

Insights and Updates



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Everything you need to know about ride hailing

As the nice weather returns to the Northeast, it might be time to think about insurance, at least for a few minutes especially if you plan on using transportation network company apps like Uber or Lyft this summer.

Whether you are driving for a TNC or simply riding as a passenger, it is important to be aware of the insurance implications of using this service while traveling. Typically, a Personal Auto Policy contains an exclusion of coverage when a person engages in a commercial activity with his or her vehicle, which is called a livery exclusion. This obviously creates a very serious issue as under normal circumstances the only coverage people have when driving their vehicle is from their PAP.

The largest TNCs have responded to

the livery exclusion in PAPs by providing coverage to TNC drivers while they transport passengers for a fee. In addition, many state legislatures have passed legislation requiring the TNC driver have certain coverage limits in place.

New Jersey requires that when a TNC drives are not engaged in a prearranged ride, they carry liability coverage in the amounts of at least \$50,000 for death or bodily injury per person; \$100,000 for death or bodily injury per incident; and \$25,000 for property damage. When a driver is engaged in a prearranged ride, the limits increase to at least \$1,500,000 for death, bodily injury and property damage. A driver must also carry primary automobile insurance for medical payments benefits in an amount of at least \$10,000 per person, per incident,

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which only applies to, and provides coverage, for the benefit of the TNC driver. Finally, coverage for uninsured and underinsured motorist coverage must be provided in an amount of at least \$1,500,000.

If you plan to drive or even simply ride with a TNC, we encourage you to know about your coverage. If you have question, give our agency a call. We'll be happy to review your policy and ensure you have the proper coverage in place.



Hurricanes and floods, oh my!

According to H. Jackson Brown Jr., “the best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today.” At our agency, we strive to do our best to help you prepare for your tomorrow—especially if your tomorrow includes a natural disaster such as a hurricane or flood.

Storms caused by hurricanes can cause a tremendous amount of property damage. A standard homeowners policy will protect your home and personal property from damage caused by, for example, fire, lightning, wind, vehicles, theft and vandalism. However, if there’s a hurricane (which can happen

in any coastal state) or a flood (which can happen anywhere at any time), you may need additional coverage. Most homeowners policies exclude water damage caused by storm surge, flooding or mudslides.

Don’t panic. You can purchase a separate flood insurance policy to cover water damage from a storm surge or flood. Often there is some warning before a hurricane hits—but keep in mind, there is a 30-day waiting period before flood coverage goes into effect. So the time to think about this insurance is now.

In addition to making sure you have the necessary insurance policies, make sure you also have the supplies on hand that will help you weather any storm. These include: 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.





How does my auto insurance react to pothole damage?

If you have collision coverage, your auto insurance policy will cover damage caused by hitting a pothole. Potholes can impair alignment; ruin shocks and struts; puncture tires; bend wheel rims; and damage other parts located under the car. Since “collision means the upset of ‘your covered auto,’ or a ‘non-owned auto,’ or their impact with another vehicle or object,” then hitting a pothole (an object) is covered by collision insurance. However, this coverage excludes damage confined to road damage to tires. This means that pothole damage to tires only will be covered if there is other damage to the auto.

That’s the good news. The bad news is that you will have a deductible for this claim, typically, from \$250 to \$1,000.

Also, since this claim is considered a collision loss with no one else

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to blame, it most likely will be chargeable as an accident for merit-rating or tier-rating purposes. In the end, it may not make sense to report a claim for little or no compensation that could possibly affect your

premiums. On the other hand, your decision may be different if the pothole turns out to be a sinkhole and the damage is much more severe.

You also may want to know that if hitting a pothole causes you to lose control of the auto and damage someone else’s property or injure someone, your auto insurance liability coverage will respond to claims made against you. Since your assets are at risk when incidents like this happen, you should periodically review your coverages with our agency to ensure they are keeping up with your current needs.



Minimize home-related risk with a policy and precautions



Are you in the process of buying a new house? Are you planning on some summer renovations to your current home? If so, now is the perfect time to update your homeowners policy. While you're protecting your home with a renewed policy, don't forget to protect your home by taking a few extra precautions.

Remember all exterior doors should be either metal or solid wood; keep all your doors and windows secured and locked. Have a deadbolt for doors, at least one inch long. If you have sliding glass doors, consider propping a piece of wood or a metal rod in the track to prevent it from being opened by force.

Other helpful tips for securing your home include: setting a few lights in your home on timers to go on and off at different times; keeping your hedges and any other landscaping properly trimmed; and positioning your valuable possessions, such as televisions and laptops, so they cannot be seen when a person looks in the window.

It's important to secure your home and it's equally important to have a back-up plan. That's where we come in. We'll make sure you have a homeowners policy that best fits your needs.

News from our agency

Customer service is our middle name

Our agency prides itself on superior customer service. Unlike large, direct writers like GEICO and Allstate that only provide its policyholders with an automated 800 number and a website, we believe that conducting business person-to-person is the best way to make sure you're satisfied and properly covered.

Waiting on hold for hours or desperately searching a website for answers is no way to be treated. It's hard to understand the specifics of a policy when you're just filling out online forms by yourself, with no explanation.

Our agency makes sure you understand your options, and that you receive the policy you think is the best fit. And afterward, you can always call our agency or drop by our office if you want to alter your coverage in anyway, or if you have any questions about your policy.

