



For Immediate Release

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Start 2013 Off Right with Thorough Insurance Review

Jackson -There is not a lot of time to think about insurance during the hectic rush of the holidays, but as you ring in the New Year, it is a good idea to evaluate your insurance coverage.

Commissioner of Insurance Mike Chaney and the Mississippi Insurance Department offers these tips and reminders to help you get 2013 off to a good start with a thorough insurance review.

“Now is the time to get smart and go over all your policies; take advantage of this time to maximize your coverage, minimize your costs and protect yourself financially,” Chaney said.

Homeowners/Renter's Insurance

- Make sure you are receiving all the discounts you are entitled to: Discounts are typically given to people who have more than one policy with the same insurer; have security or safety systems, such as smoke detectors, deadbolts and fire alarms; are 55 or older and retired; or live in homes located in eligible homeowners associations. Some insurers offer discounts if all residents of the home are non-smokers.
- Make home improvements – failure to maintain the upkeep of your property could cause your policy to be cancelled.
- Update your home inventory and make sure your homeowners or renter's policy is up-to-date. Do not forget to make note of any antique items and their value so you can talk with your insurance agent to ensure that they are properly covered.
- If starting a home inventory from scratch, try the NAIC's free smartphone app, myHOME Scr.APP.book, takes some of the headache out of the process. Download the app from iTunes or Google Play.

- Don't forget to add new gifts to your home inventory. Include as many details as you can and take a photo of each item. Most basic home insurance policies have standard limits for big-ticket items like electronics, art, jewelry or sporting equipment. You may need special coverage, so be sure to call your agent as soon as possible to discuss changes for your policy.
- Get more homeowner policy review information at www.insureuonline.org.

Colder weather can be a challenge for all drivers. There are a few insurance items you should review.

Auto Insurance

- Make sure your coverage is appropriate for your life situation.
- Liability is the part of the policy that pays for any injury or damage if you cause an accident. If your liability insurance is too low, it is possible that you could be sued for any damages above your liability limits.
- Take a look at your deductibles for comprehensive and collision coverage. This is the amount you will pay if your car is damaged or totaled. Raising or lowering this amount can affect your premium.
- Before hitting the road, make sure you have a copy of your insurance card and your insurance agent or company's number in the car. It is also a good idea to have a way to record details of an accident if you are in one. The NAIC smartphone application WreckCheck walks you through the process of gathering information following an accident. You can then email your notes directly to your agent. Download the free app from iTunes or Google Play.

Many families recently went through the open enrollment process for their health insurance at work or Medicare Open Enrollment, which means you may have new insurance cards and paperwork coming in the mail. It is a good idea to get all this information together before winter illness or accidents happen.

Health Insurance

- Check your provider lists to verify visits to your doctor and any specialists are still covered by your policy, as in-network or preferred provider lists change from year to year.
- Also read through your documents and make note of your copays for in-network and out-of-network providers so you are not surprised later.
- When planning a vacation away from home, check with your insurance carrier to identify urgent care centers and hospitals that accept your insurance coverage near your destination and along the way. Be sure to ask your carrier about applicable co-pays and deductibles if care is needed.

If you have questions about your insurance options and coverage or need assistance with your review contact the Mississippi Insurance Department Consumer Services Division at 800-562-2957 or visit the website at www.mid.ms.gov.

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