

Personal Auto Coverages – Part One

Most states have financial responsibility laws requiring you to carry proof that you are able to pay for any damage or injury you may cause while driving. Auto insurance is the way that most people comply with these laws. Typically, drivers are required to carry liability insurance at some minimal limit that varies by state. Liability coverages include the following:

Bodily Injury Liability - This covers injury that you may cause to other persons. The key is that it involves you being held financially responsible for injuries to other persons because of your driving, your ownership or other use of your vehicle. This coverage does not apply to any injuries you may suffer.

Property-Damage Liability - This handles damage that you may cause to another person's property. Again, the coverage only responds when you are financially responsible for such damage and it has to be related to your driving, use or ownership of a vehicle.

Uninsured Motorist Coverage – This coverage typically pays for injury you suffer from an accident caused by an uninsured driver. "Uninsured" usually refers to a person who has no insurance; a person who can't be located ("hit and run drivers"); a person who has insurance but their insurance company is insolvent; and other situations (defined by individual state laws).

Important: Payment under this coverage is controlled by the limits mandated by a state's financial responsibility or specific uninsured motorists law that often dictates what limit or limits must be sold. In some states, you may have an option to reject the coverage. Typically, the rejection must be in writing.

Underinsured Motorist Coverage - Similar to uninsured motorist, it pays for injuries caused by a driver who is inadequately insured. Example: You are seriously injured by someone carrying a bodily injury limit of \$25,000, but your injuries are nearly \$50,000. Your Underinsured Motorist Coverage limit is \$100,000. In this instance, your policy would pay the difference between \$25,000 and \$50,000.

Remember that this is merely an introduction to complex policy coverages. Be sure to contact your agent for detailed insurance information. Please see part two of this topic for information on other, typical auto policy coverages.

COPYRIGHT: Insurance Publishing Plus, Inc. 1998, 2000, 2003, 2008

All rights reserved. Production or distribution, whether in whole or in part, in any form of media or language; and no matter what country, state or territory, is expressly forbidden without written consent of Insurance Publishing Plus, Inc.