, and from \$100 per day to up to \$250 per day for loss of earnings and reasonable expenses.
- Deductible amendatory – if two or more of your automobiles are damaged in the same event, we will apply only one deductible.

It also provides additional coverages you may need:

- Identity Theft Expense coverage - provides up to \$15,000 for expenses related to restoring your identity.
- Trip Interruption coverage – provides up to \$500 (\$600 in Virginia) for expenses incurred.
- Automobile, Stereo, Video & Media coverage – provides up to \$1,000 for automobile stereo and video devices, and up to \$200 for the loss of DVDs, CDs or other related items.
- Cellular Phone or 2-Way Communication Device coverage – provides up to \$500 for loss or damage to your cellphone, GPS units, etc.
- Re-Key coverage – provides up to \$250 if your keys are stolen.
- Rented Automobile Gap coverage – provides coverage for the amount for which you are liable if the rental car company decides to sell a vehicle that was damaged while you were renting it.

*Package not available in NC. **Coverage not available in VA.

Note: The analysis of coverage is in general terms and is superseded in all respects by the Insuring Agreements, Endorsements, Exclusions, Terms and Conditions of the Policy. Some of the coverage mentioned in this material may not be applicable in all states or may have to be modified to conform to applicable state law. Some coverages may have been eliminated or modified since the printing of this material.

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