

Briefly Noted

- Almost 25 million U.S. families that rent their homes go without insurance coverage, leaving themselves vulnerable to serious property and liability losses. Many renters without coverage own valuable, high-tech equipment and face higher risk related to pets, a new national survey conducted by the Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers of America finds.
- National statistics show insuring your home and vehicle is cheaper in Wisconsin than nearly any other state, according to a report from Wisconsin Public Radio. Data from the National Association of Insurance Commissioners shows the average combined home and auto insurance premium in Wisconsin is 29 percent lower than the national average. The NAIC statistics are from 2003, the latest data available. It ranks Wisconsin 49th out of 50 states and District of Columbia. Only Idaho is less expensive. The average cost to insure both your home and auto in Wisconsin is \$1,054.

What This Symbol Means To You ...



There is a difference in where you buy your insurance. Many don't realize there are three sources for insurance:

1. Captive Agents—who can sell you the insurance of only one company.
2. Telephone & Internet Representatives—who can offer you the insurance of one company only on the telephone or via computer.
3. Independent Insurance Agents, like us—who represent an average of eight insurance companies and research with these firms to find you the best combination of price, coverage and service.

Drivers Ignore Dangers Of Cell Phone Use

Despite knowing that driving and talking on a cell phone at the same time is dangerous, and that it is safer to use a hands-free device to hold the cell phone, a large majority of drivers with cell phones still talk on the cell phone and drive at the same time. This is especially true with younger adults.

Even in states that have laws requiring the use of a hands-free device, many adults are not using the hands-free device, although those laws do seem to have some effect.

These are some of the results of a May 2006 Harris Poll of 2,086 U.S. adults. Other results include:

- About three-quarters (73 percent) of adults who drive and have a cell phone (78 percent of all adults drive and have a cell phone) say that they talk on their cell phone while driving.
- Two-thirds (67 percent) say that they sometimes talk on their cell and drive, while only six percent admit to doing this all the time.
- Just over a quarter of adults (27 percent) say that they never talk on their cell while driving.



Millions Unfit To Drive

Results from the second annual GMAC Insurance National Drivers Test suggest licensed Americans lack basic driving knowledge and exhibit alarming behaviors on the road.

The study revealed that one in 11 drivers—nearly 18 million people—would fail a state drivers test. Furthermore, the study shows drivers deliberately disregard pedestrians and treat driving as the new “down time,” where they catch up on the day's activities, diverting their attention from the road.

The startling results come one year after GMAC Insurance first set out to gauge the knowledge of the American driving public, when licensed drivers were administered 20 questions found on a typical DMV written drivers test.

The 2006 findings indicate drivers still do not have adequate knowledge of basic rules of the road, and they exhibit bad habits behind the wheel. For the second year in a row, Oregon drivers ranked highest on the test, with an average score of 91 percent (70 percent or higher is required to pass a standard drivers test), and Rhode Island ranked lowest, with an average score of 75 percent.

Serving You First . . .



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The Basics Of Homeowners & Renters Insurance

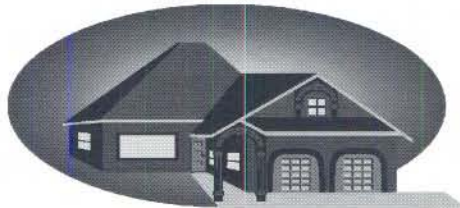
If you own or rent housing, you have the potential to suffer property damage or liability loss. Homeowners and renters insurance protect against those potential losses. Property insurance protects you from financial losses resulting from damage or destruction to your property or possessions. Liability insurance protects you from financial loss that results if others suffer and you are held responsible for those losses.

Let's look at homeowners insurance. Most policies protect your property—damage to your home or dwelling, damage to other structures on your property, damage to contents or personal property, and expenses incurred as a result of the loss or use of your home.

Typically insurance policies either spell out (a named-perils policy) what losses they will cover or they spell out those specific losses they will not cover (an all-risk policy). All-risk policies provide broader coverage. Homeowners general liability protection applies when you are legally liable for another person's losses. No-fault medical homeowners protection pays for losses suffered by visitors regardless of who was at fault. Similarly, no-fault property damage pays for property losses suffered by visitors to your home.

The Seven Basic Types Of Homeowners Insurance:

HO-1—Basic Homeowners. This typically covers 11 property damage-causing perils and provides basic personal, property damage and medical liability payments. It covers: fire or lightning; windstorm or hail; explosion; riot or civil



commotion; aircraft; vehicles; smoke; vandalism or malicious mischief; theft; damage by glass or safety glazing material that is part of the building; volcanic eruptions.

HO-2—All of the above plus falling objects; weight of ice, snow or sleet; three types of water-related damage from home utilities or appliances; and electrical surge damage.

HO-3—This extended coverage offers all of the above plus any other peril "not specified" in your policy ex-

cept flood, earthquake, war and nuclear accident.

HO-4—Renters' coverage. This usually covers only personal property from 17 listed perils and provides some liability protection.

HO-5—All-risk coverage for building and property. This isn't sold very often anymore.

HO-6—Condominium owner coverage. This protects condo owners from 17 listed perils for losses to contents, personal property, liability losses and losses due to additional living expenses.

HO-8—Provides old home coverage up to the actual cash value. It does not guarantee an older home will be rebuilt to the same standards of style and quality because that may be prohibitively expensive today.

There are many variations on all these offerings, too. Most homes are covered by HO-2 and HO-3 type policies.

If you have questions regarding how much coverage you should have or how much liability insurance you need, just give us a call. We're insurance specialists with one goal—to provide you with the right protection at the right price.