

INSURANCE BY KATIE

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

The Writer Agency
(308) 436-4202

Fall 2012



Show Me The Money!

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“The distinction between the past, present and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion.”

Albert Einstein

Scientist

Mar 14, 1879 - Apr 18, 1955

Now that many of you are making repairs to your damaged items from the summer storms, keep in mind the following:

1) If you have Homeowner HO3 or Special Commercial policy form, without any exclusionary wording to the contrary, (these are two of the most common policy forms) the insurance company will reimburse you for the cost to repair or the value to replace your damages. The **estimated** reimbursement amount is generally presented to you on your claim worksheet as three columns of figures. The “Replacement Cost” column is the **estimated** total amount needed in order to completely repair or replace your damages. The “Actual Cash Value” column is the amount the insurance company owes you regardless of whether you make repairs or not. The “Depreciation” column is the difference between these two figures. Once the repairs are made you're able to submit your **actual expenses** in order to recoup the *appropriate* amount of funds listed in the “Replacement Cost” column. (See the next item for the determination of the “appropriate” amount).

2) The worksheets received from your adjuster is simply an estimate of what they felt it would cost to repair the damages. . This figure is not a guaranteed number and you could be reimbursed more or less than that number depending on your **actual repair expenditures**.

For example, if you are able to make your repairs for less than what is listed on your estimated worksheet, that is what the company will pay: you will be reimbursed for your actual out-of-pocket expenses. On the other hand, if your actual expenses exceed that figure listed on your worksheet, it is possible to obtain reimbursement in an amount higher than is listed on your worksheet. It is important to note however, that if your damages do exceed the figure listed on your worksheet you should present this difference to the insurance company for approval prior to making any repairs.

3) Make certain to retain all of your repair bills so these can be turned into your insurance company for reimbursement upon completion of the repairs so you may pay your contractor promptly.

4) The insurance contract stipulates that you be reimbursed to such extent as to put you back into the same financial position as you were prior to the loss without betterment. What this means is that the insurance company owes you to replace and repair your items with “like kind and quality”. Of course you are free to choose to upgrade and improve your home or other damaged item during this process; however the insurance company is only obligated to reimburse you for what it would have cost to replace your damaged item with an identical type of item.

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Daylight Saving Time ends Nov 4

Don't forget to "Fall Back" 1 hour & check out our blog on that day for interesting facts about this strange tradition

www.insurance-by-katie.blogspot.com



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Got Discounts?

- * Multi-Policy
- * Multi-vehicle
- * Non-smoker
- * Good Credit
- * Empty-Nest
- * Over 50 years old
- * the list goes on.....

Call me for a discount check-up today!



Cyber Liability

Any organization with a Web site or conducting e-business or "cloud computing" needs protection from an invading army of exposures, such as e-theft, destruction of critical data, defamation, libel, copyright or trademark infringement, e-vandalism, e-threats, denial of service, and more. Unfortunately, many companies don't realize that whether they experience a data security breach isn't as much a matter of **IF** it will happen as **when**. Our agency is able to provide you with cyber insurance protection as a complement to the risk management steps you have already taken within your business. Call me today to discuss what is available so you can obtain peace of mind

Show Me \$\$.... continued

5) As a general rule, most insurance companies require that your repairs are made within 180 days (6 months) of the day when the damage occurred. In Nebraska however, it is not always possible to make these repairs before winter sets in. To that end, most insurance companies are willing to grant an extension of time in which to make these repairs upon receiving a formal request to do so.

If you have outstanding damage that will exceed this 180 day period, please contact me right away in order to request the extension.

6) Most insurance policies contain a "per occurrence" deductible which means that a deductible will apply to each incident; each storm; each damage event, even if repairs for the first damages have not been made at the time of the additional damages.

No one enjoys the process of making repairs after your items are damaged. Most of us would prefer if the damage had never happened, however, unfortunately damages cannot always be avoided. The claim process can be confusing and frustrating at times and this is why you have a trusted insurance agent who can help guide you through the process in order to make it a little bit easier!

Call me today if you have questions or need to file an extension on your repairs.

Earthquake

Did you hear?

There WAS an earthquake in Nebraska in mid-October!



Do you know?

Earthquake damage is not a coverage normally found on your home or business policy.

Earthquake can actually be very easily obtained (at least here in Nebraska so far!). And the premiums are relatively inexpensive. For example: earthquake coverage for a home valued at \$140,000 ranges between \$10-\$25 per year. The mandatory deductible is often quite large: usually 20-25% of the value of the structure but that is better than no coverage at all! Call me today to discuss your options before the "big one" hits!

Personal Property Inventory



Close your eyes. Think about one room, any room, in your house. Now, from memory try to list everything in the room. Open your eyes and check your list against the actual contents of the room. You'll be surprised how many items you **don't** remember! For that reason ask me, your agent for a Personal Property Inventory & take the time to complete it. Making a video tape or taking photos of each room is also helpful. Don't forget to open every drawer to make accurate record of the contents. It may be worth thousands of dollars if you suffer a loss.

Don't have a camera? Need help?

Let me know. I would be happy to help you make a video or take photos. I can also keep a copy because it won't do any good to have your inventory and photos burn up or blow away with your house!

Quick Response Code

I am sure you have seen these strange squares on virtually everything now, from TV boxes to wine bottles. What's it all about? A QR code is a way to quickly deliver and/or access useful information by using a "smart phone" to scan the code contained within the box, similar to what grocery stores already do. The information that can be encoded is unlimited and can range from written information, to a video about the product, or a website that automatically loads on the smart phone. Scan the QR code on this page and use the information on the website that opens to contact me and let me know



what you thought of the experience. You'll be entered to win \$20 Scotts Bluff Chamber Bucks that can be spent anywhere in County. "Like" my Facebook Page (accessed with the QR code or directly on Facebook) & have your name entered TWICE! No smart phone? Stop by & I'll demonstrate the QR code for you!

Equipment Breakdown Insurance

Today's homes are filled with equipment that homeowners depend on for basic comfort and services. Heat, air conditioning, hot water, and major appliances are just a few of the daily equipment necessities that's become more complex, costly, and prone to breakdown. Most homeowner's (and business policies for that matter) exclude mechanical & electrical breakdown losses. Simple misuse, faulty installation or poor maintenance can cause a breakdown that's surprisingly costly to fix and may not be covered by warranties and service contracts. Our agency represents many insurance companies that offer Equipment Breakdown Insurance. It can protect from the expense associated with the repair or replacement and labor in the event of loss to your home's equipment. It may also pay for damage directly to the covered equipment, additional living expenses (should you have to vacate your home while the equipment is out of service), spoilage as a result of covered equipment breakdown events,

equipment breakdown events, additional costs to replace equipment with more energy efficient units, and much more.

Not sure you need this protection? Here are some real claims that were covered:

#1 - Metal fatigue caused a fracture in the air conditioning compressor refrigerant line. The line, refrigerant & oil were replaced. Cost = \$3000

#2 - Lack of lubrication caused an air conditioner compressor to seize. Cost = \$2,534

#3 - Replacement of a dishwasher was necessary due to a broken shaft. Cost = \$1,700

#4 - A 52' flat screen TV was improperly placed on a console over the top of a heating vent causing heat damage. Cost = \$2,400

#5 - A laptop computer short circuited due to dust accumulation. Cost = \$1,500

Call me today to discuss this protection and your options

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BlogNews

Have you ever anguished over airline liquid restrictions that are supposed to keep us safe (while not allowing you to take the desperately needed large bottle of 100 SPF so you don't burn to a crisp on vacation? Read about my adventures with this in my recent blog article, **3.4 Ounces & a Javelin**



To continue the travelling theme, read about my recent highway escapade in **Deer in the Headlights** and watch the funny video!

While you're online, check out important cooking / fire safety information by reading about my mom's Alaskan cooking exploits in: **The Smoke Detector Strikes Again** or recall nice summer weather in: **Graduation on the Face of the Sun!**

You can access past issues of this newsletter within the blog or through our website

Check out my blog: www.insurance-bykatie.blogspot.com.

Want my fun blog articles delivered automatically to you? I can email them to you!

Holiday Safety Tips

The potential for automobile related accidents with young pedestrians increases four times on Halloween night according to a CDC (Center for Disease Control) study. Use these tips to stay safe:



- Don't use a cell phone or other electronic device while driving on Halloween. You shouldn't be doing this anyway ~ it's against the law!
- Pay extra attention, particularly to crosswalks, intersections and the side of the road. Kids tend to walk along the curbs, cutting across the street to get to other homes. Keep scanning all around you as you drive, whether as thru traffic or along with your kids as they trick-or-treat.
- Drive below the posted speed limit in residential areas during trick-or-treating hours. This will allow you sufficient time to break if needed.

To help prevent home fires this Thanksgiving, the Red Cross suggests:



- Keep potholders and food wrappers at least three feet away from heat sources while cooking
- Wear tighter fitting clothing with shorter sleeves when cooking
- Make sure all stoves/ovens are turned off when you leave the kitchen
- Set timers to keep track of turkeys and other food items
- Turn handles of pots and pans on the stove inward to avoid accidents
- Follow all manufacturer guidelines for the appropriate use of appliances
- After guests leave, walk around the home making sure that all candles and smoking materials are extinguished

Keep the Christmas season merry with these safety tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission:



- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant." Although this does not mean it won't catch fire, it does indicate the tree will resist burning and should extinguish quickly.
- When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and when bent between your fingers, needles do not break. The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.
- Use only noncombustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals. Leaded materials are hazardous if ingested by children.



PLEASE HELP ME

I have been thinking about starting to host short "Coffee & Cookies with Katie" gatherings to discuss current topics that affect your insurance protection and to answer questions you may have. Plus, it's a great excuse to enjoy good food and the company of friends! BUT - I need your help. I realize that not everyone is as passionate about insurance as I am 😊 so what topics are of interest to you? What concerns or questions do you have? What day and time of day would be good for you to attend? Please call or contact me with ideas!

Updated Website and  and  Internet Pages

As an added benefit to you, we continually update our website & online media. Find out more about us, explore the insurance coverages we provide, access our Learning Center, read past newsletters or our blog, and even obtain insurance quotes. Connect with me on my Facebook page where you can easily follow my blog, communicate or get a quote for insurance. Click on the "Facebook & Blog" link on the navigation bar.

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Automobile Medical Payment Protection



Medical payments coverage is an auto insurance benefit that provides a small amount of coverage for hospitalization, emergency room visits and doctor visits if you sustain injuries in a car accident. Medical payments coverage is typically available with limits of \$1,000, \$5,000, \$10,000 or \$25,000. Unless otherwise stated in your policy, limits apply on a per-person basis--FOR EXAMPLE: if you choose a \$5,000 limit and 4 people sustain significant injuries the coverage will pay a total of \$20,000. This coverage provides benefits for you and the passengers in your vehicle. It also provides protection for licensed drivers who borrow your vehicle with your permission. In an accident, auto insurance medical coverage is typically primary over standard health insurance. In other words, the medical payment coverage is used first, and any available health insurance kicks in after auto medical payments are exhausted. Lastly, (heaven forbid) this coverage can also provide funds for burial expenses. The full 6 month premium cost for \$5,000 of this valuable coverage can be literally about the cost of one lunch at McDonalds or Arby's per vehicle. And for slightly more than that, you can increase that limit as listed above. Isn't your protection worth the cost of lunch? Call me today to discuss your options today!



We Are A Trusted Choice® Agency

You've seen this symbol on correspondence from our agency and probably have also seen it on TV and in other national insurance advertising. **But what does it mean?**

Trusted Choice® agencies are insurance and financial services firms whose access to multiple companies and commitment to quality service enable us to offer our clients competitive pricing, a broad choice of products and unparalleled advocacy.

As a **Trusted Choice®** agency, we are dedicated to you and are committed to treating you as a person, not a policy. This commitment means we shall:

- Work with you to identify the insurance and financial services that are right for you, your family or your business and use our access to multiple companies to deliver those products.
- Guide you through the claims process for a prompt and fair resolution of your claim.
- Help you solve problems related to your coverage or account.
- Explain the coverages and options available to you through our agency, at your request.
- Return your phone calls and e-mails promptly and respond to your requests in a timely manner.
- Provide 24/7 services for our customers, offering any or all of the following: emergency phone numbers, Internet account access, e-mail and call center services.
- Use our experience and multiple company relationships to customize your coverage as needed.
- Commit our staff to continuing education so they may be more knowledgeable in serving you.
- Treat you with respect and courtesy.
- Conduct our business in an ethical manner.

We pledge this to you, our clients and ask that you let us know if we fail to meet our commitment, so we may take corrective action.

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What if....

As your trusted insurance resource & "go-to" gal, I pride myself in helping you navigate the confusing world of insurance. To that end, I want to hear from you. What's confusing to you? Do you lay awake at night wondering, "what if..." and hoping you are properly protected? Rest assured you are not the only one thinking these things. So ~ call me, email me, post a comment on my blog...no matter how you do it, **just do it**. Ask me your "what if" and I'll share the answer in my next blog and newsletter.

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

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

WA

The Writer Agency, LLC

Kathryn Kochenower, CIC, CRM, AIP
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Do you know someone who could benefit from personal insurance service? Refer someone and receive a thank-you gift.



Got Life Insurance?

Call us today to see how very affordable peace of mind really is!

