

INSURANCE UPDATE

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Auto-Owners
INSURANCE

LIFE • HOME • CAR • BUSINESS

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Are You Ready to Ship Out?

The new boating season is upon us ... are you and your boat ready?

Imagine sitting on your boat, enjoying the crystal-clear waters and sunny, blue skies. To help ensure that time spent on your watercraft is safe and enjoyable, there are several items to take into consideration when preparing to launch a boat for the season.

To see that your voyage goes off without a hitch, it is important to keep yourself and others safe. A watercraft inspection or a marine survey are two great tools to assist in ensuring your watercraft's safety and maintenance.

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Life Insurance: covering loved ones

Purchasing life insurance for your children can admittedly be a little awkward or uncomfortable. Because this important matter doesn't cross our minds frequently and since many people don't want to talk about it, it is important to know the benefits of acquiring a policy early.

Protection against insurability - Because it's hard to know or imagine if your children will develop conditions, disabilities or illnesses that will hinder their ability to purchase life insurance in the future, early coverage is a great option. Even hereditary conditions may exist in your family tree that will make it incredibly expensive or nearly impossible for your children to purchase life insurance later in life.

Lower premiums - The premium for a policy on a child is typically much lower than the same policy purchased on an adult. Certain life products have rates that you lock in and pay the same amount for the rest of the insured's life. The policy can be structured to make the premium payments for the life of the policy. There are also options to make only 10 payments – or even a single deposit – to make the policy paid in full. The lower the age, the lower the premium.

Building cash value - There are advantages to purchasing a permanent policy that builds cash value over your child's life. Tax deferral and tax-free policy loans are some of the tax advantages. Using the cash value for your child's educational expenses or first home purchase are some of the cash value benefits.

Death benefit - While one of the major benefits of life insurance is income replacement, final expenses are also a big part of why life insurance is purchased. Most children don't have an income to replace, but in dealing with a highly emotional, unthinkable event, the last thing you want to worry about is the financial burden of memorial services and returning to work right away. A life insurance policy will allow you the time you need to grieve.



Boating *CONTINUED*

A watercraft inspection is typically used for smaller boats (26 feet or less). A marine survey is a detailed, thorough inspection of the infrastructure and all equipment attached to and on the boat. A licensed marine surveyor completes both of these to evaluate and determine the condition and seaworthiness of your vessel.

These evaluations give you recommendations as to what areas of your vessel may need attention to prevent you from having any troubles while enjoying your voyage. By routinely using these tools as well as performing proper maintenance on your boat, you will be protecting and ensuring the safety of all your precious cargo while traveling the peaceful and serene waters.

Now get out there and make some wonderful memories!



Spring Storms: Are You Ready?

Spring is a wonderful time of year. Unfortunately, it can also bring major storm activity in the form of torrential rains, hail, high wind, tornadoes or whatever else Mother Nature wants to throw our way. Being prepared to protect your home and contents is important.

Rain, rain, go away...

- Make sure gutters are clear of debris. When the rains come, it is important that the water has a clear drainage path away from your roof.
- Secure your gutters. Make sure all extensions are in place and are the proper length to move water away from your foundation.
- Test your sump pump. Make sure the system is draining properly and mechanical components are in operating order. Consider battery-powered backup options.

Whispering winds...

- Wind storms can do a lot of damage. Make sure your trees are pruned and healthy. Get rid of trees that pose a potential risk for falling on your home or on another property you value.
- Make sure your outdoor gear (furniture, tools, mowers, etc.) are secure when not in use. These can become either damaged or the cause of damage in a high wind situation.

If the storm hits...

- Have tape ready to secure window panes from shattering.
- Have extra batteries of all sizes on hand.
- Make sure you have key items such as a flashlight, battery-operated radio, cellphone, first-aid kit and water bottles on hand.
- Park vehicles in a secure, preferably covered, location.

These are just some ideas on how to be prepared for a potential spring storm season.



TAKING STEPS TO PREVENT SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

With summer just around the corner and winter in our rearview mirror, a lot of business owners feel that they can put their concerns about slips, trips and falls away for a few months. Unfortunately, that is not the case. As commercial property owners, we must be ever-vigilant about the dangers that lurk around us.

While not every region has extreme winters, every state does experience fluctuations in temperature and weather that can affect sidewalks and parking lots. Freezing and thawing of the ground can cause heaving and cracking of sidewalks, along with potholes in parking lots.

Warmer states may not experience frost heave, but heavy winter and spring rains can cause washouts and sinkholes that may also cause severe damage to parking lots. Early summer is the perfect time to make necessary repairs brought on by winter and spring weather events.

Spring cleaning also gives you the perfect opportunity to look inside your building. Deep cleaning means that the mops are out and things are getting moved around.

Make sure “wet floor” signs are properly used and only left out when floors are actually wet. Be on the lookout for loose carpet seams or defects in hard surfaces, where even the smallest deficiencies can trip someone. Make sure that boxes and other equipment are kept out of walkways and that walk-off mats and chair mats do not have curled edges that can create trip hazards. Changing burned-out lightbulbs immediately is the best practice, but if you have been putting it off, have them changed while cleaning the fixtures.

Taking a few extra preventive steps in the spring can help prevent slips, trips and falls all year long.

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