

INSURANCE *Common Claim Tips*

RISK
MANAGEMENT
LOSSES
SAFEGUARD
PROTECTION
LIABILITY
ACCIDENT
POLICY
INVESTMENT



You've purchased your policy, paid your premiums and unfortunately, you have suffered a loss. Once a claim is reported with your insurance company, you expect to be made whole quickly...but the claim process may not go the way you anticipated. The following are some common claim tips from the Wyoming Department of Insurance (DOI).

Auto Insurance

Pay your monthly premiums to keep your policy active. Deductible limits for comprehensive and collision coverage are determined when you purchase a policy. Selecting a higher deductible might lower your monthly premiums, but you will have to pay the higher deductible amount when a claim is filed. It may not make sense to file a claim if your repairs cost less than your deductible.

Claim delays are a frequent claim complaint. If you're involved in a two or more vehicle accident, your insurer and the other insurer(s) will conduct a liability investigation. You can help by taking photos of your damage, showing the area where the accident took place, and providing witness contact information. The NAIC's WreckCheck at: www.insureonline.org/auto_wreckcheck_guide.pdf walks users through what to do after an accident. If there is a dispute about what happened, a police report may be necessary before making a liability determination, but police reports may take weeks to get.

Homeowners Insurance

Determine whether your policy requires insurer notification within a designated timeframe. Some policies may also require that you immediately mitigate damages to protect property from further loss. For example, cover a broken window so water can't get inside the home and cause additional damage.

Make a home inventory now so you can provide information in the event of damage or loss. A home inventory with photos can help expedite the claims process. Also, take photos to document your loss and damage. If you have sufficient proof to show you've done everything in your ability to prevent damages and that the damages are not due to negligence, you'll have an easier time with the

claims process.

Many homeowners policies will pay for living expenses including hotel and meal costs when you can't live in your home. Remember to keep receipts for reimbursement.

Finally, your homeowners settlement check may include your mortgage company's name, which may require extra steps with your bank to collect the payment.

Health Insurance

It's your job to verify your health care providers and facilities are in-network. In-network health care providers have contracted with your insurer to accept certain negotiated (discounted) rates. If you've scheduled a planned procedure or office visit, verify the provider and facility accept your insurance. If your procedure includes an anesthesiologist or other specialty staff, try to determine if those providers are also in-network.

If you receive a surprise bill or have unresolved questions, contact your insurer or the Wyoming DOI. Consumer representatives may be able to help determine whether there's been an error or to resolve an issue.

Life Insurance

Life insurance claims can be denied for a variety of reasons including material misrepresentation. Be honest and truthful on your applications. Insurers may deny claims for omissions or false information regarding such things as your smoking habit or employment history on your application.

If you think you might be the beneficiary of a life insurance policy and don't know how to begin the collection process, the NAIC's Life Insurance Policy Locator at: <https://eapps.naic.org/life-policy-locator/#/welcome> may help, especially if you don't know the policy number or have much information about the life insurance company. You can also contact the Wyoming DOI for assistance.

Prepare Ahead of Time

Read your insurance policy and ask questions before a loss occurs. Know what your policy covers and talk with your agent or insurer to make sure you have the right plan or appropriate coverage. Understand the covered perils and any exclusions in your policy. Knowing your insurance coverage can provide peace of mind in the event of an emergency.

More Information

If you're having serious concerns with how an insurer is handling your claim, call the Wyoming DOI. They may be able to assist you with a resolution or with filing a complaint.



Wyoming Department of Insurance
<http://doi.wyo.gov>
1 (800) 438-5768

This public service announcement is presented and paid for by the insurance companies licensed to do business in Wyoming in cooperation with the Wyoming Insurance Department. For more information on the state's insurance companies, including financial information, visit the Insurance Department website's "Company Financial Information" section.