

Insurance by KATIE

K - Knowledgeable A - Attentive T - Trustworthy I - Independent E - Experienced

The Writer Agency
(308) 436-4202

Spring 2010

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“For the man sound in body and serene of mind there is no such thing as bad weather; every day has its beauty, and storms which whip the blood do but make it pulse more vigorously”

George Gissing
English novelist
1857-1903



April Showers Bring....

I have written about claims in past newsletters, however, recent wind and rain activity (not to mention worldwide catastrophes) have caused me to think about what could be a heavy storm season this summer. Claims happen. Your policy specifically outlines contractual duties associated with damage to covered property. As we enter storm season, we want you to know what to expect if you have the misfortune of suffering a loss.

The Claims Process: Report damage as soon as possible after it has happened by calling our office or direct claims service numbers provided by your insurance company. A formal claim will be submitted to your insurance company and they are responsible for determining whether your policy will apply to the claim and the amount that will be paid. If damage is from an area wide storm, such as severe hail storm, it is likely you will not reach a “live” person when you call due to the volume of calls we will be receiving. When prompted by the answering machine, please leave your name, phone number, and description of the item damaged, such as address of location damaged or year, make and model of a specific automobile. Rest assured we will submit your claim as quickly as possible based on your detailed phone message!

The Time Frame: You should be contacted shortly by your company who will provide further instructions and aid in the settlement of this claim. If you are not contacted within three days, please call our office right away so we may assist in this process.

Your Duties: Please respond promptly to any communication you receive from the insurance company or our office and be sure to cooperate fully with any requests. Take necessary precautions to protect the property from further damage or potential liability situations, however, do not make any permanent repairs until authorized by the insurance company. Do not dispose of damaged items until instructed. This will help speed the claim process and fulfill your contractual duties as provided in your insurance policy. Keep copies of any documents that may be important to settling your claim, such as police reports, receipts, or notes of conversations.

Our Duties: One of the most important reasons you do business with me and our agency is the assistance provided once you have suffered a loss. Please feel free to call me at any point in the claims process as I am here to help you in any way I can!

School's Almost Out - Watch for children playing in/near streets !



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Flood Insurance



NOW is the time!

On April 21, 2010 President Obama declared spring flooding has created a "major disaster" in 35 Nebraska counties allowing state and local government entities to request federal aid to help pay for repair costs. Although most of the Panhandle was spared, it is more important than ever to revisit frequently asked questions with answers provided by the National Flood Insurance Program:

Doesn't my homeowners insurance policy cover damages caused by flooding?

No. Let's say that again, **NO**, flood damage is not typically covered by a homeowners insurance policy. You **MUST** purchase a separate policy in order to obtain flood coverage.

If my home is flooded, won't federal disaster assistance pay for my damages?

No. Federal disaster assistance often comes in the form of a low interest loan to help cover flood damage and loans are only available if the president formally declares a disaster.

Why do I need flood insurance? My community has never been flooded.

Flooding occurs in low-to-moderate risk areas as well as in high-risk areas. Poor drainage systems, rapid accumulation of rainfall, snowmelt, and broken water mains can all result in flood. Properties on a hillside can be damaged by mudflow, a covered peril under the Standard Flood Insurance Policy

What is covered in my basement?

Flood insurance covers your home's foundation elements and equipment that's necessary to support the structure (for example: furnace, water heaters, circuit breakers, etc.). Flood insurance does not cover basement improvements, such as finished walls, floors, ceilings or personal belongings.

Why do I need flood insurance if I live on a hill and most likely will never get flooded?

Floods can occur in any area, although to varying degrees. If you live on a hill or in an area that has never been flooded, your risk may be significantly reduced, but it is **not** eliminated. Flooding can be caused by heavy rains, melting snow, inadequate drainage systems, failed protective devices such as levees and dams, as well as by tropical storms and hurricanes, all of which can affect property on a hill.

Does flood insurance cover flood damage caused by hurricanes, rivers, or tidal waters?

Yes, a general condition of flood exists if two adjacent properties are affected, one of which is yours. Or, if the flood is confined to your property, the flood water must cover at least two acres.

Is flood damage from wind-driven rain covered?

No. When rain enters through a wind-damaged window or door, or comes through a hole in a wall or roof, the resulting puddles and damage are considered to be windstorm-related, not flood-related. Flood insurance covers overflow of inland or tidal waters and unusual and rapid accumulation or runoff of surface waters from any source. However, the flood must be a general and temporary condition of partial or complete inundation of two or more acres of normally dry land area or of two or more properties (at least one of which is yours). Although flood insurance specifically excludes wind and hail damage, the good news is that most homeowners insurance *does* provide such coverage.

Please make an informed decision about the flood risks you face before deciding **not** to purchase flood insurance. You may qualify for a Preferred Risk Policy (a lower-cost flood insurance policy). Flood Insurance cannot be obtained when the flood waters are closing in on your property. **DON'T WAIT**...Get more valuable information from <http://www.floodsmart.gov> or contact your agent.



Before you leave on your summer trip --- ask me about AAA emergency road protection or AAA trip planning service and their money saving discounts!



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Long Term Care Insurance

Reform of the United States health care system has been headline news event for over a year. President Obama signed a bill passed into law by Congress on March 23, 2010 which will take many years to be fully implemented. As with previous laws, the new law **does not** cover long stays (Long Term Care – LTC) in a nursing facility except for the very poor. Most private health insurance policies and Medicare only pay for nursing home care for a short period after hospitalization. Due to this, you could quickly spend your life savings on LTC (nursing home) costs.

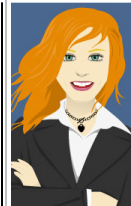
I recently read an article entitled Long Term Care You Can Afford in the March 2010 issue of Kiplinger's Personal Finance magazine. It stated that statistics show the average 65 year old person can expect to spend about 3 years in a long term care facility. Many younger people will also need care due to injury or illness. The cost of a private room in a LTC facility in Scottsbluff/Gering averages \$5800 plus per month. A semi-private room is \$5500 plus, and that does not include medication or specialty needs such as diabetic or other chronic illness care. Alzheimer's care facility costs are more.

There are many companies that offer Long Term Care (LTC) policies to cover all or part of your costs. These policies come with many, many options which allow you to find one that fits your requirements and financial ability. Obviously the younger you are when you buy a policy the lower the cost. An older couple may be able to purchase one policy that will cover both of them--this would be less expensive than 2 individual policies. Policies can also be written with a high deductible. These would be appropriate for someone who can afford the risk. For those of you with Health Savings Accounts (HSA's) your long term care policy premiums can be paid out of your HSA. The cost may also be a tax deductible item under current tax law.

Long term care is something that many of us will need and most of us don't have. We have insurance on our cars, trucks, boats, campers, houses, and health. Why not protect the most important asset – ourselves - to obtain the long term care we need and want? It should be part of your overall insurance and financial plan. If you would like to discuss how Long Term Care could fit into your insurance plan or would like a copy of the Kiplinger article, call me!

New Website and **facebook** Page

As an added benefit to you, we have launched a new website. Find out more about us, explore insurance coverages we provide, access our Learning Center, read past newsletters or our blog, and even obtain an insurance quotation. If you prefer, connect with me on my Facebook page where you can easily follow my new blog, communicate or get a quote on your insurance. Click on the "Facebook & Blog" link in the navigation bar of our website.



BlogNews

Look closely at the photo below. Do you know what it is?

Check out my new blog www.insurance-by-katie.blogspot.com to read the whole story, "April Fool's Day & the Flying Truck".



Curious about the new texting while driving law instituted in Nebraska earlier this year? Parents are you looking for a way to convince your kids not to text while driving? Log on to my new blog at:

www.insurance-by-katie.blogspot.com

to read, "Crash Text Dummies" and watch a very real and very scary video that captures a public bus driver texting while driving at 65 mph!



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To Blog or not to Blog.....

A blog is a type of website that provides commentary on a particular subject and combines text, images, videos and links related to the topic. The purpose of my blog, "Insights from Insurance-by-Katie" at www.insurance-by-katie.blogspot.com is to provide insights, inspirations, and (a little) insurance information in a humorous, **fun**, and informative way. I post twice each month & I encourage you to look and comment on the interesting photos & videos. See pg 3 for samples of the intriguing, and often crazy, information you'll find on the blog!

About Our Organization

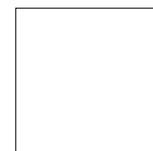
Our agency represents many very competitive insurance companies dedicated to providing superior coverage and superb customer service.

With the support of the staff in Ogallala, Katie Kochenower, a Certified Insurance Counselor and Risk Manager, uses her

20+ years experience to provide you with valuable, high quality, affordable insurance tailored to fit your specific needs.

The Writer Agency

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**Do you know
someone who could
benefit from personal
insurance service?
Your referrals are
appreciated!**

