

July 2004

“THE CIRCLE OF SAFETY”

CONSUMER AWARENESS ADVISOR

News and Tips to Make Your Life Easier, Safer and Happier!

For Friends and Clients of PDCM Insurance

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WARNING: E-mail Scammers Pose As Credit Card Company To Get Your Personal Information

Identity theft is big business. When criminals have your social security number and other personal info they can get credit, obtain loans, get a driver's license, get a job and do all kinds of things in your name.

Of course, they won't pay the bills they incur in your name and it will all go on your credit record! Talk about a huge mess to clean up.

With e-mail, these criminals are becoming more sophisticated. Beware of e-mails that appear to be coming from a credit card company you already do business with. These e-mails are very professional looking and could fool you.

They usually state that it's time for your records to be updated and ask you to provide your name, address, social security number, etc. And they threaten that your card will be canceled if you don't reply.

Don't fall for it! Never give your personal information in reply to an e-mail. Always check with your credit card company to make sure it's really them who need the updated information. And make sure you call the customer service number on the back of your card or on your bill, NOT the number given to you in the e-mail.

Before And After A Home Claim – What To Do To Get All The Money You Have Coming

There's no point in worrying about it all the time, but we have to face facts. Sometimes stuff happens to our homes. Sometimes it's little stuff like roof damage from a bad thunderstorm. Sometimes it's worse – like major fire damage.

Regardless of the circumstances there are a few simple things you should do to help get your claim settled fast and to help you get all the money you have coming to you.

Before The Claim

A little preparation can be a big help in getting your claim settled fast. Here are a couple things you should do.

- ✓ Understand what your policy covers, what it doesn't cover and what that means to you.

No insurance policy covers “everything”. The same is true with homeowners. For example, ground water that enters your home is not covered by a standard home policy. There are many other exclusions.

Insurance policies have loss limits, too. If the value of your property exceeds these limits, you may receive less than the cost to replace it.

You can buy back many exclusions with other policies or with endorsements to your home policy. You can also increase your loss limits in most cases, as needed. Read your policy and/or review it with us to plug any gaps in your protection.

- ✓ Document your possessions ... especially the expensive stuff.

When you have a loss, the insurance company needs to know what was lost or destroyed. You'd be surprised how much stuff you have that you could easily forget about after a disaster.

Pictures or videos are a great way to document your possessions. You should shoot a new video every year or so. With a video you can talk while shooting and describe important features of your property. **TIP:** Keep the video somewhere other than your home – like a safe deposit box at the bank.

Keep receipts, too, especially for expensive items, along with make, model and serial numbers. And keep these in your safe deposit box, too. These records do no good if they burn up in a fire.

After The Claim

- ✓ Report the loss promptly. You can either call our office or the 24-hour, toll-free claim reporting number of the insurance company.
- ✓ Take all steps necessary to prevent further damage. Unlike other products or services you buy, an insurance policy is a contract between you and the insurance company. One of your obligations is to prevent further damage after an incident.
- ✓ Take pictures and/or a video of the damage. This can be very helpful in getting your claim settled fast.
- ✓ Keep receipts and estimates. Your insurance company will pay for all kinds of things you may not be aware of. Keep receipts of every expense you incur related to your loss. You can then review them with your claims adjuster to see what's covered.
- ✓ Relatives and friends may have pictures of your home from parties and such. You can use these to help remember your property and for the claims adjuster.

As always, contact us with any questions or whenever you need any advice. That's why we're here.
