



March 2011

INSURANCE *Tips*

Free help with your insurance questions or complaints

Consumer Advocacy
Hotline

Toll-free
888-877-4894

Salem
503-947-7984

Email
cp.ins@state.or.us

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Salem, OR 97309-0405

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Half of all Americans do not have a home inventory of their possessions, according to a survey by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners. Of those who do have an inventory, 32 percent lacked pictures, 58 percent had no receipts, and 44 percent had not stored the inventory in a safe place outside the home. These tips for making an inventory will ease your claims process following a loss.

Making a home inventory

1. In listing possessions, include “celebration” purchases, such as jewelry and fine art. Think about family heirlooms, collections, and furniture as well as everyday items such as flat-screen TVs and custom guitars.
2. In addition to commonplace items (toys, DVDs, and clothing), do not forget items you may use only occasionally - holiday decorations, sports equipment, tools, and high-ticket items kept outside your home, such as landscape and swing sets.
3. Attach copies of original sales receipts, appraisal documents, or both. Note model and serial numbers.
4. Group your possessions into logical categories, such as by hobby or by room.
5. Photograph or videotape each item and document a brief description, including age, purchase price, and estimated current value.
6. Open drawers and closets to document what is inside.
7. Store your home inventory and related documents in a safe place you can get to easily. This might be a file online, a fireproof box, or a safe deposit box. You may want to share a copy with your insurance provider to make necessary updates to your coverage.
8. Update your inventory annually and any time you make a significant purchase.
9. Start by downloading the free myHOME Scr.APP.book app for iPhone users.

iPhone app features

The *myHOME Scr.APP.book* app lets users photograph and capture images, descriptions, bar codes, and serial numbers, and store them electronically. The app organizes information room by room and creates a backup file for email sharing.

Three factors set the *myHOME Scr.APP.book* app apart:

- ▶ It is **free** and includes features comparable to other apps costing up to \$4.99.
- ▶ It has more features than any other free home-inventory application on the market.
- ▶ It was created by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC).

Download the app at the iTunes App Store, or search “NAIC” in the app store from your iPhone.



Contents coverage

- ▶ Keeping a home inventory helps you stay on top of your family's changing insurance needs. People are often surprised by what is not covered under standard home insurance policies.
- ▶ On average, home contents are reimbursed only up to 70 percent of the home's insured value, for example, \$70,000 to replace the contents of a home insured for \$100,000. Ask your agent if your policy covers the costs of replacing your damaged or destroyed possessions or the actual cash value of the items. Actual cash value is replacement cost minus the depreciation in value that occurs over time.
- ▶ Standard policies impose limits on replacement coverage for certain types of personal property, such as jewelry, furniture, furs, firearms, and electronics. You can purchase separate insurance for such items, generally after an appraisal or other documentation of the value. Ask your agent about the best way to do this, depending on what you want to insure.
- ▶ Exactly how much you will be reimbursed for lost, stolen, or damaged personal property can vary greatly from policy to policy.



Coverage to fit life stages

- ▶ **Parents and families:** Many homeowner policies do not cover items such as laptops and TVs stolen from a college dorm room; if your son or daughter lives off-campus, you will need renter insurance. Most policies limit coverage for jewelry to \$500, which typically is not enough to replace a favorite pair of diamond earrings or a wedding ring. The standard limit to replace computers may not be enough for a busy household with multiple computers.
- ▶ **Young singles:** Consider purchasing renter insurance to cover your possessions, even if living with roommates — do not rely on the landlord's insurance. Items such as sports equipment or navigation systems stolen from your vehicle typically are not covered by auto insurance and must be filed against homeowner or renter insurance.
- ▶ **Military:** Most policies do not cover personal property taken with you while deployed to a war zone; if you store belongings left behind, you likely will need additional off-premises coverage.
- ▶ **Seniors:** If you start a home-based business after retiring, make sure to let your insurance company know. Business property is limited to a set amount unless you purchase a special rider. With most companies, \$2,500 is all the business property coverage you get.