

Insurance Made Easy

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AGENCY



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5 Smart Home Automation Safety Tips

Smart home automation technology can offer homeowners peace of mind, convenience and efficiency, making it possible to automate systems and equipment ranging from home security to thermostats. With a smartphone acting as a control center, homeowners can remotely monitor video cameras, lock or unlock doors, turn on lights or automatically shut off the water to their home if a leak is detected. A recent study found that 69% of consumers will own a “smart” in-home device by 2019. As this technology gets integrated into more homes, the potential exists for a variety of home security vulnerabilities and concerns. With so many possibilities, there are a number of decisions to make. Following are some important home automation safety considerations.

1. Which Features Matter Most?

Many consumers seek out specific solutions (e.g., remotely turning on lights), which can lead to a number of gadgets that do not communicate. Choosing them on an individual basis could leave a homeowner with a dozen different apps and ways to control their home. There are two general types of home automation options: service provider solutions, which may come with monthly fees, and individual smart products, such as smart TVs and thermostats. Individual devices can be connected by a smart home automation hub, but it is important to select a hub that supports all of the devices that you wish to control.

2. Smart Sensors Protect the Home

Smart home devices can help homeowners manage their risk by enabling remote monitoring, alerts and control of a home’s systems that, if they were to fail and go unnoticed, could result in costly consequences.

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“When a Business Owner Retires, Should His or Her Insurance Retire Too?”

As a homebuilder, you spent your life making sure the work you did was safe and sufficient. Every year you purchased a commercial general liability (CGL) policy just in case. You made it many years with no claims and want to reward your good work with a much deserved and overdue retirement in where else? Florida.

Understanding that coverage under the CGL policies you have purchased is triggered by an “occurrence,” thus solidifying coverage “forever into the future,” you decide not to renew your policy. After all, who wants to keep paying for insurance on a business they no longer work in, especially knowing that if a claim were to arise from past work you’re covered anyway?

Basking in the sun next to your cellular phone, you are surprised to receive a call from a familiar voice from your past. It’s your insurance agent, informing you that a deck you installed on a home two years ago collapsed during a party. No one was killed, but several of the 35 folks on the deck were injured. A claim is being filed against you for the injuries and damage to the home resulting from the accident. Your agent then informs you that you have no insurance to cover the claim.

How could this be? After all, you always purchased “occurrence” CGL policies, including the policy in force two years ago when you built the deck. And since “occurrence” coverage goes forever into the future, why is there no insurance coverage for this recent accident?

The concept of an “occurrence” policy is one of the most misunderstood in liability insurance. It is true that an “occurrence” policy could provide coverage for accidents that happen well after the policy has been in force. However, the agreement in the policy says that for insurance to apply the “bodily injury” (in this case to the folks rudely introduced to the ground below the deck) and/or “property damage” must occur during the policy period.

To simplify, some refer to an “occurrence” policy as “boom” coverage. Specifically, when did it go “boom?” In this case, while the negligently constructed deck was installed two years earlier, the “boom” happened when the deck actually collapsed; this was the accident that caused the bodily injury and property damage. The only liability coverage that would cover this claim would be a policy that was in place when the deck actually went “boom.”

You can leave a business behind, but liability can follow you forever. Anyone in a business that provides products or services is susceptible to this fact. To address the risk of the unknown, insurance companies have developed insurance called discontinued operations liability. This policy will continue to provide liability insurance to you even after your interest in a business ceases. Call us about discontinued operations liability insurance and how it will help you enjoy the future even if the past gets in the way.

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- Smart thermostats can provide alerts if a home loses power or if the temperature in the home falls below or rises above a set threshold.
 - Water sensors can detect unwanted water in the home, alerting the owner to potential leaks near washing machines, dishwashers, water heaters and other areas.
 - Smoke, heat and carbon monoxide detectors that can interface with a central hub or mobile apps are available.
- This provides remote monitoring and control capabilities beyond the classic alarm system.

3. Smart Security Systems.

- Smart locks remotely control and monitor home entry.
- Smart light bulbs remotely control or program lights when you are away, in order to make a home appear occupied.
- Smart motion lights and exterior lighting allow for remote programming and monitoring.
- Connected security cameras monitor a home, while connected motion sensors can provide alerts.
- Smart doorbell alerts monitor activity at the front door and allows homeowners to remotely view and/or photograph visitors.
- Smart garage door delivers alerts when the door is left open and allows a homeowner to close it remotely.

4. Understand Privacy Policies

With the Internet of Things monitoring, sharing and potentially selling consumer data, some smart coffee makers, dishwashers and thermostats now come with privacy policies. Without strong privacy laws, it is up to the consumer to read agreements for each individual device. It is important to be comfortable with how data from smart home devices are used and shared.

5. Secure Your Network

It is also important to secure devices to help protect against hackers and other intrusions.

- Safety and security features can vary widely by manufacturer and by individual product. Before buying, evaluate each smart device for potential safety and security issues.
- Devices that are hard-wired to the Internet rather than those that rely on a Wi-Fi connection tend to be more secure. If a device is linked through a wireless network, activate all security features to protect against interception of signals and make sure the device issues an alert if it loses the connection.
- Remember that [passwords are the first line of defense](#) and be sure to create a strong password for each smart device. Be aware that many devices ship with the same default passwords, or none at all.

Sources:1 <https://acqutygroup.wordpress.com/2014/08/21/acquty-group-2014-internet-of-things-study/>

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Shout Out...

Fridays you may notice us in jeans...

each staff member in jeans has pitched in a couple dollars. After our office match, we are donating the proceeds to the

Brewer High School's NHS Backpack Program.



"Brewer High School's National Honor Society has created a Backpack Program to help fellow students who are food insecure.

The food items that the student takes home are in a nondescript backpack, so the student has no fears about their peers' opinions. Each backpack contains enough food for the weekend and/or school vacation.

Food, monetary, and nondescript backpack donations are always welcome!

We appreciate all the help from community members and we hope to extend this program to Brewer's Community School.

If you have any questions please contact Brewer High School or alibby@breweredu.org, THANK YOU!" reported by the NHS members.

We are proud to support our local youth and their great ideas!

Donations towards this student-led program may be sent to

Brewer High School,
Attn: Diane Caron
79 Parkway S, Brewer, ME 04412

Please label: NHS Backpack Program.

For more details, contact: Mr. Libby
alibby@breweredu.org