

RSS TIPS & TRENDS

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WORKERS COMPENSATION BASICS

Work related injuries and occupational illnesses could rob your firm of experienced employees, reduce corporate profits and raise your workers compensation insurance premiums. Our agency can protect both your employees and your bottom line. How?

Quality Costs Less with Our Agency

We represent many insurance companies. We can search and procure just the right mix of proper coverage and a competitive price from a quality insurance carrier.

We are Small Business Experts

Our agency has been in business for many years. We have a proven track record with many of the small businesses in the community. We can provide referrals upon request.



Claims Management

The claim staffs in both our offices and your insurance carrier work in tandem to insure that compensation claims are handled professionally, speedily and with compassion.

Prevention and Loss Control

Our carriers offer safety information, loss analysis and professional advice to create a safer workplace and decrease your risks. In some situations, experienced loss control specialists also assist you with rehabilitation and light duty work programs to help injured employees return to work as quickly as possible.

All of these value-added services are designed to try to reduce claims and lower costs. If your firm does not have

their workers compensation insurance with our agency, call immediately for a no-obligation assessment. At the same time, we may be able to save your firm money by reviewing all of your business insurance needs.

DOES YOUR BUSINESS HAVE A COMMERCIAL UMBRELLA POLICY?

If you keep up with the business news, it is no surprise to see firms involved in litigation where judgments run into the millions of dollars. Could your firm be next? Accidents do happen. For example, one of your commercial drivers could be involved in a fatal vehicular mishap. Or, a customer could fall and be seriously injured on your premises. Your firm's best protection against the potential high damages (damages over your primary policy limits) associated with such an accident is a Commercial Umbrella insurance policy. Commercial Umbrella policies provide coverage in million dollar increments above the limits of select primary commercial business policies. A Commercial Umbrella may protect your firm in the event of a catastrophic loss. Some Umbrella policies include the cost of defending you in court as part of total policy limits. Here are some tips when considering the purchase of this important coverage:

- Seek professional advice on how to determine the proper amount of insurance to purchase. Note that the higher the limits in your underlying (primary) policy, the lower the cost of Umbrella coverage.
- Make sure your underlying (primary) policy and Umbrella policy have the same anniversary date. The time limits of these policies should be the same, particularly if 'claims made' coverage is in effect.

If you do not presently have a Commercial Umbrella policy for your business, call us immediately. We can provide you with a full explanation of potential benefits, in addition to a no-obligation quote.

THE BENEFITS OF LOSS PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Imbedding loss prevention strategies into your day to day business thinking can reduce potential damages from a disaster. Here are a few loss control recommendations, among the many available to businesses, to prevent and mitigate potential damages from a loss (especially fire):

- Train employees in fire safety, particularly those responsible for storage areas, housekeeping, maintenance and operations where open flames or flammable substances are used.

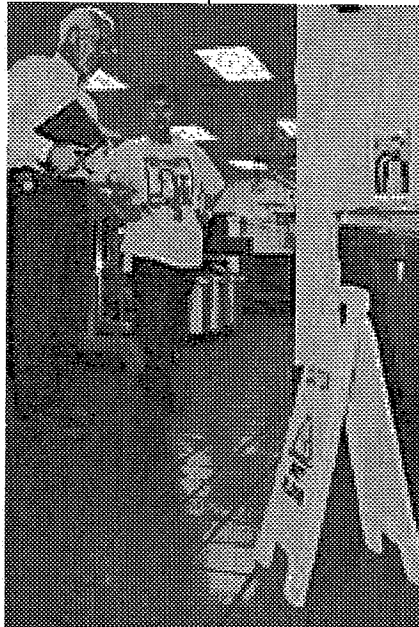
- Modernize the firm's electrical system, since faulty wiring causes a large percentage of commercial fires.

- Situate your business in a fire-resistant building – a structure made of non-combustible materials and firewalls. Also look for a fire

alarm system connected to the local fire department. Lastly, look for a sprinkler system that can suppress a fire before it spreads.

- Mitigate storm-related damage by making sure the building conforms to damage-resistant building codes.

Also, let's make sure your current policy has appropriate coverages and adequate limits in the event of a major disaster. Review your policy and contact our office with comments or concerns. Better yet, we'll be happy to visit your business location for a complete business property-casualty and life insurance review.





PREPARING COMPANY CARS FOR THE COLDER WEATHER

Proper maintenance of company owned vehicles can go a long way to preventing accidents and vehicle breakdowns, both of which can adversely impact employee productivity. With cooler weather approaching, here are some basic maintenance tips to keep your fleet on the go:

Coolant: Make sure it is clean and able to protect to at least -34 degrees fahrenheit. If it is time to change the antifreeze or it looks cloudy or rusty, this is the perfect time to have the maintenance completed. It may be prudent to replace the pressure cap too.

Battery: It should be tightly mounted to the vehicle and the connections secure and free of corrosion. If you notice symptoms like slow engine cranking or dimming lights when you come to a stop, have the battery and electrical system checked.

Lights: Critical for proper viewing of the road at night. And, for on-coming traffic and pedestrians to see your vehicle at a safe distance. A quick cleaning of bulb lenses and an inspection for bulbs needing replacement is a good start.

In case of a winter driving emergency, business vehicles should carry an ice scraper, snow brush, shovel, jumper cables, flares/reflective triangles, blanket and a traction enhancer (e.g. sand). Be prepared!

PROPERLY FUNDING A BUY-SELL AGREEMENT

A properly constructed buy-sell agreement is a key ingredient in a firm's succession plan.

It covers important contingencies, like the death of a key partner. If your firm does not have a buy-sell agreement in place, here are four sound reasons to implement one:

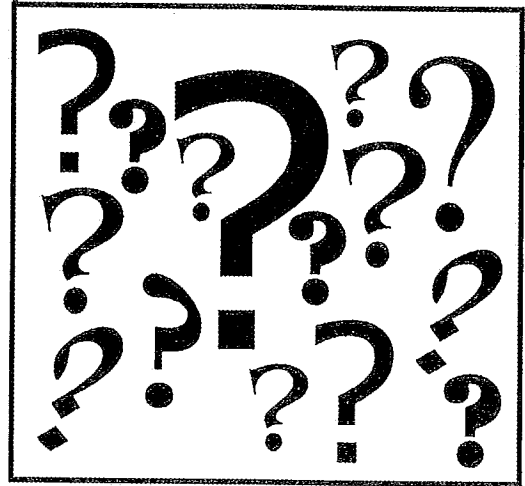
- ▶ Your business will continue to be properly managed in the future in the event a partner dies. A buy-sell agreement makes sure the partner's estate sells their business interest back to the firm or another partner.
- ▶ The estate will have liquidity when they convert the deceased partner's business interest to cash. This cash can be used to settle the estate and establish an income stream for beneficiaries.
- ▶ Both buyers and sellers will have a guarantee of a fair, reasonable price for the business interest. A purchase price will be established between partners while the business is a viable going-concern. Not when it is vulnerable to a lower price following a partner's death.
- ▶ If an outside appraisal is done to establish an accurate value, the firm will have used an accepted method of arriving at an acknowledged business value for federal estate tax purposes.

Equally important in the buy-sell discussion is how to fund it in the event of the death of a partner. We recommend that life insurance be used to provide immediate liquidity. Policies purchased to fund the agreement are usually listed as an addendum in the buy-sell agreement to codify their existence.

Contact us for buy-sell funding questions. One of our account executives or joint venture partners can visit privately with your team to discuss sensitive issues. As an independent agent, we have access to a sizable number of life insurance companies. We can utilize our carrier relationships to obtain a cost-effective solution for your buy-sell funding needs.

DOES MY BUSINESS POLICY EXCLUDE COVERAGE FOR CERTAIN TYPES OF LOSSES?

Property insurance policies usually exclude coverage for flood damage. To see if your office location is at risk, consult with your town and county building authorities for the precise location of flood zones. If a review of flood zone maps reveals your location is at risk, review your commercial policy immediately for flood coverage. Also review the policy for earthquake and terrorism coverage. These too are typically excluded. If a review shows these coverages absent, contact our offices immediately. One of our customer service representatives or sales staff can assess your coverage shortcomings and make recommendations to close the gaps.



The information, suggestions and techniques contained in this newsletter are offered as informational items only, and this agency makes no warranty of any kind, expressed or implied, as to the accuracy of the information or its fitness for a particular purpose.

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