



**J. KRUG & ASSOCIATES, INC.**

Relax. You're Covered.

INSURANCE BROKERS AND CONSULTANTS

1350 West Northwest Hwy., Suite 100 • Mount Prospect, IL 60056-2297  
t 847.392.8585 f 847.392.8137 • www.jkrug.com

## Personal Touch

Volume 19, No. 1

### Electric space heater safety

When the temperature drops outside, many people turn to electric space heaters as an economical way to heat a room without having to heat their entire home. Although space heaters can be a good secondary or supplemental heat source, it is important to follow safety precautions when using them.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC, 2010), more than 25,000 residential fires and 300 deaths each year are associated with the use of small space heaters. If you plan to use a portable space heater in your home this winter, be sure to follow these safety measures:

**Look for the UL label.** When purchasing a space heater, select one that has been tested by the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL), which is an independent product safety certification organization that has been testing products and writing standards for safety for more than a century. A UL label means the heater

has met strict safety standards and has the latest safety features.

**Read the operating instructions.** The manufacturer's instructions contain important information about how to use and maintain the heater properly. Read and follow them carefully.

**Examine the heater.** Inspect the heater, its electrical cord, and its plug before using it. Do not use a heater that is damaged in any way.

**Plug the heater directly into an outlet.** Do not plug the heater into a power strip or extension cord, which can overheat easily when used with a high-wattage appliance.

**Place the heater on a level, nonflammable surface, such as a tile floor.** Avoid putting the heater on a rug, table, or other elevated surface where it could be easily knocked over. When buying a new model, look for one that has automatic shut-off features.

**Do not use the heater in a bathroom.** Keep electric space

heaters away from all sources of water to prevent electrical shocks and electrocutions.

**Keep the heater out of the reach of children and pets.** Do not place space heaters in a high foot-traffic area, such as an entryway or hallway. Remind children not to poke their fingers or other objects through the heater's protective guard.

**Keep combustibles three feet away.** Place the heater at least three feet away from anything capable of igniting, such as drapery, furniture, rugs, clothing, and bedding.

**Never leave a heater unattended.** Turn the space heater off when you leave the room; unplug it before you go to bed. Never leave a heater running while you are asleep.

Although electric space heaters can take the chill out of a room, they are not meant to replace your home's primary heating system. Carefully following the manufacturer's instructions and the tips above can help keep you and your family safe and warm this winter.



## Simple steps to trim auto insurance costs

Most people recognize that auto insurance is a necessary and valuable means of protection.

However, increased repair costs, medical expenses, theft claims, and injury lawsuits are all adding to the cost of auto insurance. While we'll do everything we can to keep your auto insurance affordable, there are also ways *you* can control cost. Here are a few suggestions for cutting costs on your auto insurance:

**Raise your deductibles.** An easy way to reduce insurance premiums is to increase your deductibles. Higher deductibles mean you assume more of the risk for small claims. It is important, therefore, to set deductibles at limits you can comfortably afford, since you will have to pay for them out of pocket if an accident occurs.

**Drive defensively.** Traffic violations and accidents can raise your premiums.

So, be sure to maintain your car regularly, drive with care, and buckle up every time you're in a vehicle.

**Buy a low-profile car.** Driving a low-profile vehicle can reward you with lower rates. It costs less to insure autos that are less likely to be stolen and that are less expensive to repair. A higher safety rating may also reduce your premiums.

**Reduce physical damage insurance on older cars.** As your car ages, it may not be cost effective or necessary to continue carrying collision and/or comprehensive insurance as you did when it was new.

**Inquire about discounts.** Many insurers offer policy discounts for a variety of reasons. For instance, some companies offer a multi-policy discount if they insure both your house *and* your

car. Others may offer discounts for senior citizens, student drivers with good grades, or long-time customers.

**Update your policy, as necessary.** Changing circumstances may render you eligible for lower rates. If you move, get married, or no longer insure a young driver, be sure to update your insurance accordingly.

As rising costs for auto repairs, medical expenses, theft claims, and injury lawsuits drive up insurance premiums, it may seem as though the cost of insuring your vehicle is out of your control. However, by following the above tips, you can keep your costs to a minimum and ensure a "smooth ride" with the proper insurance coverage. Be sure to contact one of our qualified insurance professionals for further information about your individual circumstances.

## To rent and not to worry

Predicting when a fire, natural disaster, or burglary will occur is nearly impossible. Fortunately, *protecting* your personal belongings from disaster is not. If you are a renter, you need to be aware that your landlord's insurance will not cover damage to your personal possessions in these situations. Purchasing **renters insurance** is an inexpensive way for you to protect *your* belongings.

Renters insurance is similar to **homeowners insurance**, without the building coverage. The policy protects you against losses due to theft, fire, smoke, lightning, windstorms, vandalism, explosions, etc. Typical exclusions are mudslides, earthquakes, and floods. You can purchase coverage for such excluded circumstances separately at an additional cost.

Renters insurance offers coverage for the following:

**Personal Property:** Your clothing, jewelry, furniture, electronic equipment, appliances, bicycles, and any other items you bring into the rental unit are covered under renters insurance. Most policies have a coverage limit on particular items (e.g., jewelry or property used in business), but further coverage may be available at an additional cost. Also included under personal property is protection for your belongings when they are *away* from your rental unit. Note that there is a 10% limitation on this off-premises coverage if the loss occurs at another residence, such as your summer house.

**Loss of Use:** If severe damage to your rental unit prevents you from living in it, renters insurance generally

covers reasonable lodging, food, and related expenses until repairs have been completed.

**Personal Injury:** The personal liability coverage of the policy covers your responsibility if someone is injured while visiting your rental unit or arising out of your personal activities anywhere in the world.

Many tenants may be unaware of the importance of renters insurance or choose not to consider it until *after* a disaster occurs. Sometimes, they may assume their landlord's insurance will cover everything in the house. However, without renters insurance, your personal property would *not* be covered. If you are a renter, please call us for more information. We can help you find the coverage that best suits your needs.

## Your personal checklist

Just as you schedule an annual checkup for your health, it is important to review your insurance program annually. Although you may be unaware of it, your financial profile has probably changed over the past year. Therefore, adjustments to your insurance coverage may be needed. Please take the time to complete this checklist and mail it back to us in the enclosed envelope. Or, if you prefer to discuss your insurance needs in person, please call to schedule an appointment.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

### Check yes or no. If yes, on a separate piece of paper, please provide a brief description or explanation.

- Yes  No  1. Do you have collectibles such as antiques, fine art, stamps, coins, or baseball cards?
- Yes  No  2. Do you own valuable jewelry or furs?
- Yes  No  3. Do you own costly sporting equipment or firearms?
- Yes  No  4. Do you have expensive cameras or other photography equipment?
- Yes  No  5. Do you have any alarms installed in your home? If so, what types do you own and are they monitored?
- Yes  No  6. Do you keep more than \$200 cash in your home?
- Yes  No  7. Are your personal belongings insured for their full replacement value?
- Yes  No  8. Do you have children away at college?
- Yes  No  8a. If so, are their possessions insured?
- Yes  No  9. Do you own tools, equipment, or instruments used in your trade or profession?
- Yes  No  10. Do you operate an office or studio in your home?
- Yes  No  11. Do clients come into your home to make purchases/conduct business?
- Yes  No  12. Are you concerned with water backup through sewers or drains?
- Yes  No  13. Do you or your resident children baby-sit for a fee?
- Yes  No  14. Do you have a dog, cat, or other animal?
- Yes  No  15. Have you recently remodeled or redecorated your home?
- Yes  No  15a. Do you have plans to do so?
- Yes  No  16. If you lost your home, would your insurance cover your home's full replacement value?
- Yes  No  17. Are you interested in flood insurance for your home and personal property?
- Yes  No  18. Are you interested in earthquake coverage?
- Yes  No  19. Do you use a wood, coal, or pellet-burning stove?
- Yes  No  20. Do you have a swimming pool?
- Yes  No  21. Do you own rental or investment property?
- Yes  No  22. Do you own a vacation residence (e.g., condo, cabin, or trailer)?
- Yes  No  23. If you rent, do you carry renters insurance?
- Yes  No  24. If you own a condo, do you have condo insurance?

- Yes  No  25. Do you plan to purchase a new vehicle this year?
- Yes  No  25a. If so, would you like us to provide you with an insurance estimate for the vehicle(s) you are considering? Please include the year, make, model, and type of vehicle(s). \_\_\_\_\_
- Yes  No  26. Does our agency insure all your vehicles?
- Yes  No  27. Does your automobile policy list the names of all drivers living in your household?
- Yes  No  28. Do you routinely drive vehicles you do not own?
- Yes  No  29. Do you have non-factory installed equipment (like stereos, DVD players, navigation systems, etc.) in your car?
- Yes  No  29a. If so, would you like a quote on insuring those items?
- Yes  No  30. Do you own a vehicle with custom furnishings or equipment (e.g., a conversion van)?
- Yes  No  31. If your vehicle were damaged in an accident, would you need your current automobile policy to reimburse you for a rental car while yours is being repaired?
- Yes  No  32. Do you own any of the following recreational vehicles?
- Boat     Camper     All-Terrain Vehicle     Motor Home     Golf Cart
- Snowmobile     Motorcycle     Moped     Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Yes  No  33. Do you carry at least a \$1,000,000 umbrella liability policy?
- Yes  No  34. Do you own a business?
- Yes  No  34a. If so, do we currently insure it?
- Yes  No  35. Do you plan to start a business?
- Yes  No  36. Would you like a no-obligation review of your life insurance needs for your business (e.g., key person life insurance)?
- Yes  No  37. Do you have professional liability or malpractice coverage?
- Yes  No  38. Do you and your family have health insurance coverage?
- Yes  No  39. Do you have disability income insurance?
- Yes  No  39a. Do other family members need such coverage?
- Yes  No  40. Do you have life insurance that would pay your mortgage in the event of your death?
- Yes  No  41. Would you like a no-obligation review of your personal life insurance needs?
- Yes  No  42. Do you have long-term care coverage to protect your savings from expensive nursing home costs?
- Yes  No  43. Do you know anyone else who might benefit from a no-obligation insurance review from our agency?
- Please list: \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign and date this form and return it to us in the enclosed envelope.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like us to be able to communicate with you by email?

If so, please provide your email address. \_\_\_\_\_

Please call or stop by if you have any questions or concerns. We are happy to serve your needs. We appreciate your time and valuable input. Thank you!