

NEWS BLAST



Playing It Safe

Getting a Trampoline? Understand Liability Risks

AS SUMMER approaches, many families with children will buy trampolines or bring one out from winter storage so the kids and their friends – and maybe even parents – can bounce to their hearts' delight.

But while they are fun, they can also be dangerous, with 100,000 Americans seeking emergency-room treatment for trampoline-related injuries a year, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

This means you have a potential liability should a guest be injured playing on a trampoline. If your child's friend is injured and you were not supervising their play, you run the risk of being targeted in a negligence lawsuit.

Even if you have barred the kids from playing on the trampoline without adult supervision and they break the rules, you can still be held liable should your child's friend injure themselves.

If you are in the market for a trampoline or have one already, you need to have

strict safety rules in place to protect your family members and any guests that use your trampoline.

If you do decide to get one, pay close attention to the safety recommendations from the CPSC Trampoline Safety Alert in the box below.

Insurance

While your homeowner's policy could cover the cost of a claim, the policy limits may not cover all the damages that you could incur if the injury is a severe one.

If you have not already done so, you should consider getting an umbrella policy that pays out once you've breached the limits of your homeowner's insurance. ❖

Leading causes of injuries

- Colliding with another person on
- Landing improperly while jumping or doing stunts
- Falling or jumping off the trampoline
- Falling on the trampoline springs or frame

Preventing injuries

- Only one person should use the trampoline at a time.
- Make sure no one is attempting somersaults. A bad landing leading to a back or neck injury can cause paralysis.
- Use pads to cover springs and frame.
- Place the trampoline away from trees or nearby structures.
- Never allow anyone under the age of six to use the trampoline.
- Make sure children are supervised by a responsible adult.
- Add an enclosure designed for trampolines, to help avoid people falling off.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission



CONTACT US

PLACER

INSURANCE AGENCY

If you have any questions regarding any of these articles or have a coverage question, please call us at:

Placer Insurance Agency

5 Sierra Gate Plaza, Second Floor
Roseville, California 95678

Phone: (916) 784-1008

Toll Free: (800) 642-5037

E-mail: newsletter@placerins.com

License No.: 0C66701

Personal Liability

Hiring a Contractor? Make Sure They're Insured

WHEN YOU hire contractors, electricians or other home repair specialists, you may shop around on price and go with the least expensive one.

But if a contractor comes in with a bid that is much lower than the competition, it could mean they are cutting corners – and one of the top ways for them to do this is in the insurance they carry, or are supposed to carry.

Consider these scenarios:

- An electrician's faulty work starts a fire that guts your kitchen and dining room.
- A contractor's worker breaks a leg while working on your home.

If either of these events occurs and the contractor doesn't have insurance, you'll be on the hook for the damages.

Even if a contractor tells you they are insured and bonded, you need to verify that it's true. After all, they could be stretching the truth by just having their vehicle insured, and they could be bonded for another project they have worked on in the past.

While your homeowner's policy provides some liability coverage, it may not cover all the expenses in an especially costly event.

The first thing you should do when hiring a contractor is to ask to see their certificate of insurance. If they don't have it, they can call their insurance agent and ask them to send it to you. A certificate doesn't provide all the insurance details, but it's a good start.

However, if you are having major work done on your home, you need to delve further. You should look for the following:

Coverages on certificate of liability insurance

Current dates – Check to see that the coverage is current. If it's past the policy expiration date, then it doesn't tell you if they currently have insurance.

General liability coverage – The contractor should have this insurance, which covers bodily injury to you or third parties and property damage arising out of their operations.

Check also to see if their coverage includes “products and completed operations,” which covers damages that may arise out of their finished work. If this is not included, then the contractor's liability ends when they finish the job.

Workers' compensation – This coverage is mandatory for all employers, except under very rare circumstances. It covers medical expenses and lost wages if an employee is injured on the job. If the contractor doesn't have this coverage, you could be on the hook for these costs.

Sometimes small contractors will tell you that they don't need to have it, but that is typically true only if they have no employees and it's a sole proprietorship.

Other coverages to look for

Builder's risk – If you are building a new home or adding onto your home, this provides protection for the new construction and building materials while it is being built.

While most contractors will buy this coverage, some of them will ask the homeowner to do so. Make sure you are clear who should buy this coverage and, if it is the contractor, make sure you ask for proof that it's been purchased.

Fidelity bonds – The most common type of bond you could encounter provides protection if a contractor's workers steal from you.

But while better than nothing, actually getting paid from these bonds can be somewhat difficult.

It's probably a better bet to lock up or remove your valuables when contractors are working in your home. Although you have hopefully picked a contractor you trust, he or she is probably not going to be the only one that enters the job site. ❖



Automotive Insurance

Are You Covered for Personal Use of a Company Car?

GETTING A company car is a coveted perk for employees, but it can also cause some coverage issues with your personal auto policy. The standard auto policy excludes coverage for non-owned vehicles furnished or available for your regular use.

This means you are relying solely on the company’s insurance for protection. If for any reason the company’s policy does not respond if you are in a traffic accident, you have no coverage.

The company’s business auto coverage will also not provide you protection if you use the vehicle outside the scope of the employer’s permission. This can leave a big gap if you or a family member use the vehicle in a way that wasn’t part of the original agreement.

Nightmare scenario

Your employer allows only you to drive the vehicle. Your spouse takes the company car to the grocery store and on the way she crashes into another vehicle.

Unfortunately, you have no coverage on either your policy or the company’s policy. You would be on the hook for damage to the car and possibly the other vehicle, as well as for medical costs for any injuries sustained by either party in the accident.

The solution

If you are given a company car, you should consider adding an “extended non-owned coverage for named individuals” endorsement to your policy. You should name each member of your family of driving age.

This endorsement will fix the gap in coverage when an employee is furnished an auto for their regular use (or even has one available for their regular use out of a pool of vehicles). But, note that this is only for liability coverage and there is not going to be any physical damage coverage for the vehicle.

This endorsement is inexpensive and can provide peace of mind. It is a good idea anytime you have regular access to a vehicle you do not own.

If the insurance company won’t add the extended non-owned endorsement (or a similar one) to the personal auto policy, or can’t add it, the next option would be to buy a named non-owned policy to fill the gap in coverage.

In effect, this accomplishes the same thing as the extended non-owned coverage for a named individual, but may be more expensive. ❖



Produced by Risk Media Solutions on behalf of Placer Insurance Agency. This newsletter is not intended to provide legal advice, but rather perspective on recent regulatory issues, trends and standards affecting insurance as well as instructional articles on protection and managing personal risk. Please consult your broker for further information on the topics covered herein. Copyright 2018.



Smart Planning

How to Keep Your Family in Touch in Emergencies

MOST PEOPLE do not expect to ever find themselves in the midst of an emergency or disaster. These events happen, though, and they can be made worse when families have not planned ahead for how they will communicate at such a time.

Members of your household might not be in the same place during an emergency, including:

- School shootings
- Extreme weather, such as tornados, hurricanes and blizzards
- Workplace violence
- Explosions, whether from bombings or gas leaks.

When these kinds of events occur, people naturally want to know whether their loved ones are safe.

But, communicating with other household members may be complicated by factors such as outages affecting power supplies, Internet access, and cell phone service. Extreme weather may make transportation inadvisable. Local authorities may even prohibit unnecessary travel.

Without advance planning, the natural response may be anxiety at best and panic at worst. In the heat of the moment, individuals may take rash actions, placing themselves at risk.

Questions You Should Be Able to Answer

- How will everyone get emergency alerts and warnings?
- How will they communicate with each other if normal communication channels are down?
- How can individuals let the others know their condition?
- Where will they meet up and how will they get there?

Emergency Communications Plan Elements

- The names and contact information for individuals outside the area for family members to get in touch with.
- Addresses of locations in the area for the family to gather.
- Names, addresses and contact information for all family workplaces.
- Names, addresses and contact information for all schools.
- Names and important information for all family members, including dates of birth, Social Security numbers, and vital medical information.
- Contacts for all family medical providers, including physicians, dentists, pharmacies, veterinarians and specialists.
- The names and phone numbers of health, auto and homeowner's or renter's insurance companies, and policy numbers.

Family members should plan to report where they are, their condition, and whether they can travel. If you have pets, the report should include their location, condition, and who has custody of them.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has developed emergency planning templates. The one for parents contains self-explanatory fields for entering vital information.

The one for children, in addition to having fewer fields for the most basic information, has spaces for drawing maps that show emergency gathering locations and all exits in the home for use during fire emergencies.

FEMA also has a wallet-sized template. Every member of the household should have copies of the plan, which they can keep in for storage in wallets, purses, backpacks, and glove compartments.

Your family may never need to use the emergency communications plan. But, having one on hand can make dealing with an emergency easier for everyone by reducing stress and worry. ❖