



Hausmann-Johnson I N S U R A N C E

700 Regent Street
PO Box 259408
Madison, WI 53725-9408

Phone: 608-257-3795 Fax: 608-257-4324
www.hausmann-johnson.com

Personal Lines 2009 Spring & Summer Newsletter

*Vacant Homes
Flood Damage to Property
Reporting Losses
Mobile Electronic Devices' Laws
Government Issued Safety Alerts
Life Insurance Choices
Coverage Coach Q & A*

Vacant Homes

In the current real estate market, it is very common to see houses that sit for sale for long periods of time. Sometimes houses sit vacant after the owners have moved to their new homes. Leaving a house vacant can present a unique situation for homeowners from an insurance standpoint.

When a house is unoccupied and with no furniture for an extended period of time, usually 30 days, the house becomes classified as vacant. A vacant house is generally not covered against vandalism, malicious mischief, glass breakage, or frozen pipes, as well as other possible limitations. A vacant house presents a relatively easy target for thieves and vandals. The house also is more likely to suffer other losses with no one present to mitigate damages. If a house is deemed vacant, insurance carriers are likely to non-renew the policy at its next renewal. We need to know immediately when your house becomes vacant.

Homeowners who are trying to sell their house and have not had any success should be aware that there are ways to protect themselves against the potential limitation in coverage, or lack of coverage. If the homeowner has moved out of the area, someone should be checking on the empty house on a regular basis.

Homeowners with a vacant house may have to purchase a special policy that provides coverage for vacant houses. These policies are generally much more expensive than a standard homeowner's policy. Our Personal Lines Department will be able to answer any questions you may have and offer solutions to this important issue. Please contact the Personal Lines Department at 608-257-3795.

Is Your Property Covered For Flood Insurance?



With spring and summer comes the potential for flooding. Is your home, condo or rental unit covered for flood damage? Many people learn too late that flooding occurs in every state and at any time of the year. Even if you live far from the coast or rivers, flood damage can be caused by melting snow, heavy rain, clogged storm drains, and dense development. Here are some additional facts that make a case for flood insurance being an essential coverage.

- Approximately 25% of flood insurance claims come from low risk areas.
- Six of every ten declared disasters involve flooding.
- Federal disaster relief is not free. It usually comes in the form of a loan with interest.
- If you do not purchase and maintain a flood policy after you receive federal disaster assistance once, you will not be eligible for future disaster relief.

Note that by federal law, a flood policy does not become effective until 30 days after its purchase. If you purchase the policy in connection with a new home purchase, the policy usually is effective at the time of closing. So don't delay. If you don't presently have flood insurance, give us a call. We'll assess your risk for flood damage and at the same time review pricing for flood coverage. In that same discussion, we'll review some flood policy deductible choices which may provide discounts.

Hausmann-Johnson Insurance

Phone: 608-257-3795
Fax: 608-257-4324



Report Property Damage Losses Immediately

Prompt reporting of a property claim benefits both you and the insurance carrier. Prompt reporting results in a faster inspection of damages and subsequent claim payments (assuming it is a covered loss). If you suffer a loss to insured property, you can speed up the claim process by following these tips:

- Contact us as soon as possible, even if the damage on the surface appears minimal. Ideally, contact the insurance carrier first to “fast track” the assignment of a company adjuster to your case.
- Make temporary repairs to protect the insured property against further damage. Obtain itemized receipts from a contractor, and keep copies to give to the insurance company adjuster.
- Hire only licensed contractors for repairs. Call friends, family, or one of our staff for reliable referrals.

We are only a phone call away should you sustain an insurable loss. Our personalized service is one of the benefits of having your insurance with Hausmann-Johnson Insurance.

Sign-Up for Government Issued Safety Alerts

The National Highway Safety Administration (NHTSA) now offers free email alerts to consumers on vehicle, tire, and child restraint recalls. The alerts provide consumers with instant safety information, in case it is missed in our daily stream of media information sources.



The tire recall information is especially important, as most of us are traveling daily in our vehicles on major highways. A tire failure under these circumstances could prove fatal.

To sign-up, access the web address at www.odi.nhtsa.dot.gov. On the left side of the page, click on “safety recalls”. In the center of the recall page, you will find a choice titled “Vehicle, Tire, and Child Restraint Recall Alerts By Email”. Sign up and stay safe!

Know “Mobile Electronic Devices’ Laws in Our State and Neighboring States

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) research shows that driving while using a cell phone or other electronic communication devices contributes to almost 25% of police-reported traffic accidents. In addition to the accident risk, being caught driving and using one of the banned electronic devices may result in a fine and a record of the violation noted in one’s state driving record. To avoid being ticketed and fined for illegal cell phone use, we recommend that readers be aware of cell phone laws in any state they drive in. Violation data from neighboring states may be forwarded to your home state, as many states exchange traffic violation data. Be aware of how a state defines “mobile electronic devices”. Most define these devices as any hand-held or portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communications between two or more people. Included are devices for text messaging or paging, personal digital assistants, laptop computers, equipment capable of playing video games or digital video disks or equipment on which digital photographs are taken or transmitted.



We provide this level of detail to educate our clients. With this knowledge, we hope they can avoid accidents and preserve the health and welfare of both themselves and their passengers. A good driving record also allows us to offer clients preferred automobile rates from the many insurance companies we represent.



*Call Hausmann-Johnson Insurance
for all of your insurance needs.*

(608) 257-3795
www.hausmann-johnson.com

**Life Insurance Choices -- Term or Permanent.
Which is Best for you?**

In initial discussion with clients about the best type of life insurance to purchase, we are often asked about what types are available. Generally speaking, there are two types of life insurance: term and permanent. The two main types of insurance are referred to as whole and universal. In some situations, a custom financial planning solution may include both. Here are three key factors to consider in making a decision:

Duration of Coverage

The longer period of time you need insurance protection, the more consideration one should give to permanent life insurance. Some examples of permanent needs includes: financial needs of loved ones, final expenses, contribution to favorite charities and estate taxes. Some examples of temporary needs are: educational expenses for children and large loans (home mortgage, vehicles, college loans, etc.).

Premium Changes

Permanent life insurance premiums are generally level and payable for life. Term life insurance premiums are level for a pre-set period of time (usually 5, 10, or 15 years), after which they can increase dramatically or require a medical exam for continued eligibility.

Cash Value

Term insurance has no cash build-up. Permanent insurance combines a death benefit with a savings component. The savings component can build cash value -- against which the policy owner in some cases can borrow funds for an immediate need like paying for a child's education.

While insurance terminology can be confusing, don't let it lead you to avoid making a life insurance decision. We can visit with you in our office or at your home on a no-obligation basis to answer questions and dispel any confusion. As a local independent insurance agency, we not only provide highly personalized service, but also have access to a multitude of life insurance carriers with competitive prices.

So take the first step and call us. Make 2009 the year to take a serious look at your life insurance needs.

Rob Squires
608-252-9659
rob.squires@hausmann-johnson.com



**Dog Bite Claims Continue
To Escalate**

Dog bites continue to escalate in our society despite the best efforts of pet societies to educate their members on the issue. They now account for

30%+ of all homeowners insurance liability claims, generating about \$350 million in claims during 2007. This is up 10.5% from the previous year, according to research generated by the Insurance Information Institute. The average cost of a claim in 2007 was \$24,511. Since 2003, the cost of this type of claim has risen by about 28%. More than 4.7 million people are bitten by dogs annually, according to the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Nearly a million of them need medical attention.

Industry experts advise that pet owners are usually liable for injuries caused by bites if:

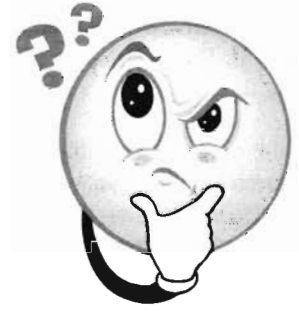
- *An owner knew the dog had a tendency to bite*
- *If your state's statute makes the owner liable regardless of whether they knew of their dog's tendency*
- *If the injury was caused by unreasonable carelessness on the part of an owner*

Some carriers will not cover certain breeds due to the rising cost of dog bite claims. Those breeds most often blacklisted are: Pit bulls, Dobermans, Rottweilers, Akitas, Chows, and Wolf hybrids.



From an insurance perspective, we recommend that all of our insureds with dogs carry adequate liability limits to cover a loss. This would include both primary policy limits and umbrella/excess liability policy limits. Unsure of your policy's liability limits? Unaware of the fact that umbrella or excess liability insurance policies are affordable for the average person? Call us. Don't take risks by not telling your insurer that you own a dog. If the dog hurts someone, you may not be covered. If your insurer doesn't cover your animal, another might. Let's talk pets and the need for adequate liability limits.

The Coverage Coach



How can I save money on my homeowners insurance policy?

The easiest way to reduce the cost of a homeowners insurance policy is to increase deductibles. This means the insured pays more out-of-pocket in a covered loss. A second approach is to alert us to any safety measures in effect at your home like smoke and intrusion alarms, dead bolts, fire extinguishers, etc. These may generate discounts. Lastly, consider placing your auto and homeowners policies with the same insurance carrier for a multi-policy discount.

Give us a call and let's discuss all of the options that might be available to lower your insurance premiums.



Hausmann|Johnson
I N S U R A N C E

The information, suggestions and techniques contained in this newsletter are offered as informational items only, and this agency makes no warranty of any kind, expressed or implied, as to the accuracy of the information or its fitness for a particular purpose.

Hausmann-Johnson Insurance, Inc.
700 Regent Street
PO Box 259408
Madison, WI 53725-9408

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MADISON, WI
PERMIT NO. 2860