



Auto Insurance has Changed in Ontario

If you are buying a new policy after September 1, 2010, you will receive the new Standard Auto Insurance Policy and have the option to increase your benefits as described to the left.

If your vehicle is already insured, you don't have to do anything until your next policy renewal date.

When your policy comes due for renewal, the new Standard Auto Insurance Policy will apply.

In the meantime, your insurance company

will automatically include the following limits/coverages:

- **\$100,000** limit for non-catastrophic injuries and **\$1,000,000** limit for catastrophic injuries for Medical and Rehabilitation expenses
- **\$72,000** limit for non-catastrophic injuries and **\$1,000,000** limit for catastrophic injuries for Attendant Care expenses
- Housekeeping and Home Maintenance Expenses up to **\$100** per week for all injuries
- Caregiver Expenses up to **\$250** per week for your first depend-

ant plus \$50 per week for each additional dependant for all injuries

If you prefer to move to the new Standard Auto Insurance Policy before your next renewal date, contact us. We'll explain your options and help you make an informed choice.



Social Media and Your Safety



"Hey gang, we're looking forward to Disney. Will send pics. See you in two weeks"

"Check out these fantastic whale pics off the coast of Alaska. Having a great time. Home Saturday!"

"Stuck in snowstorm at the airport, can't wait to get home"

You may have come across such posts

on **Facebook**, **LinkedIn**, **Twitter** or other social sites. With the increasing popularity of online social networking there is often a desire to **share personal itineraries** with friends. Please, whether you are posting from your mobile, your home, or even your store or office, take care and avoid sharing personal details or your whereabouts. Even if

your site does not contain your address, it may still be possible for the criminal element to piece it together from other sources.

Also, do make sure your privacy settings are properly established. Finally, make sure children are properly guided and monitored in the use of social networking practices as well.

Choosing the Right Contractor and Protecting your investment

Whether you're adding a new room or two, replacing an outdated kitchen or re-shingling the roof, home improvements can be challenging.

While some homeowners may have the time and skills to do the work themselves, most people will save time and money by hiring a professional. Finding the right contractor is very important. Choose wrongly, and your project can quickly turn into a nightmare of unmet schedules, cost over-runs, shabby workmanship and endless arguments.

Where do you start?

Ask for recommendations from family, friends, co-workers and neighbours. Building supply



companies, hardware stores and local builder/ renovator associations are also excellent options. Once you've got a list, contact your local office of the Better Business Bureau (BBB) to see if any complaints have been lodged against the firms you name. Then, call and check the references. Contractors with nothing to hide will not be offended with these inquiries.

Always deal with a professional

Protect your home — and yourself — by dealing with a reputable firm that operates in the

open market, legally and responsibly. Professional contractors and sub-contractors follow stringent guidelines to protect themselves and those they do business with. Professionals have all the necessary insurance. Their policies are up-to-date and they can provide you with a certificate of insurance. Your peace of mind is worth it.

Protect yourself

Although you may save money in the short term, uninsured contractors expose you to significant financial risk in the event of an injury or damage to your property. You could be liable if an employee of the contractor is hurt while working on your property or if they damage your home or your neighbour's property.

Before starting any renovation on your home, be sure to call us, your insurance professionals. You want to make sure your investment in your home is adequately insured under your policy from the get go, as renovations increase the value of your home, and materials values can quickly add up. Calling us first will ensure you have adequate coverage under your policy to protect the investment you're making in your home.

So, check your coverage with us. Then, once you've checked references, confirmed insurance and legal credentials, agreed on a price, schedules and materials, pick the contractor that you like and feel you can communicate with. It's a long process and you'll be glad you did.

Beware of contractors who:

- Quote prices before seeing the job;
- Knock on the door and claim they can give you a "special price" because they are doing work in your area;
- Offer discounts if they can, "use your home to advertise with".
- Demand unusually large

Beware of contractors who have a Post office box for an address.

deposits "to buy materials". Most reputable contractors maintain charge accounts with their suppliers;

- Will not supply you with a detailed written contract specifying what they say and what they will do;
- Have an address that is a post office box, telephone number, or answering service address.



Why Should you insure your home for more than you paid for it?

Many people mistakenly believe the amount they paid for their home is the same as its replacement cost. Unfortunately this is not always true.

Depending on where you live, the cost to rebuild a total loss home can be significantly more than its market value.

Some of the factors that drive up rebuilding/ reconstruction costs include:

Urgency - Property losses are not planned like a new construction project. When they do occur, there is a need to rebuild as soon as possible. This means the cost of labour, materials and other services required are often significantly higher.

Demolition and Debris

Removal - Major losses, require the removal of partially damaged property and debris. Costs in-

crease if there are environmental issues such as soil contamination.

Building Codes - New and more demanding building codes may need to be met when rebuilding or restoring a damaged home.



Worksite Access and Collateral Damage

At reconstruction sites there is typically less room because of debris, landscaping, fences and other buildings in the vicinity.

This causes more work and material storage to be done further away from the site, thus extending the project time and cost. In some cases, physical access requirements result in collateral damage to existing property on and beside the insured's property.

It's easy to see how the cost to rebuild your home could be much more than you paid for it.

Don't get caught in a situation where your loss exceeds your coverage limits. We can provide you with advice to help you determine the correct amount of insurance you need on your property. Contact us if you have any doubts.

Who are today's entrepreneurs?



According to Statistics Canada's Business Register:

- Retail trade, personal services, construction and professional services account for almost one half of all **small businesses**.
- The majority of these are "micro" businesses, such as small grocery and convenience stores, car dealerships, pharmacies, gas stations, clothing stores and appliance retailers.
- Most small businesses are built around the expertise of a single individual (or small group of individuals) with special knowledge in the following areas:
 - Technical or professional fields
 - Sales -local services
 - Construction trades
 - Farming
 - Trucking
- **Strength in numbers:** 98% of businesses in Canada are considered small and they employ 48% of the labour force.
- **Survival:** 96% of new businesses with 1 to 99 employees survive for one full year, 85% for three years and 70% for five years. As well, from 1997 to 2009, business bankruptcies in Canada fell more than 50% to about 6,700.
- **Women in business:** 46% of SMEs have some degree of female ownership; 16% of SMEs are majority-owned by women; 19% are owned in equal partnerships between male and female owners.