



OBERRYMAN
INSURANCE AGENCY

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NEWSALERT

Seasonal Safety

Keep Your Home and Identity Safe While Shopping

HOME BREAK-INS increase dramatically during the holiday season. Thieves expect people to be shopping for new toys and electronics and stashing them in the house.

Not only that, but cyber criminals also up their game during December, increasing your risk of identity or credit card theft.

Whether you do your shopping online or in the stores, it's important to remember these basic safety tips to protect yourself against holiday season theft.

Protect your home while out

Lock everything – Many burglars get into homes just because a door or window was left open or unlocked.

Secure valuables – Never leave anything of value out in plain sight. Consider placing any jewelry, extra cash or other valuables in a safe deposit box or even a secure hidden safe within the house. Remember one of the first places burglars look is the master bedroom.

Leave the light on – The more it looks like someone is home, the less likely that someone will try to break into your home. If you're going to be gone for more than a day, buy a timer for your lights so they come on at various times during the evening and turn off in the morning.

Activate your alarm system – Don't forget to arm your security system – this simple step will go a long way to protecting your home.

Protect Your Identity

To avoid having your personally identifiable information stolen:

- Invest in identity protection software. There are many services that range in their coverage of protection of your personal information.
- Don't click on links in e-mails from sources you don't know. Also beware of bogus e-mails that look like they come from legitimate sources, like your bank. If you're unsure don't click and instead go to your bank's website to log in.
- Use a credit card instead of a debit card. You can often dispute charges you didn't make on a credit card and you won't be liable for them.
- Verify that shopping websites use encrypted payment forms, such as a secure socket layer (or SSL).

WISHING YOU A HAPPY HOLIDAY



The takeaway

Taking the above steps can reduce the chances of your home being burglarized or your identity stolen. Even if you have insurance, dealing with a theft is something you want to avoid. ❖



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Winterize Your Home to Prevent Costly Damage

WHEN WINTER approaches, it is time for homeowners to start securing their homes to protect them against the elements — wind, rain, sleet, hail, snow and ice.

The most common causes of damage to properties during the colder months are hail, rain and wind.

Failing to winterize your home can lead to costly problems later and leave your family freezing in some cases. And not all issues that arise from the effects of the elements are covered by your insurance, particularly if you've neglected problems.

To ensure that doesn't happen to you, consider the following winterization tips.

Winterizing the roof

The roof is the best place to start when winter-proofing a home. All types of severe weather will stress shingles over time. Whether it is wind tugging at them or debris chipping away at them, shingles must be kept in good condition or replaced as needed.

Before the first freeze or snowstorm arrives, check the roof carefully to determine the condition of the shingles. Make any needed repairs as quickly as possible.

A roof can also sustain damage from branches that fall onto it. This happens when trees are not regularly trimmed, and the result is often water leaking into the home itself. Over time, even a slow and unnoticeable leak can lead to extensive rotting.



Keep the roof safe

- Check it for damage, clean the gutters and make sure downspouts are clear.
- Trim all trees and especially dead branches around the home.
- Make sure the flashing is in good shape to avoid water damage.
- Use impact-resistant roofing materials whenever possible.
- Fix any damaged or bubbled areas on a flat or sloped roof.
- Put extra insulation in the attic to prevent ice buildup and subsequent water damage.

Winterizing the basement

When the roof is finished, check the basement next. Make an appointment to have the furnace inspected and cleaned each year, and be sure this is done by a qualified technician.

Put insulation on all exposed water pipes. It is also helpful to keep the thermostat turned up during colder periods to prevent pipes from freezing and bursting.

If there are any flammable materials in the basement, make sure they are stored away from wiring or heating units.



Winter-proofing windows

Leaky windows will let in not only air, but also snow and rain into the home. This can lead to big problems after a short period of time, so it is important to make sure the caulking around the windows and door frames is in good repair.

After completing these tasks, walk around the house and look for other items that need fixing.



Check the chimney

If there is a fireplace or wood-burning stove, have the chimney checked and cleaned annually before the colder months arrive.

Clean under the dryer and its exhaust pipe to prevent fires.

Ensure snow removal tools are accessible

Be sure that all of your snow removal tools, including shovels and deicing agents like salt and sand, are out of storage and easily accessible when snow starts to fall. This might be a small task on your winterizing list, but it's an important one.



The last word

If you decide to do this work on your own, give yourself plenty of time before the cold weather arrives.

If you discover any issues that could pose a hazard to yourself or your property, you should call a professional right away so that you aren't left with a frigid disaster that disrupts your life. ❖

Why Final Expense Coverage Is So Important

DYING CAN be an expensive business. Many families are burdened by the final expenses for loved ones and sometimes they are stretched to make the final preparations.

But you can help your family by securing final expense insurance, which is designed to cover the bills that your loved ones will face after your death. Costs include medical bills and funeral expenses. That said, if you are considering this type of insurance, you have to make sure you get it right.

Here's what you need to know.

What is it?

A final expense life insurance policy isn't the same as other life insurance. Term and permanent life insurance value your policy as proportionate to your earning power now and for the rest of your life, and are meant to help your family make up for the loss of income that your passing may cause.

With final expense insurance, the value of your policy is proportionate to the expense of your desired funeral. While coverage in other forms of life insurance can exceed a million dollars, it's rare for final expense insurance policies to pay out more than \$20,000.

Do you need insurance?

It depends. If you already have term or whole life insurance, the payout from those policies can help your loved ones pay for final expenses. But, if you have term life insurance and you outlive the policy term, it's a different story. In that case, you may want to consider final expense insurance.

Alternatively, maybe your family will have plenty of assets to work with when you die. In that case, you may not need insurance as they could afford to foot the bill for your final expenses on their own.

It's a good idea to assume around \$10,000 for funeral expenses. But don't forget to take into account whether you will want a catered party after the service. Maybe you'll end up leaving big bills behind. If situations like these sound like your situation, you may want to consider securing final expense coverage.

What does it cost?

The exact cost of your final expense insurance will depend on your age. The older you are, the larger the premiums. This is because insurance companies take on more risk when insuring older individuals, given the fact that they're statistically closer to death.

If you buy final expense insurance when you're 45, you'll pay less each month than if you wait to purchase until you're 74.

The takeaway

Whether you choose a life insurance policy that covers funeral expenses and then some, a dedicated final expense insurance policy, or funeral pre-payment, you'll be doing your loved ones a huge favor.

Taking the time to consider and document your end-of-life wishes may be a little uncomfortable now, but it will make all the difference when the time comes. If you're having a hard time figuring it out on your own, please contact us. ❖



Adult Children and Your Liability as a Parent

IF YOU HAVE an adult child whom you are still paying some expenses for, or they are studying in college — living either away from you or at home — you could still be held liable for any damage they cause through their own negligence.

They may even have their own car insurance, in their own name, but if your child ends up injuring someone severely and is sued and the policy limits on their car insurance are not enough to cover the judgment, you could still be held liable for damages that the policy didn't cover, depending on the circumstances.

And your car insurance or homeowner's insurance won't cover it, meaning you'd have to pay out of pocket if your child cannot.

That said, aside from car accidents, your adult child's negligent and/or intentional acts that damage someone else's property or injure a third party may be covered under your homeowner's policy and an umbrella policy.

For the purposes of this article, we are talking about mostly an adult child under the age of 25 living at home or away at college.

Key factors that may trigger coverage

- Parents' continued financial support of the child, and/or
- The adult child lives under their roof.

The car insurance issue

There may be occasions when parents of a 20-year-old reckless driver who is either still living at home or away at college may want to take steps to separate his or her liability from their

How to Shift Liability

- Put the car the child drives in their name.
- Remove them from your auto insurance policy.
- Require them to buy their own insurance.

own.

When you remove a young adult driver from the family policy, you reduce the probability of a claim for property damage, first and third party injuries, and other liabilities that may result from an accident.

It would reduce your auto insurance premiums and push the liability to the child's insurance. However, if you are sued for extreme negligence and the award exceeds the policy's liability maximum, the additional award could be on your shoulders if your child doesn't have the personal resources to pay.

Your own car insurance would not cover it and, since it's auto-related, the homeowner's policy wouldn't cover it either.

Coverage explanation

The scope of coverage for minor and adult children under their parents' homeowner's policies, with respect to personal property coverage and personal liability coverage, rests on the policy definition of "insured" in the typical policy.

The definition, in pertinent part, includes relatives who are residents of the named insured's household. Children, brothers and sisters, parents and grandparents are examples.

This doesn't mean that your 40-year-old daughter who is over for dinner is covered, though, since a visitor is not a resident.

Also, the policy will cover persons under the age of 21 in the care of the named insured (such as a foster child), as well.

The next time your homeowner's or renter's policy is up for renewal, please call us and let us know if you have any grown children and what their status is in terms of living arrangements, and any financial support that you may provide them. It will help in determining

