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Your Insurance and Children in College

By: Anita Munno, CISR, ACSR

A major milestone in life is when your child leaves home to go to college. Of course emotions, both joyful and bittersweet, surround this big event and insurance concerns are probably not in the forefront of your thoughts. But, as with most life changes, there are coverage issues that should be reviewed to make sure there are no surprises later. Some questions to ask: Is your child's "stuff"—clothes, computers, TVs, books, etc. still covered under your policy? Will they have liability coverage if they cause injury or damage to another person? Are they taking a car with them and if not, does your auto insurer give you a credit? What if they borrow someone else's car? What if they rent their own apartment instead of living in the dorm?

The good news is that, in general, many homeowners and auto policies define an *insured* to include "a student enrolled in school full-time, as defined by the school, who was a resident of your household before moving out to attend school, provided the student is under the age of 24 and your relative." In addition, many companies offer an endorsement to extend to the 'age 24' issue, in case a child takes a little longer to graduate. As far as liability is concerned, if the child is still an *insured* by the definition above, then they are protected for personal liability just as if they were still living in your home.

Most homeowners policies extend coverage for "personal property usually located at an 'insured's' residence, other than the 'residence premises,' is 10% of the limit of liability for Coverage C (contents /personal property) or \$1,000, whichever is greater." So, your child's items should be covered under your homeowners policy. However, if your child rents an apartment instead of living in the

dorm, then it's probably best if they purchase a Tenant's Homeowners policy (HO4).

Auto insurance extends to students away at school as long as parents still own the car. If a child owns a car and parents are *not* included on the title or registration, then the child needs their own auto policy, regardless of where they live or go to school. If your child goes away to school over 100 miles, most companies will credit your auto policy—but you must let us know so we can update your policy. As far as borrowing someone's car is concerned, the rule to remember is that when you borrow a car, you also borrow the insurance on that car. But, that car's insurance company will probably go after whoever was responsible for any claim or accident. So, if your child is responsible for an accident while borrowing a car, your own auto insurance may have to respond.

We've only touched on a few scenarios, so give us a call to review your own policies and your specific questions—we are here to help.

We are here for you during the pandemic

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Until it is safe for our entire staff to work together and to comply with local mandates, we are rotating team members weekly. There will always be staff in the agency who can assist you. However, when your account manager works remotely and you need to be in contact, it is most efficient to reach them via email. You can always call in and leave a voice mail message as an alternative method of contact.

Currently, our office is closed for visitors, but we look forward to when we can see you again in person.

Thank you for your patience as we navigate COVID-19 together. We appreciate your business!