

Distracted Driving on the Rise

Distracted driving increased during the pandemic, according to a study by Travelers, with a growing number of people reporting using their mobile devices while driving. A large contributor is an increasing need to be constantly connected at work with 1 in 4 respondents saying that they answer work-related calls and texts while behind the wheel.

Pre-pandemic, only 19% of drivers reported using a mobile device for texting or emailing while driving. This year, that jumped to 26%. Slightly more than 1 in 10 reported checking social media while driving before the pandemic, a number that has increased to 1 in 5. And 19% have taken videos and pictures behind the wheel during the pandemic, up from 10% pre-pandemic.

With such dangerous driving behaviors, 2020 motor vehicle deaths were up 8% from 2019, which is the highest percentage increase in 13 years, according to the National Safety Council.

INTRODUCING THE 2020 INSURANCE FRAUD HALL OF SHAME

The year 2020 would not be complete without a recap of America's worst insurance fraud crimes. Homeless New Yorkers targeted in a \$31.7 million slip-and-fall ring. A sober-home mogul trades sex for drugs. A billionaire insurance mogul attempts to bribe a state insurance commissioner. These are among the newest members of the Insurance Fraud Hall of Shame inducted by the Coalition Against Insurance Fraud:

Slip ring stumbles. Bryan Duncan hired hundreds of homeless people to fake **\$31.7** million of painful injuries from set-up falls against businesses in New York City. Many had unneeded surgery. Federal sentence: 80 months.

Fired up, watered down. Dozens of old houses were burned and flooded in a \$1.7 million scheme by Patrick Wayne Bronnon's ring in Texas. They also insured fake possessions. State sentence: 78 years in state prison, though Bronnon died in July 2020.

Stolen Valor. Richard Meleski claimed he was a Navy SF41 wounded in Beirut, Lebanon. Yet the Pennsylvania man never served in the military. He invented the heroics to steal more than \$300,000 of federal disability money. Federal sentence: pending.

Food folly. Tainted food sickened Jacqueline Masse, the New Hampshire woman said. She filed nearly **\$400,000** of false claims against innocent restaurants and grocery stores. Masse also stole her children's identities for claims. State sentence: 15 months.

Sex, drugs, betrayal. Christopher Bathum traded sex for drugs to addicted women at his rehab facilities in a \$175-million insurance scam. The Los Angeles-area man also gave patients drugs so they'd relapse for more expensive rehab. State sentence: 52 years.

Skin-deep scam. Dr. David Morrow billed uninsured beauty surgery as medically essential in a \$50-million scam. The Beverly Hills surgeon charged tummy tucks as hernia repairs, and nose work as fixing deviated septums. Federal sentence: **20 years.**

Rapper fraud racket. Would-be Chicago rapper Qaw'mane Wilson had his mother shot for life insurance and her savings to flaunt money and build up his fan base. State sentence: 99 years.



GREAT QUOTES

"Failure is only the opportunity to more intelligently begin again." —Henry Ford

"Freedom requires that we learn and put into practice the 3 R's-Respect, Responsibility, and Restraint." —Fr. Brian Cavanaugh, TOR

"To be trusted is a greater compliment than to be loved." —George MacDonald

"People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing; that's why we recommend it daily." --Zig Ziglar

"You are positive, creative and happy to the degree to which you eliminate negative emotions from your life." -Brian Tracy

DON'T BE FOOLED!

I'm passionate about selling my clients the coverage and protection they need, or at least help them make good decisions about what they want to self-insure. I have significant concerns that consumers are now, and soon will be getting even less advice than ever. The tricks—and these are tricks—carriers and agents use that result in insureds buying less coverage are too successful for them to stop using. People who care can at least take this opportunity to create a niche that rewards their efforts and protects those clients who will work with them, collaboratively, to build strong insurance programs.

The tricks can be generalized in these categories: Price, DIY and Complexity.

Regarding Only The Price Side:

"You can save \$X" or "The average new buyer saves \$X" I see this all the time.

1. The former does not make any claims the savings refer to apples to apples coverage. For example, in one case the client was told, "You have the same coverage as before, 25/50/25, adds up to \$100,000—just what you have now, but you'll pay less." The insured had \$100,000 Combined Single Limit. The two are not even close to the same, so the 25/50/25 quote should save the insured a lot of money! Insureds see these ads and they automatically presume the coverages are the same and usually don't know enough to easily identify when the coverages are not the same. In this case our policy would have paid \$100,000 if one person was suing you. But the new coverage would only have paid \$25,000. That's quite a difference for "same" coverage!

2. The second claim is a case of serious statistical misapplication. It only applies to the consumers who buy from that carrier. 10,000 people could have gotten HIGHER quotes while 10 obtained materially lower quotes and the statement, "The average person SWITCHING saved \$X" would be categorically correct, and rather pointless. By leaving out the other 9,990 people who did not switch from the equation, reality is distorted.

Just had a client that called and stated that Allstate had quoted them "exact same coverage" but was much less on their home insurance. Having just replaced an Allstate policy where we were almost \$1,000 less, I doubted her "exact same coverage" and asked her to bring me the quote. It was completely full of holes. Higher deductible, the old HO3 instead of her HO5, plus much of the wording in their contract was weak compared to our policy she had with Auto-Owners.

I get these "quotes" like you do I'm sure. Where they quote more coverage on the home than you have or need but the premiums are way lower. Like \$450 for \$300,000 on the home. This is the classic bait and switch. If you asked them to actually write that policy for you and they did, they would be in deep trouble at claims time.

Love Liberty Mutuals ads on TV. "We give you only what you need!" How do they know what you'll ever need? They don't. It's done over the phone without even a drive by from the agent.

If you get a much lower price from someone, call us. We're not going to lie to keep your business. We have more than one company and can quote them if needed. But, to get the lowest rate you'd have to change every year. And, after awhile, you'd have a tough time getting a company to take you at all. A question on every application is how long were you with your previous company or name the companies you've been with the past 5 years.

If you even begin to question a quote call us. If it's better we'll tell you. Almost always, if it's a lot lower, it has less coverage for you.

DO I NEED AN UMBRELLA POLICY?

Well, do you drive a car? Anyone who drives needs an umbrella policy. More than 80% of umbrella claims are the result of an auto accident. And, it doesn't have to be drunk driving or going the wrong way on a one way street either. It could be backing into an elderly person or toddler in a parking lot or causing an 11 car pileup on the interstate. There are many ways that you can very rapidly get to \$250,000 or \$500,000 or \$1,000,000 of bodily injury claims off the auto policy and would need the umbrella.

If you have children, whether at home or at school, you are a good candidate for an umbrella.

You see headlines frequently for fraternity hazing incidents or college parties or kids bullying another child; the different types of umbrella claims that I've seen over the years involving kids are pretty scary. People who use social media can be sued for internet libel. You can be sued for writing an opinion, even if what you said was completely factually accurate. Knowing that young people today are very active online and stressing their opinions, the risks there are pretty high.

You should consider an umbrella policy if you volunteer at charities even. A lot of people today are very socially minded and unfortunately it exposes them to a lot of opportunities for accusations of wrongdoing.

Today's society is increasingly litigious. Jury awards for injuries over a million dollars are no longer even noteworthy. People today are very socially conscious. They feel an obligation to make sure that people who have been injured are financially compensated, regardless of issues of negligence. In their mind, the insurance company has deep pockets, this person has been hurt and we should provide funds for this person's injury.

To compound that, there are a lot of private injury attorneys spending around a billion dollars a year advertising their services.

Finally, I carry a personal and a business umbrella! I know we have some clients driving around with limits of liability that are way too low because they want cheap rates. But after they get sued for more than they have coverage, they will come back to me for coverage because "You never spoke with me about an umbrella so you failed your fiduciary responsibility to explain coverage options to me." Plus, I am telling you about an Umbrella right now!

Call for a quote today. The cost, compared to the not having one at claim time is very, very small.

Call us at 515-964-0637

P.S. You should really consider adding Uninsured and Underinsured Motorist coverage to your umbrella also. Yes, it in-

SOLD MY CAR SO I CAN CANCEL COVERAGE FOR IT NOW. RIGHT??

Maybe!

To be safe always have the buyer give you their auto insurance agent's phone number and call them to see if it is covered before you remove coverage from your own policy. Or, until you can prove the title has been changed! Just because you signed the title over to the buyer, they may not have completed the transfer, and you could still be liable as the "owner/registrant" of the vehicle in some cases.

WILL YOU HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO LAST THROUGHOUT YOUR RETIREMENT?

We can answer that question for you in about 20-25 minutes of your time. Don't guess. Call us now to schedule a time. Takes about 15-20 minutes to input your data and the answer instantly appears in a very short read printout and on the screen. There are many financial planners out there but you would have to spend three or four hours and about three or four appointments to get the same answer we can show you in 20-25 minutes of your time. **Call 515-964-0637 now.** Lew

RETIREMENT RISKS

After several months of relative calm, Americans are increasingly worried about retirement risks related to market volatility, inflation and COVID-19, according to a new study from Allianz Life Insurance Company of North America.

As the pandemic continues to linger and the U.S. economy proves volatile and unpredictable, one-third of Americans are nervous about the safety of their retirement savings. As a result, two-thirds say they are keeping some money out of the market to protect it from loss.

Worries over inflation are also high—with many believing it will get worse and affect retirement plans. The study found that 78% of Americans expect inflation to get worse over the next year.

Specific to retirement planning, 72% say they are concerned that the rising cost of living will impact their retirement plans, while 70% say they are worried they will be unable to afford the lifestyle they want in retirement. At the same time, 57% say they have a financial plan in place to help address the rising cost of living.

If you are concerned about your retirement, give us a call to run a quick report for you to see if you will have enough money to retire the way you want. This can be done in a short time and you can physically see how yours will look when it is done. And, if the report shows you will be short of your goal, we are able to suggest ways to increase your guaranteed retirement income without taking any more risk.

Call us today to set up a quick appointment. Don't go into retirement blind!!

THE COLD WEATHER IS FINALLY HERE

As you seek to prevent risk related to winter weather, you should keep in mind that service companies continue to struggle to find enough employees to properly support the amount of work coming in to them at this time.

While many other industries that are struggling with staffing shortages can change their hours of operation, "companies that conduct home repair and risk mitigation on properties have no alternative other than to schedule jobs weeks or even months out." This means you the homeowner, need to be prepared to wait-or take steps to prevent damage in advance.

One area of risk prevention this may particularly impact is homes with fireplaces and/or woodburning stoves, which should be cleaned regularly by a professional. However, it might be difficult to schedule maintenance in a timely manner due to lack of help during these times when help is hard to find.

Other areas that should be looked at include HVAC filters which should be changed at least once a year. We replace ours every six months just to be sure. Don't place space heaters near drapes or other flammable materials and be sure the electric cords aren't frayed either.

Slips and falls are always a winter weather concern, and keeping stairs, railings and pathways free of snow and ice is essential. If you can't do this yourself, seek out a teen who would be willing to do it for a little extra cash.

Ice dams are a common cause of damage to homes and are caused by improper ventilation in your attic. This can cause damage to your insulation, walls and ceilings. Ben Franklin said it right back in 1736 when he stated that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Or "it's better to be safe than sorry!"

HOME INSURANCE PRICES GOING UP!

Due to the many, large losses in the Derecho and the large increase in rebuilding materials costs, rates are taking a jump. Coverage for your home is going up about 20%. So if you were at \$200,000 it will be going to \$240,000. Some companies won't even write a new home policy in Polk and other counties in Iowa at this time, at any price. The only good news in this is if you are selling your home, it's more valuable than ever. But then you have to buy one too!

ANOTHER WARNING ABOUT YOUR LIABILITY INSURANCE LIMITS

When you get our "Risk Reduction" letter each year, take a look at your liability limits. We tell you what they are now and ask you if you think that is enough. We want you to be certain you are carrying the proper limits for your situation. Getting sued for \$500,000 when you only have \$100,000 per person is not what you want to happen I'm sure. To increase this limit does not really cost that much. And, if you need an Umbrella policy, you MUST have the higher underlying auto and home liability limits.

There are many reasons to have higher limits. If you have kids at home you may get sued for something they put on Facebook for example. We've had liability claims of \$1,500,000. Your \$100,000 would look pretty foolish when faced with this loss. Never had a client, when faced with this kind of loss, say they wished they had never bought that Umbrella!!

ANOTHER WARNING ON YOUR AUTO INSURANCE

We are running into situations where our client, in order to earn a little more income, is using his/her vehicle to deliver groceries or meals or chauffeuring strangers such as the Amish. A personal auto policy will NOT cover you while doing this.

Actually, your home insurance would also not protect you while renting it for getaways.

These are "business-like" situations and are not covered under a "personal auto or home" policy.

This is why we do these newsletters. We want our clients to know the limitations in these policies. That's why we believe you are "worth more than the 15 minutes" some companies offer you a quote for. Most of these agents haven't a clue to what we are telling you each time we do a newsletter. And since they never even meet you, they really don't care what happens as long as they make a sale and earn a paycheck.

We have people upset with us when we ask them questions trying to determine what their risk really is so we can cover it. One told me recently they just wanted the lowest premium and they wanted it now! They only wanted what they needed. I asked them how they knew what they needed when many agents don't even know what they are selling. They hung up on me!

We are committed to educating our clients as much as possible. We hate it almost as much as you would when a claim could have been covered by insurance but wasn't because we were not aware of the particular risk.

Please call us with any questions you may have about any situation. We will help you.



AGING CARS

The average age of vehicles on the road is the oldest in nearly 20 years. U.S. drivers have been holding onto their cars and trucks for longer than ever, according to data from HIS Markit Ltd.

As of January 2020, the average age of cars, sport utility vehicles and pickup trucks rose to 11.9 years. This is up from 11.8 years the previous year.

Data for the period since the coronavirus pandemic hit the global economy are not final, but the sharp slowdown in vehicle sales is likely to push the average age of vehicles on U.S. roads over 12 years.

Also, If you are storing a car like the photo, consider placing plastic sheeting under it. This keeps moisture from coming up and condensing on the bottom of your vehicle and taking hold...thus causing your vehicle to rust easier.

DOWN TO THE WIRE

North Carolina billionaire Greg Lindberg made his fortune through dubious business practices, weaving a web of corruption that led him to attempt to bribe the state's insurance commissioner. His illegal gambit was busted by an FBI wire.

Capitalizing on the large amount of assets insurance companies hold, Lindberg began buying insurance companies in 2014. He then used those companies' existing assets to provide loans to other companies he controlled totaling an estimated \$2 billion. Much of these "loans" were used to expand his personal holdings.

Lindberg's first insurance acquisition was an Alabama burial policy insurer. But Lindberg could not loan out the volume of assets he intended under Alabama state law. Not to be discouraged, Lindberg relocated the business and its assets to North Carolina. He then established a relationship with the state's then-insurance commissioner Wayne Goodwin, striking a deal to lend 40% of his burial policy assets to affiliated business ventures, rather than the customary 10%.

The special arrangement rapidly expanded Lindberg's acquisition efforts. However, Lindberg had already begun walking a fine tightrope. He often exceeded the 40% arrangement he had with the Department of Insurance. Regulators began to worry that the businesses he was acquiring couldn't meet their claim obligations.

When Goodwin was voted out of office, Lindberg approached his successor, Mike Causey.

Lindberg pitched the new insurance commissioner on a plan to replace Causey's deputy, Jackie Obusek who was attempting to rein in Lindberg's enterprise with a much more cooperative associate of Lindberg's.

Causey contacted federal law enforcement and agreed to wear a wire for the FBI to record Lindberg's bribery attempts. During the operation, Lindberg donated \$250,000 to the North Carolina Republican Party to be steered toward Causey.

A federal grand jury indicted Lindberg and co-conspirators in March 2019. That same year, Gov. Roy Cooper signed what is commonly known as the "Lindberg bill," which formally capped asset loans to affiliated businesses at 10%.

Lindberg went to trial in February 2020 and was convicted by a jury on conspiracy to commit honest services wire fraud and bribery.

DID YOU GET AN EXPENSIVE CHRISTMAS GIFT?

If you did and it's jewelry, don't forget to add the item(s) to your home policy on a Jewelry Floater. This gives you better coverage, and if you insure it properly, you will always get that amount at the time of loss, with no depreciation. Under the newer HO5, loss of a piece of jewelry may be covered where it isn't under the older HO3 form, but you still have your policy deductible to pay first and most are \$1,000 or more today.

Placing the item(s) of jewelry on a floater can give you zero deductible at time of loss.

AND, if you run a business out of your home, be certain we are covering it for you as the basic policy excludes business pursuits.

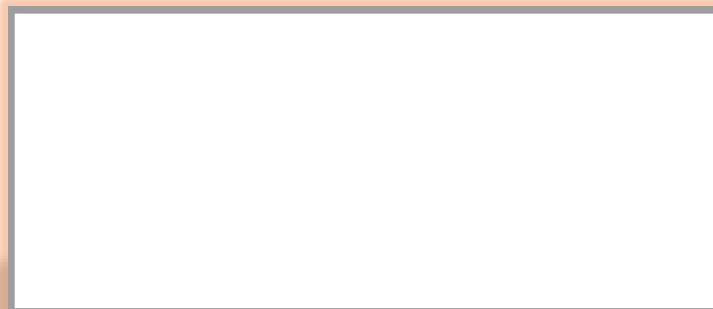
Since craft shows and other seasonal venues are decreasing in size due to Covid and going online sales you may also have much more inventory on hand than before so you'll want to take a look at that to see if you have enough coverage.

Gift cards are popular this time of year also. The home policy treats them the same as cash and most only cover up to \$200 aggregate. So you may want to increase that limit also.

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Our \$50 Restaurant Gift cards for this time go to **Walter L. Luloff and Karen Dyer! THANK YOU BOTH!**

Your cards are on the way to you. In fact you should already have them by the time I get this Newsletter in the mail. Enjoy and **THANK YOU** both for your trust in us as your own agent.

We thank you for coming with us and for referring your friends, neighbors and families to us also. That's the finest compliment we can receive from you.

Also, thank you for responding to our surveys when we send them to you. You will only receive these **if we have your email address** so please be sure to call us with yours, or if yours has changed since we originally wrote your policies.

Our retention of our clients is at 96% and stays about that way all the time so we are very happy that you must be happy with us too. However, we know we aren't perfect so don't be afraid to tell us that when you answer the survey form. We **WANT** to know how we are doing so we may improve in areas where needed. But, be nice please!! Thank you all!



Vol 1, 2022

TRUSTED AGENT

In business since 1966!

Over 100 years of total experience!

A Newsletter For Friends and Clients of Doubleday Insurance

DON'T ALWAYS TRUST A TRUST!

I keep getting questions about trusts. Attorneys keep recommending you place property in a trust but don't mention you need to call your agent and get the trust covered too.

Once you place your auto or home in a trust, your policy that's usually in your personal name(s) will no longer cover you because you, as an individual, no longer own the property.

This is an easy fix. Just call us and add the Trust as an Additional Insured.

And, while you're at it, request a quote for at least a \$1 million Umbrella. The cost is low compared to the risk you face.

People believe that lawsuits can't take more than you have in the bank but the truth is that once you are found liable, wages can be garnished well into the future .

Don't take a chance, get an Umbrella with limits to cover your bank account and future income you might receive.

TO CONTACT US:

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WELCOME to 2022!

Sure hope it's better than 2021. I'm praying for the Covid to be gone forever. I can't imagine any person or country turning a virus like that loose. No matter how wicked they may be.

I'm asking that all of you remain healthy along with your entire family.

He is not a doctor but, a Pastor I know told me to take 2 aspirins in the morning and 2 in the evening for 5 days when I got Covid the first time. I did that and was over it in the 5 days. Did the same a year later with the same results. I've given this direction to quite a few people this past year and all have reported healing in the same time frame.

Don't know if it will work for you but I would certainly try it. Aspirin is cheap. Of course if you are allergic to aspirin, don't do it.

WHOS NAME IS ON YOUR INSURANCE POLICY?

If your home is in both of your names your insurance policy should be also. And if one of you is NOT on the title, it should be in almost every case. Check with your attorney if you have questions. We have had two situations this past year where only the husband was on the title and insurance policy and he passed away. There was a claim against their Home policy and payment was made to only the husband and the mortgage company and the mortgage company would not sign off on the check to the wife since her name did not appear. It has been a financial disaster for the wife so far.

And while I'm on this subject, please consider your life insurance coverage or lack of. If you are struggling to make ends meet now with both of you, just imagine how your spouse would be able to go on without that income you earn. I don't care if you buy it from another agent but please buy it from someone. Term insurance is at its lowest cost ever right now. Much cheaper than most people think. Don't leave your spouse and kids without any means of replacing your income. Life insurance isn't expensive but life is!

Having the proper name on an auto policy may be even more important. There is a huge difference in your protection between "Named Insured" and "Other Insured" if they aren't Named on your policy. Especially if they are on the title of a vehicle. If you want more details on why, give me a call at our office. Lew