

Your BUSINESS

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VIA INSURANCE & FINANCIAL SERVICES

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The spy you invite in

For nearly a decade, the majority of digital copiers have served multiple purposes. Beyond making copies, they are able to act as printers, fax machines and scanners. What's more, they can work on more than one copy, print, fax or scan job at once. It's incredibly convenient and cost-efficient, but in recent years, information-technology security experts have learned that these benefits come at a hidden cost.

The technology that enables these advances is the humble hard drive, the same hardware that stores the files in desktop computers. In this case, each document that's sent through a multifunction digital copier for copying, faxing, scanning or printing is saved to an internal hard drive. Think about the documents that pass through your copier and what could be stored in the unit's hard drive: employee records, financial documents, medical data and more.

Now, if you own your copier, never send it out for maintenance, never sell it and destroy the hard drive when the copier has reached end of its life, this running record of your files is not a big deal. However, that's not the scenario most businesses face. Most businesses lease their digital copiers and swap a new one in every two years or so. And, as these machines are considered obsolete, the leasing companies sell them at steep discounts—either here in the U.S. or overseas.

As a business owner, here are some steps you should take toward copier security:

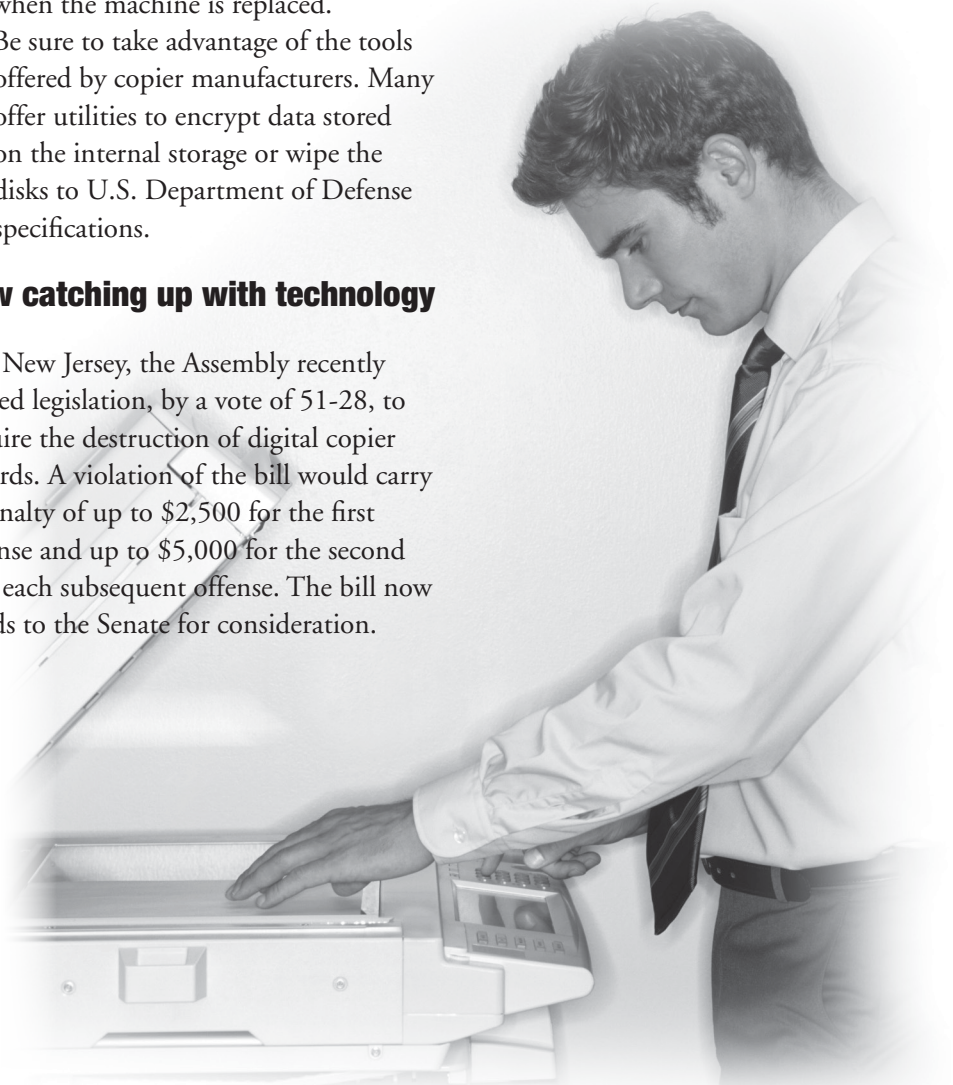
- Be careful what you copy. Avoid copying/faxing/scanning/printing sensitive information.
- Discuss end-of-life security with your leasing company and insist that copier hard drives will be erased completely when the machine is replaced.
- Be sure to take advantage of the tools offered by copier manufacturers. Many offer utilities to encrypt data stored on the internal storage or wipe the disks to U.S. Department of Defense specifications.

Law catching up with technology

In New Jersey, the Assembly recently passed legislation, by a vote of 51-28, to require the destruction of digital copier records. A violation of the bill would carry a penalty of up to \$2,500 for the first offense and up to \$5,000 for the second and each subsequent offense. The bill now heads to the Senate for consideration.

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Disaster doesn't need to strike twice—avoid disaster fraud

If a manmade or natural disaster strikes your business, your impulse may be to deal with the first contractor who comes along. While your intention is to get your business up and running again, you may open yourself up to fraud.

If a disaster hinders your business, then call our agency. We can walk you through the claims process. If your company has a business-interruption insurance policy, it can help cover payroll and other expenses you might have, which can alleviate some of the pressure to get your business running again.

To make yourself and your business less susceptible to fraud, obtain several bids from contractors and avoid contractors who show up at your business uninvited and point out damage you may not have seen. Work with local, licensed contractors and check with the Better Business Bureau to see if any complaints have been lodged against the contractor you are considering.

Remember, if something sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Your best defense against disaster fraud is to have a plan before disaster strikes. Call our agency today, we can make sure you have the insurance coverage you need to get your business running again should the worst happen.

Will the economy affect my insurance premiums?

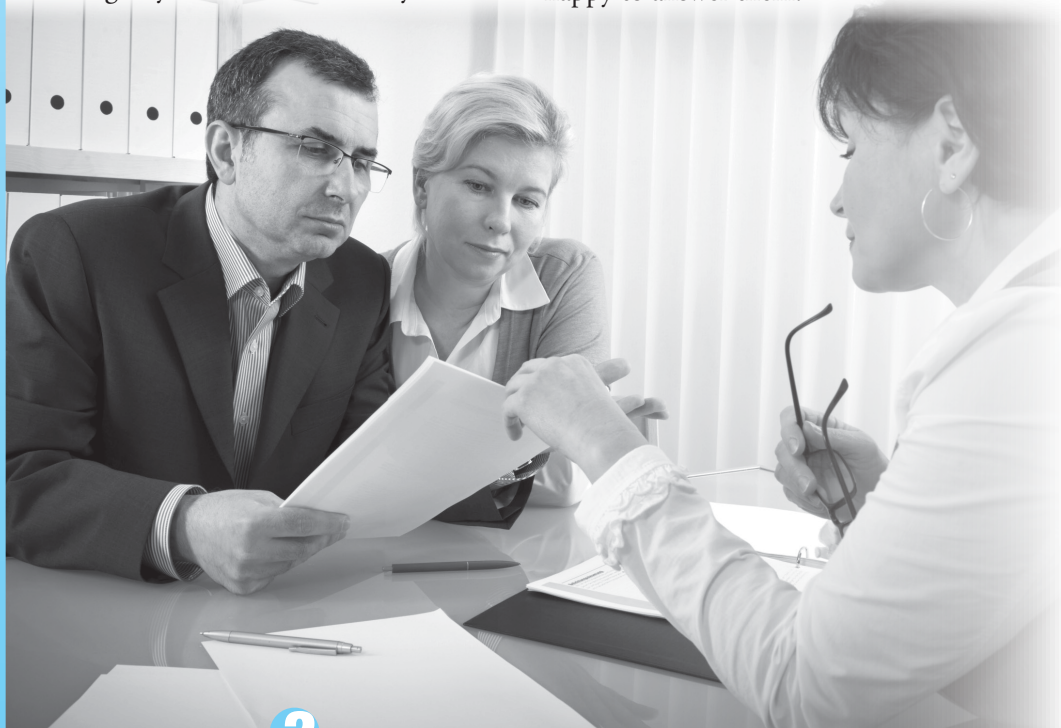
Nobody has a crystal ball, but the recent prolonged poor economy could have an effect on the cost of your insurance. The insurance industry has seen continuously lower earnings in an unfavorable investment climate. In fact, according to the Insurance Information Institute, industry earnings for 2011 were the lowest in a decade. Recent natural disasters, combined with sustained low insurance pricing have led to conditions that make it more difficult for companies to support the cost of claims.

As your insurance agency, we want to keep you informed of changes that might occur in the future. The insurance marketplace is hardening, and some insurance companies have indicated that their costs will increase. There also are indications that some coverages that have been provided in standard policies may no longer be available, or may be available only at a separate premium. Some insurers are sending out notices to insureds whose policies will come up for renewal, advising of potential changes. Our agency wants to make sure you're

prepared in case your carrier does decide to increase premiums or change certain coverages.

In most cases, we recommend that clients stay with the insurance company that has been writing their policy. We know from experience the company is more likely to take your history and loyalty into consideration to minimize the impact of these changes to their existing customers. If changes are coming, we will contact you well in advance to gather the information required for your renewal policy. Please be ready to respond as quickly as possible to our requests for this information, since renewals are taking longer to secure under the new market conditions, and we may need extra time to arrange the best terms and price we can achieve for your individual situation.

We appreciate your business and your loyalty. As always, our only goal as your agency is to make sure you have the coverage that best fits your situation. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our office and we will be happy to answer them.





What the health-care ruling means for you

Now that the U.S. Supreme Court has made its much-anticipated ruling on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, many employers wonder if they should manage their employee benefits or work with a broker to take care of this business.

According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (2010), employers' financial and reporting obligations will differ depending on their size. For example, depending on the size of your business, you will be required to report the value of your employees' health plan premium on their W2s starting in 2014.

Under the law, small employers—those with fewer than 50 full-time employees—will have the option of purchasing coverage for their staff through the health exchange.

Larger employers—those with 50 or more full-time employees in the

previous year—may be subject to two separate penalties; One would apply if a large employer does not offer health benefits to its full-time employees and has employees who qualify for and are

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receiving federal tax credits, or subsidies to buy health insurance through a PPACA health exchange.

The second, separate penalty can be assessed on large employers for offering health benefits that are not affordable, or do not provide a certain minimum level of benefits if the employer has any employees who receive federal tax credits

or other federal subsidies to buy health insurance through an exchange.

Making it even more challenging is the shrinking market for small group health plans. More and more, health insurance carriers are taking themselves out of this business.

All of this reinforces the necessity of working with a broker who understands the complexities of a changing system. Many small groups will be tempted to run the risk of doing it themselves, through an exchange. This can be costly, not to mention taking a company's focus (and that of its employees) away from its core business.

One thing that is certain is that you don't want to navigate the new health-care policies alone. We may be able to help you, and if not, we can refer you to an adviser who can.



Workplace safety

Workplace safety is one of the most important issues facing employers today.

Providing a friendly and safe work environment for employees will improve performance and contribute to the overall success of the organization. Whether working inside or outside, accidents can, and do, happen. As an employer, it's your responsibility to attend to these issues.

Even employers with good safety practices sometimes can forget the proper procedures to follow when a worker is injured. Here are a few good practices to keep in mind:

- If an employee gets hurt, your first concern always is to ensure they get the proper care, including informing them of their benefits.
- Know your legal duties. Read the documents sent by state authorities or your insurance agent.
- Abide by state reporting requirements.
- Put together a safety and security manual, which should include building security, disaster and evacuation procedures, first aid, floor plans including emergency exits, incident report forms and filing procedures.

- Investigate the accident, both for fulfillment of legal obligations (and obligations to the insurer) and to gather information to prevent the same event from happening again.
- Notify your agent and company promptly and send all information you have, along with your report of loss.
- Follow up with the employee. If the injuries are serious, be prepared to do what you can to help the employee return to work as soon as possible.

Employee involvement in health and safety programs must include supervisors and senior management. Get employees involved in health and safety programs through committees, meetings, investigations and emergency medical response programs.

These are only some basic suggestions of what to do if or when an accident occurs. There is much more to know on the subject such as proper accident investigation, medical case management, return-to-work programs and more. Give us a call. We can help.

News from our agency

Address liability, then relax at the office party

The last few months of the year are full of holidays, and many businesses participate in the celebrations by holding office parties and events. While it's refreshing to be able to set aside office protocols and socialize with co-workers in a more relaxed environment, such events also can leave your business vulnerable from a liability standpoint.

If you are serving alcohol at the party, you might want to purchase special event coverage or a liquor liability policy. There are other steps you can take to limit liability with regard to alcohol, such as holding the party at an alternate venue that has its own liquor license, limiting alcohol consumption, or centering the party on an activity that doesn't involve drinking.

If you plan to hire caterers for the event, make sure they are licensed, as food poisoning presents another potential liability concern. And if physical activity is part of your event, such as an office basketball or softball game, make sure you have coverage in case an injury should occur.

Let us help you navigate through these potential troubles. If your business is planning something for the holidays, we can make sure you're covered. That way, you can truly relax and enjoy the atmosphere with your employees, as you intended.