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## Insuring Against Identity Theft

Anyone who has ever lost their wallet or, worse yet, had it stolen, knows the panic that sets in at the thought of a complete stranger having access to personal information such as home address, Social Security number and bank/credit cards. Now imagine someone having all that information and more without the help of a misplaced wallet. It's possible and unfortunately very common as identity theft remains the No. 1 reason people contact the Federal Trade Commission.

### 13 Every Minute

Every minute approximately 13 people in the United States have their identity stolen, according to the Identity Theft Resource Center, and there is growing concern among policyholders wishing to protect themselves from becoming part of that statistic. Identity theft insurance is second only to auto insurance in the list of products homeowners say they would like their insurance provider to offer, according to a report by J.D. Power and Associates.

The report, based on responses from 9,045 U.S. homeowners insurance policyholders, has been conducted annu-



ally since 2001, however this is the first year participants cited identity theft insurance as something they would like their provider to offer in addition to their homeowners insurance.

"We asked policyholders which products they would like their homeowners insurer to offer, and the No. 1 mention was auto insurance (55 percent), the second was ID theft, followed by valuable possession coverage," says Jeremy Bowlers, senior director of the insurance practice at J.D. Power and Associates.

### For Your Security

Many insurers have responded to the demand for identity theft protection by offering a variety of coverages for homeowners, renters and small business owners.

If you are in doubt as to whether you have identity theft protection, give our agency a call. We can assist you with this vital coverage.



## Renters Need Insurance

Even if you don't own a house, you may have a lot to lose in a fire or if you are named in a liability suit for an incidence at your residence.

Homeowners Policy Form HO-4 is especially designed for renters. It covers your personal property for a number of different types of damage including theft, smoke, vandalism, fire, explosion, falling objects, building collapse, and rupture of steam or hot water systems. There is no coverage for the dwelling. That is the owner's responsibility, not the renter's.

### Some Of The Other Covered Losses:

- A minimum of \$25,000 in personal liability for each occurrence of bodily injury and property damage to others arising out of your negligence.
- A minimum of \$1,000 in medical payments without regard to fault for injuries occurring in your home to anyone other than you or your family.
- Injuries occurring outside your home if caused by you, a member of your family living with you, or your pet.
- Ten percent of limits of personal property coverage for your belongings if destroyed or damaged away from your home if the cause is covered by your policy.

## 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.



## Crash Tests Expose Fender Bender Costs

Those minor fender benders might cost more than you think, according to new crash tests released recently by the insurance industry.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety found that most bumpers on mid-size cars do little to prevent costly damage to vehicles, even in low-speed crashes of up to 6 mph. The crashes frequently occur in parking lots and in commuter traffic.

Testing for the first time by the Virginia-based institute finds that only three mid-size vehicles, the Mitsubishi Galant, Toyota Camry and Mazda 6, sustained less than \$1,500 in repairs from each of the four crash tests.

The tests were conducted to review damage from front, rear, front corner and rear corner crashes.

"The cars with the lowest repair bills after the new bumper tests still sustained much more damage than they should have in some of the tests," said Adrian Lund, the institute's president. "We got crumpled grilles and headlights, plus buckled fenders in impacts at speeds equivalent to an average person walking fast."

The institute conducted tests on 17 mid-size cars in low-speed tests. In one test of the front end at 6 mph, four vehicles, the Nissan Maxima, Volkswagen Passat, Pontiac G6 and Hyundai Sonata, had damages of more than \$4,000.

By comparison, the institute conducted similar tests on a 1981 Ford Escort and found the front-end test only caused \$86 in damages. They said it highlighted federal requirements that were in effect until 1982 that required bumpers to keep damage away from vehicle safety equipment and sheet metal parts in crashes of up to 5 mph.

Since 1982, the institute said the required test speeds have been cut in half, leading to more damage.

Automakers said they work to design vehicles to resist low-speed collision damage. Nissan, for example, said it believes the Maxima "performs competitively in terms of cost of repair."

Volkswagen of America Inc. said that "while low-speed collision repairs are an element of the total cost of ownership, we're confident that Volkswagen products continue to provide exceptional customer value."

General Motors Corp. said in a statement that the tests "have everything to do with damageability, but they are really not an occupant safety issue. These are new tests, and we are assessing the results."

Serious injuries are uncommon in low-speed crashes, and the institute's bumper tests did not assess passenger safety.

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