



Insurance Insights

newsletter Spring 2014



ODI
Ohio Department
of Insurance



Lt. Governor / Director
Mary Taylor

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Taylor Announces Study Finds 26,000 Insurance Jobs Available Between Now and 2020

The Ohio insurance industry needs 26,000 skilled workers by 2020, according to a new workforce study cited by Lieutenant Governor and Department of Insurance Director Mary Taylor at an *Insuring Ohio Futures* announcement at Nationwide Arena in Columbus on April 3. Insurance industry executives and key stakeholders from *Insuring Ohio Futures*, a career awareness program started by 13 Ohio-based insurance companies, joined Taylor for the announcement.

The arena's empty 18,500 seats each represented a vacant job, with retiring baby boomers responsible for 80 percent of the positions.

"A growing economy and strong demand from Ohio's insurance industry means 26,000 Ohioans have an opportunity to find a good paying job to support their family" said Taylor, who added that the workers needed to fill the looming job gap would fill Nationwide Arena and still require 7,500 more employees creating a 3-mile-long line stretching from the arena to the campus of The Ohio State University.

"The insurance industry is an economic pillar for our state and meeting this need is critical to its strength moving forward," added Taylor.

The announcement was based on a workforce study using Bureau of Labor Statistics data conducted by Bill LaFayette, owner of Regionomics, a Columbus-based economic and workforce strategy firm.

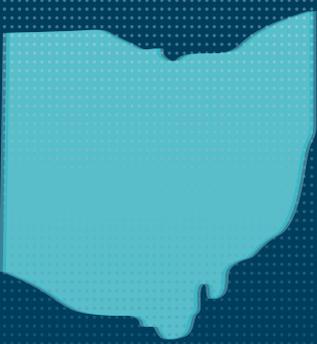
"The key message of this study is that we must ensure that enough workers are available for this crucial industry," said LaFayette. "If the workers are not attracted and trained, the industry will fail to grow to its potential, negatively impacting the overall Ohio economy. The workers themselves may not ever consider this opportunity without being properly introduced to it. That is why *Insuring Ohio Futures* is so important."

Insuring Ohio Futures, and InsuringOhioFutures.com, seek to educate students, career-changers and military veterans about the career opportunities that exist in the insurance industry. The study identifies the need in each of more than 100 individual occupations, including actuary, claims, IT, marketing, sales and more.

Taylor was joined by David Kaufman, president and CEO of The Motorists Insurance Group and board member of the IIRC, Chancellor John Carey of the Ohio Board of Regents, and Colonel Timothy Gorrell, director of the Ohio Department of Veterans Services.

Formed in 2012 after Governor John Kasich challenged the industry to develop a long-term strategy to combat the talent shortage, the IIRC has overseen the building of a public-private coalition consisting of insurance companies, insurance trade associations, institutions of higher learning and public officials all focused on attracting new talent to Ohio's insurance industry.





Taylor Announces Study Finds 26,000 Insurance Jobs Available Between Now and 2020 ... Cont'd.

"This awareness program has been a critical step toward addressing the talent gap," said Kaufman. "With a need of 26,000 workers, *Insuring Ohio Futures* will continue to serve as a catalyst to attract talent to the industry. The website, InsuringOhioFutures.com, is a tremendous resource for anyone who wants to learn more and is considering a career in insurance."

The Department's savings and recovery figure includes a record \$16.4 million

The Ohio insurance industry ranks seventh in the nation with more than 95,000 employees and an annual contribution of \$17.4 billion to the state's GDP. However, prior to the launch of the *Insuring Ohio Futures* program, not a single Ohio college or university offered a risk management and insurance (RMI) degree program.

IIIRC member companies have engaged schools around Ohio, helping to craft program curriculum to meet industry needs, offering critical resources such as lecturers with industry experience, and helping raise awareness of the launch of these new RMI degree programs. Currently, Kent State University, Franklin University and the University of Cincinnati offer bachelor's degree programs related to insurance. New programs are expected to launch this year at Ohio Northern University and Ohio Dominican University, with Bowling Green State University likely to add programming in 2015.

"Preparing students for the workforce is one of the key missions of Governor Kasich and the Board of Regents," said Chancellor Carey. "In the year since I became Chancellor, we have taken many steps to ensure that students are getting an education that will prepare them not only for a job, but also for a career."

"Collaboration is key to making Ohio a strong player in a global economy, and I am pleased to see the collaboration taking place between our insurance companies and our institutions of higher education. This creative approach to meeting the industry need for jobs is making Ohio the topic of conversation across the country."

Military Veterans Will Play a Key Role in Filling the 26,000 Jobs

With 26,000 jobs to fill, the insurance industry will need to attract workers from many sources. While students and career-change professionals are prime sources of talent, Ohio insurance leaders agree that military veterans offer skills transferable to the insurance industry. With mission-oriented and value-based training, veterans transition well into the insurance sector.

"The *Insuring Ohio Futures* program is a great example of how an industry and its partners in higher education and state government can engage veterans and raise awareness of career opportunities," said Director Gorrell. "The transition to the civilian workforce can be a challenge for veterans as they leave active duty. The unemployment rate among young veterans is almost always higher than the national average, but knowing that there are 26,000 insurance jobs provides an opportunity for our well trained military veterans to make a difference for Ohio-based companies."





OSHIIP's Statewide "Welcome to Medicare" Events Underway

The Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information Program (OSHIIP) is holding a total of 19 "Welcome to Medicare" events across Ohio in April and May. The events will help consumers and their families understand the basics of Medicare.

"In 2013, the Department's OSHIIP program helped Ohioans save more than \$16 million," Lieutenant Governor and Department of Insurance Director Mary Taylor said. "With events scheduled in every region of the state this spring, I encourage Ohioans who recently enrolled in Medicare or those becoming eligible later this year to attend and learn more about their coverage options."

OSHIIP is the state's official source for free and unbiased Medicare information and counseling. OSHIIP helped more than 160,000 Ohioans with Medicare save a record \$16.4 million in 2013. The figure includes a record \$8.96 million saved during the fall open enrollment period.

The events provide an opportunity for consumers to learn about the benefits provided by Medicare and important deadlines that must be met. In addition, specifics about Medicare Advantage plans, supplemental health insurance, prescription drug coverage, and financial assistance programs to help beneficiaries pay Medicare's Part B premium and prescription drug out-of-pocket expenses will be provided.

Click [here](#) for an events schedule.

Insurance Department Saves Ohioans \$23.5 million in 2013, Releases Top Complaints Received from Consumers

Lieutenant Governor and Department of Insurance Director Mary Taylor announced the Department helped Ohio consumers save or recover \$23.5 million in 2013 while assisting nearly 200,000 Ohioans mainly through its toll-free hotlines, community outreach efforts and counseling sessions. Taylor also announced the Department's top types of consumer complaints based on both the reason for the complaint and by the type of coverage.

The Department's savings and recovery figure includes a record \$16.4 million by the Department's Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information Program (OSHIIP), and \$7.1 million from the Office of Consumer Affairs, which addresses non-Medicare insurance matters. Over the past two years, the Department has saved or recovered \$48 million for Ohioans.

"Each and every day the Department is working with consumers to help resolve their complaints and answer their questions," Taylor said. "As we continue to improve our processes and reach out to consumers more aggressively, we helped Ohioans save or recover \$23.5 million in 2013."





Insurance Department Saves Ohioans \$23.5 million in 2013, Releases Top Complaints Received from Consumers...Cont'd.

The Office of Consumer Affairs received 5,397 consumer complaints in 2013. The majority of the complaints dealt with insurance claim denial, claim delay or unsatisfactory claim settlement offers.

The following lists show the top types of consumer complaints for Ohio and nationally in 2013:

Top Types of Ohio Consumer Complaint Reasons:

1. Denial of Claim/Adverse Benefit Determination – 22.9%
2. Claim Settlement/Payment Delay – 12%
3. Claim Settlement/Unsatisfactory Offer – 9.4%
4. Underwriting/Cancellation or Non-Renewal – 4.2%
5. Policy Service/Premium Notice Billing – 3.2%

Top Types of National Consumer Complaint Reasons:

1. Claim Settlement/Payment Delay – 23.97%
2. Denial of Claim/Adverse Benefit Determination – 15.63%
3. Claim Settlement/Unsatisfactory Offer – 11.32%
4. State Specific (Other) – 4.76%
5. Underwriting/Cancellation or Non-Renewal – 4.51%

Top Types of Ohio Consumer Complaints by Coverage:

1. Accident and Health – 41.4%
2. Personal Auto – 24.3%
3. Homeowners and Renters – 16%
4. Life and Annuity – 12.8%
5. Other Coverage – 5.5%

Top Types of National Consumer Complaint Reasons by Coverage:

1. Personal Auto – 37.62%
2. Accident and Health – 36.07%
3. Homeowners and Renters – 12.57%
4. Life and Annuity – 7.91%
5. Other Coverage – 5.85%

The national information is based on the submission of closed complaint data to the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC). Aggregate data can be accessed at www.naic.org.





Insurance Department Saves Ohioans \$23.5 million in 2013, Releases Top Complaints Received from Consumers... Cont'd.

Insurance Claim Tips:

- **Know Your Policy:** Your policy is a contract between you and your insurance company. Know what's covered, what's excluded and deductible amounts.
- **File Claims as Soon as Possible:** Call your agent or your company's claims hotline right away. Provide Complete, Correct Information: Incorrect or incomplete information can cause a delay in processing your claim.
- **Ask Questions:** If there is a disagreement about the claim settlement, ask the company for the specific language in the policy that is in question. Find out if the disagreement is because you and the insurance company interpret your policy differently. If this disagreement results in a claim denial, make sure you obtain a written letter explaining the reason for the denial and the specific policy language under which the claim is being denied.
- **Do not Rush into a Settlement:** If the first offer made by an insurance company does not meet your expectations, be prepared to negotiate to get a fair settlement. If you have any questions regarding the fairness of your settlement, seek professional advice.
- **Health Claims:** Ask your physician to provide your insurance company with details about your treatment, medical conditions and prognosis. If you suspect a provider is overcharging, ask the insurance company to audit the bill and verify whether the provider used the proper billing procedure.

Ohio consumers who would like to file a complaint or have insurance questions can call the Department's consumer hotline at 1-800-686-1526 or visit www.insurance.ohio.gov. If your inquiry is Medicare related, call OSHIIP at 1-800-686-1578. You can follow the Department on twitter [@OHInsurance](https://twitter.com/OHInsurance) and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/OhioDepartmentofInsurance.

Report Shows Auto Insurance Rates Lowest in Country

Ohio has the least expensive auto insurance rates in the country according to a recent Insure.com report. The 2014 average annual premium for an auto policy for a new vehicle in Ohio is \$926 compared to the national average of \$1,503.

"Competition drives down the cost of any insurance product, whether it is auto, health, homeowners or life insurance," Lieutenant Governor and Insurance Director Mary Taylor said. "This report demonstrates choice, competition and a free market are better for consumers and their bottom line. While I am proud of the fact Ohio has the lowest auto insurance rates in the country, we will work to promote competition to ensure consumers continue to have affordable choices."





Report Shows Auto Insurance Rates Lowest in Country...Cont'd.

The report, available at www.insure.com, said Ohio has consistently placed near the top of the list for least expensive states, but this year is the first time it has come in first place. Approximately 660 car insurance companies do business in Ohio, according to A.M. Best, with only Illinois and Texas having more auto insurance providers.

The report also said that according to data from the National Association of Insurance Commissioners and estimates by the Ohio Insurance Institute, the average amount consumers will pay for auto insurance in Ohio in 2014 is the same as it was 12 years ago. Insure.com commissioned the auto insurance rates from six large carriers in 10 ZIP codes per state. The rates were compiled in January 2014.

Related information: Click [here](#) for more about Ohio's average homeowners insurance premium ranking sixth lowest in the country.

Top ODI Fraud and Enforcement Cases for 2013

Lieutenant Governor and Department of Insurance Director Mary Taylor recently announced the Department's top fraud and enforcement cases for 2013. During the calendar year, the Department processed 6,349 allegations of agent misconduct and insurance fraud, initiated 1,633 investigations, identified more than 519 civil and criminal violations of Ohio insurance law, took administrative action against 169 insurance agents and agencies, assessed \$43,800 in fines and referred 63 individuals for prosecution.

"We continue to aggressively fight insurance fraud on behalf of those directly harmed in these cases," Taylor said. "Insurance fraud is a serious crime that drives up the cost of insurance for all Ohioans and in order to bring offenders to justice we continue to work with our law enforcement partners at the local, state and federal level."

Taylor said Ohioans, prior to buying insurance products from an insurance agent or agency, should contact the Department at 1-800-686-1526 to ensure they are properly licensed. Consumers are also encouraged to call 1-800-686-1527 if they feel they have been deceived or suspect someone has committed insurance fraud. Information about insurance and how to prevent and report insurance fraud and professional misconduct is available at www.insurance.ohio.gov.





Top ODI Fraud and Enforcement Cases for 2013... Cont'd.

The Department's top statewide fraud and enforcement cases for 2013:

FRAUD DIVISION

Coshocton Woman Sentenced for \$2.1 Million Health Care Fraud Scheme

In December, Barbara Elise Miller, former owner of Three Rivers Infusion and Pharmacy Specialists in Coshocton, was sentenced in U.S. District Court in Akron. She was ordered to serve 54 months in prison and three years of probation for submitting fraudulent healthcare billings to private insurance companies and Medicaid. In July, she was sentenced in U.S. District Court in Akron to serve 27 months for obstructing the federal health care fraud investigation.

Coshocton Duo Associated With Health Care Fraud Scheme Sentenced

In October, Doug Bolden and James Ireland, of Coshocton, were sentenced in U.S. District Court in Akron for their earlier involvements in the federal obstruction case regarding Three Rivers Infusion and Pharmacy Specialists' health care billing scheme. Bolden was given two months in prison, six months of home detention and three years of probation. He was ordered to pay a \$131,043.75 fine. Ireland was sentenced to two months in prison, six months of home detention and one year of probation. He was also ordered to pay a fine of \$16,933.63.

Miami County Resident Sentenced for Fraud Involving \$60,000 Insurance Claim

In August, a Miami County Common Pleas Judge ordered Patricia Young, of Piqua, to serve three years of community control. Young filed false information to support an alleged fire loss totaling more than \$60,000. If Young fails to abide by the terms of her sentence, she will serve 17 months in prison.

Two Former Lorain County Title Agents Sentenced for \$290,000 Title Insurance Fraud

In December, Gregory R. Klima, of Avon Lake and the co-owner of Title Access, LLC, was sentenced in the Lorain County Court of Common Pleas and ordered to serve 18 months in prison and three years of probation for his role in diverting \$290,484.00 from an escrow account for personal use. His business partner Timothy R. Grodzik, of Columbia Station, was sentenced in November to 15 months in prison and three years of probation. They were ordered to pay full restitution.

Boardman Chiropractor Sentenced for \$33,000 Attempted Insurance Fraud

In March, chiropractor David Esarco, of Boardman, was sentenced in the Mahoning County Court of Common Pleas and ordered to serve two years of community control, 60 days of house arrest and pay a \$1,000 fine after being convicted of attempted insurance fraud and attempted theft. Full restitution was paid to the insurance carriers who Esarco defrauded. He billed insurance companies more than \$33,000 for services he never rendered to patients. He pled guilty to workers' compensation fraud for a similar billing scheme.





Top ODI Fraud and Enforcement Cases for 2013... Cont'd.

ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

Fake Health Insurance Entity Issued Permanent Cease and Desist Order

In October, the Department issued a final order to United States Contractors Trust making the previous order to cease and desist permanent. The entity sold fictitious health insurance coverage to at least four Ohioans. The entity is not licensed to sell insurance in Ohio and has also been ordered to stop its unauthorized insurance business in South Carolina, North Carolina, Vermont, Florida and Maine.

Reynoldsburg Agent Loses License after \$149,000 Theft and Forgery Conviction

In July, the Department revoked the license of Lee Solomon, of Reynoldsburg. Solomon, who served as President of SOLO-NFO, misappropriated premiums collected from clients, failed to place insurance coverage as directed by their clients, and forged client signatures on annuity surrender forms in a \$149,000 case. In addition to losing his insurance license, Solomon was convicted in criminal court of theft, forgery, identity theft and perjury.

Berea Agent Loses License for \$117,000 Annuity Misrepresentations

In December, the Department revoked the insurance license of Margie T. Karl, of Berea, after it was found she misrepresented the terms and conditions of three annuity products sold causing the consumers to incur more than \$117,000 in surrender fees.

Worthington Agent Submits Bogus Applications to Generate \$3,300 in Commissions

In June, the Department revoked the insurance agent license of Josh Bialka, of Worthington, after an Enforcement investigation confirmed he submitted at least 27 fictitious insurance applications to insurer AFLAC for 13 individuals that do not exist. He had received \$3,350 in advanced commission that the insurer was able to recover.

Cuyahoga Falls Agent's License Revoked for Life Insurance Forgery

In August, the Department revoked the insurance license of Bradley D. Ward, of Cuyahoga Falls, for forging a consumer's signature and submitting an application for a life insurance policy to an insurance company without the consumer's knowledge or permission.

The Ohio Department of Insurance fraud unit investigates allegations of insurance fraud, such as the submission of false or inflated claims, and works with prosecutors to criminally prosecute those who commit fraud. The enforcement unit investigates allegations of unlicensed insurance activity as well as agent / agency misconduct.

You can follow the Department on twitter [@OHInsurance](https://twitter.com/OHInsurance) and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/OhioDepartmentofInsurance.





Newlyweds and Important Insurance Decisions

According to a recent survey by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC), in which the Ohio Department of Insurance is a member, for couples embarking on the journey of marriage and combining their financial lives, the real adventure often begins after the honeymoon is over. In fact, the survey cites notable discrepancies between what couples know they should talk about before tying the knot, and what they actually discuss.

“This survey captures a sentiment we often encounter — consumers want insurance education, but often don’t know where to begin,” Lieutenant Governor and Department of Insurance Director Mary Taylor said. “These new resources provide an advantage for couples interested in addressing these important decisions together.”

Sensitive Insurance Topics Ignored

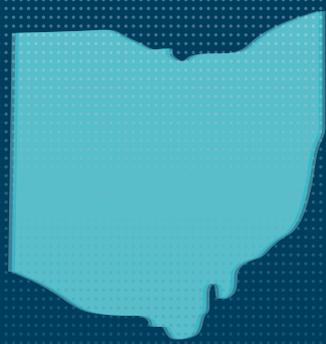
The NAIC survey found that before the wedding, many couples had not fully explored topics that affect insurability. For example, while 71 percent of newly married couples acknowledged the importance of sharing beneficiary designations before marrying, nearly half never got around to addressing their life insurance needs before saying “I do.”

To help couples get smart about insurance together without tearing each other apart, the NAIC created the Insurance Survival Guide for Newlyweds, an easy-to-understand, downloadable resource that offers facts and tips to encourage couples to ask these questions early. And the NAIC’s new “I Do Adventures” interactive game uses lighthearted fun to drive home valuable insurance lessons. They are available at www.InsureUOnline.org.

The survey highlighted several trends common to young couples:

- Though 61 percent of couples ages 18-24 talked about combining auto policies before marrying, only 30 percent cited their spouse’s driving record — a key factor in calculating premiums — as an important topic to discuss before marriage. In fact, across all age groups, more couples viewed “where we will spend the holidays” as more important to discuss before marriage than their partner’s driving record.
- 84 percent of respondents ages 18-24 said it was important or extremely important to share details about pre-existing health conditions before marriage. But before the big day, only 73 percent had addressed the topic of whose health insurance to keep.
- 62 percent of engaged or newly married couples ages 25-34 rated designating a beneficiary as important or extremely important to discuss pre-wedding, but only 42 percent even broached the subject of whether or not they will have enough life insurance before tying the knot.





Newlyweds and Important Insurance Decisions...Cont'd.

The data suggests older newlyweds are just as likely to put off important conversations:

- 85 percent of engaged or newly married couples ages 55+ said a pre-marital discussion about insurance beneficiaries was important, yet only 40 percent exchanged thoughts on life insurance coverage amounts before exchanging vows. In fact, 33 percent of recently married couples ages 55+ had yet to discuss life insurance as long as one year after the wedding.
- Before tying the knot, recently married couples ages 55+ were more likely to have discussed their entertainment budget than their life insurance coverage (50 percent vs. 40 percent, respectively).

Having “The Talk”

To avoid misunderstandings, couples should have a pre-wedding sit-down to directly address auto, home, health and life insurance. Key questions to consider:

- *How's your driving history?* Finding out your spouse has a lead foot after saying “I do” can be a shock to your psyche and your auto insurance premiums. If your partner has a less-than-ideal driving record, consider a named-driver exclusion clause, or you may want to think twice about combining coverage.
- *Can we afford to renovate our home?* As couples merge households, consider what that starter home offers now and will offer in the future. A renovation investment of \$5,000 or more can change a home's replacement value and insurance needs.
- *Which health plan should we keep?* The lowest premium isn't the only consideration when deciding among health insurance options. To avoid a short-term decision that results in long-term increases in out-of-pocket expenses, review provisions related to cost sharing (deductibles, co-pays and coinsurance) and consider what is not covered by the plan.
- *How much life insurance is enough?* Now that “I” actually means “we,” couples should revisit life insurance coverage. To arrive at a new amount, consider future income potential, the cost of raising children and any outstanding mortgage payments.

Ohioans with insurance questions can call the Department's consumer hotline at 1-800-686-1526 and visit www.insurance.ohio.gov for insurance information. You can follow the Department on twitter [@OHInsurance](https://twitter.com/OHInsurance) and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/OhioDepartmentofInsurance.





Ohioans Urged to Prepare for Volatile Spring Weather

Now is the time for Ohioans to ensure they are adequately protected during the volatile spring weather season, which is capable of producing flooding, thunderstorms, damaging winds and tornadoes.

“Spring in Ohio can bring dangerous and damaging weather which is why it is imperative Ohioans take steps now to protect themselves,” Lieutenant Governor and Department of Insurance Director Mary Taylor said. “Ohio has endured a number of severe weather events in recent years demonstrating you can never be too prepared to protect your possessions and have the insurance coverage that best meets your needs.”

Taylor said Ohioans should meet with their insurance agent to make sure they have adequate insurance for their properties, vehicles and other possessions, and to assess the need for flood insurance. Flood insurance is not included in a typical homeowner’s and renter’s policy. It’s instead made available by a federal program. There is a 30-day waiting period before coverage becomes effective. You should also inquire with your agent if coverage for damage caused by a sewer or drain back-up is available and appropriate to add to your policy.

Advance Insurance Planning Tips:

- Be sure you have adequate insurance coverage and deductibles that are reasonable for your needs.
- Damage caused by rain, hail, lightning

and tornadoes are generally covered by a standard homeowner’s insurance policy and an auto insurance policy’s “comprehensive” or “other than collision” coverage.

- Call your agent or the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) at 1-888-379-9531 and visit www.floodsmart.gov to learn more about flood insurance.
- Download the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) home inventory app from the Apple App Store or GooglePlay. A paper version is available at www.insurance.ohio.gov. Include as many details as you need and take photos of your possessions.

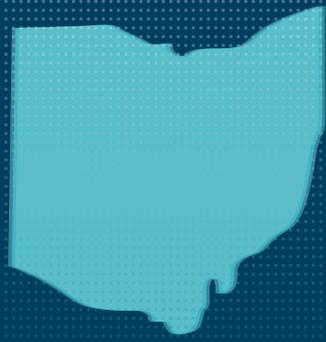
Post Storm Recovery and Insurance Tips:

- Call your insurance agent or company as soon as you can. Be sure your agent knows how to contact you, especially if you have to move out of your home.
- Take reasonable steps to prevent additional damage if permitted by public safety authorities and if you will not endanger yourself.
- Closely inspect your property and cars for damage. Note and photograph any damage.
- If required to seek temporary housing, check your homeowner’s insurance policy for “loss of use” coverage.
- Be sure everything is considered in your claim. Back up claims with written estimates.

How to Avoid Contractor Fraud:

- Obtain a list of reputable contractors from your insurance company, the Better Business Bureau or a specialized consumer organization.





Ohioans Urged to Prepare for Volatile Spring Weather...Cont'd.

- Contact multiple contractors and obtain more than one estimate.
- Do not allow a contractor to inspect your property when you are not home.
- If you give a contractor permission to inspect your property, personally watch them conduct the inspection.
- Obtain the terms and conditions of the project in writing.
- Avoid signing a contract until the document is reviewed fully and/or discuss the terms of the contract with a legal representative or a trusted adviser.
- Pay the contractor by check or credit card, rather than in cash, and do not pay in full until all work has been finished.

Ohioans can visit the Department's Severe Weather Awareness Toolkit, consumer publications, tip sheets and more at www.insurance.ohio.gov and call 1-800-686-1526 with insurance questions. Those who have been victimized by contractor fraud should contact the Department's fraud hotline at 1-800-686-1527. You can follow the Ohio Department of Insurance on Facebook and on twitter [@OHInsurance](https://twitter.com/OHInsurance).

Visit www.weathersafety.ohio.gov for important weather safety information produced by the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness.

How to Avoid Insurance Scams

How does one best avoid being a victim of an insurance scam? One very important step is taking the time to become knowledgeable about insurance and learning how to detect fraudulent sales pitches and behavior.

"The best defense against scams is to become informed," Lieutenant Governor and Department of Insurance Director Mary Taylor said. "We have a number of consumer resources available that I urge Ohioans to take advantage of and review before making an insurance purchase."

One of the largest consumer protection agencies in Ohio, the Department has saved or recovered \$48 million for consumers over the last two years. The Department also monitors the financial solvency of insurance companies to ensure consumer claims are paid, reviews the rates for insurance products, and handles consumers complaints made against insurance companies and agents. In addition, the agency investigates allegations of professional misconduct and consumer insurance fraud.

Included in the Department's collection of insurance consumer guides located at www.insurance.ohio.gov is the ***Be Proactive: Protect Yourself From Fraud*** publication. It provides information and tips to help people avoid financial exploitation, annuity sales fraud, living trusts fraud, life insurance scams, investments fraud, reverse mortgage scams, Medicare sales fraud, healthcare fraud, online security threats and telemarketing fraud.

Taylor has five important insurance tips to help Ohioans protect themselves:





How to Avoid Insurance Scams... Cont'd.

Become Informed: Understanding insurance can make you a more confident consumer and help you recognize if someone doesn't have your best interest in mind.

- Utilize the Department's free auto, homeowners, health, life, long-term care insurance, Medicare and Be Proactive: Protect Yourself From Fraud consumer guides, toolkits, and tip sheets at www.insurance.ohio.gov.
- Follow the Department on Facebook and its Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information Program (OSHIIIP) to stay connected on the latest insurance information.

Utilize Trusted Resources: Build a network of trusted advisors that you can lean on if you have important insurance questions and decisions to make.

- Call the Department's consumer hotline at 1-800-686-1526 for free and unbiased help. Also visit the agency's website to determine if the person selling you insurance is licensed.
- Tap into your agent's knowledge base and talk with close family members and friends.

File a Complaint: If you disagree with your insurer, maybe over a claim matter, or have been wronged by your agent, contact the Department.

- You can file a complaint at www.insurance.ohio.gov or initiate the process by calling 1-800-686-1526.

Identify Fraud, Report It: Insurance fraud is one of the biggest white collar crimes in the United States costing households approximately \$1,000 annually in increased premiums. Consumer should watch for scams related to the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

- Fake insurance companies and dishonest people often try to sell coverage that is usually difficult to secure and sell policies that are significantly cheaper. If it seems too good to be true, it usually is.
- Never provide your checking account number to have your premiums automatically deducted unless you are dealing with a reputable company.
- Be suspicious if you are being pressured into giving your credit card number or using the automatic withdrawal payment method.
- If you're an insurance consumer and feel you've been scammed, call the Department's fraud hotline at 1-800-686-1527.
- If you're an insurance or health care professional who knows of someone committing professional misconduct, call 1-800-686-1527.
- If you're aware someone has committed insurance fraud, such as falsifying or padding a claim, call 1-800-686-1527.

Shop Around: No two insurance products are priced the same. It pays to comparison shop for the coverage that best fits your lifestyle and budget.

- Find an agent in your community with the Department's agent locator tool at www.insurance.ohio.gov.
- Ensure you have adequate insurance protection, inquire about discounts and don't be rushed into making a purchase.





To request consumer publications
or ask questions about insurance, please call the
Ohio Department of Insurance consumer lines:

Medicare issues800-686-1578

Other types of insurance800-686-1526

Fax(614) 644-3744

TDD/TTY phone users, please call Ohio Relay Service 711

For many Department services and
publication updates, please visit our website

www.insurance.ohio.gov

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