

Insurance Dept. Recommends Reviewing Insurance Coverage on Summer Fun Items

COLUMBUS —The temperature is rising and the sun is shining. Before you put the boat on the lake or get the ATVs out of storage, Ohio Department of Insurance Director Mary Jo Hudson is recommending Ohioans to speak with their insurance agent to make sure they are properly protected.



“Nothing spoils summer fun like finding out you don’t have the proper coverage for your possessions after something happens,” said Director Hudson. “Contact your insurance agent to make sure your home, vehicles and property are properly insured for summertime activities.”

Use these tips to review your coverage to make sure you and your family are insured for the increased risks that come with outdoor activities:

Boats

Small boats may be covered by homeowners policy but coverage for liability risk is limited. Insurers generally provide liability insurance on small sailboats and powerboats with small motors. However, a boat of any significant size will be excluded from your homeowners policy for both property and liability coverage. If you own a larger boat, ask your insurance agent or company about a separate policy that covers physical damage to the boat and any liability that might result from its use.

Personal watercrafts, such as Jet Skis, will also likely require a separate insurance policy. Again, you might be able to purchase this policy from your homeowners insurer or you might wish to use an insurer that specializes in boat insurance. You might also want to consider purchasing an umbrella policy to provide liability coverage above what your boat policy offers. Talk with your insurance agent or company about your options.

Questions to ask your agent before putting your boat or personal watercraft in the water:

- Does my policy have adequate liability limits?
- Are there special discounts for taking safety courses?
- Who does the policy cover to operate the boat or personal watercraft?
- Is the liability of towing skiers or persons on tubes covered by my policy?

Motorcycles and Scooters

Motorcycles are not covered by your standard auto insurance policy. You must have a separate policy that covers liability and, depending on the value of the motorcycle, physical damage coverage. If your motorcycle is financed, your lender will likely require you carry physical damage coverage.

The premium for your policy will partially depend on the motorcycle's engine size, its age and how often you ride. Be sure to ask your insurance agent or company if they offer discounts to members of associations or for taking safety courses.

Insurance companies have separate requirements for helmets. Be sure you understand Ohio helmet laws and that you have read your policy to see what it requires when it comes to wearing a helmet.

If you carry seasonal coverage on your motorcycle, which allows you to eliminate liability and perhaps collision coverage in the winter months if you do not ride, check to make sure your policy is up to date and that you have a current insurance card before riding this summer.

Scooters for yourself or your teenager also must have insurance. Talk with your insurance agent or company about who will be operating the scooter. Some insurance companies might offer a discount for safety courses.

ATVs

All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) are also not covered by standard automobile insurance policies; however, your homeowners policy might partially cover your liability on an ATV. Ask your insurance agent or company if this coverage is enough to protect you and your family. You might want to consider a separate ATV policy to make sure you are properly insured.

Questions to ask your insurance agent or company:

- Are there age restrictions on who may operate the ATV?
- Does my policy cover friends or family who are operating the ATV?
- Is there a discount for taking an operator safety course or for riding with a helmet?

Pools and Trampolines

Be sure to ask if your homeowners policy specifies any safety measures you are required to install, such as a certain height fence or locked gate.

Some companies might not insure your property if you have a trampoline, or they might have policy exclusions for any liability related to trampoline injuries. Be sure to understand exactly what damages and injuries your homeowners policy covers before you allow anyone on the trampoline.

An insurance company can deny coverage or cancel your policy if you do not follow the policy safety guidelines or do not inform the company when you install a pool or purchase a trampoline. Check with your insurance agent or company for rates and safety guidelines before making your purchase.

You may also want to consider purchasing an umbrella policy to provide liability coverage above what your homeowners policy offers.

Fireworks

Lighting off fireworks is illegal in Ohio. While you may not have any insurance coverage if you or a family member injures someone or damages property due to the use of illegal fireworks, you are protected for damage to your property if somebody else other than a family member is responsible for the damage.

More Information

Ohioans with questions concerning insurance are encouraged to call the Department's consumer services hotline, 1-800-686-1526. Additional tips and more information about insurance, including a link to the Insure U web site, can be found at the Department's web site, www.insurance.ohio.gov.

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