



**Dora**  
Department of Regulatory Agencies

**Division of Insurance**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**AUTO, HEALTH & RENTERS' INSURANCE SHOULD BE PART OF  
BACK-TO-SCHOOL PACKAGE FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS**

**Denver** – Laptop? Check! Books? Check! Clothes? Check! Insurance?

“As hundreds of thousands of college students prepare to head to Colorado colleges and universities for the 2011-12 school year, insurance to protect their health and belongings should be a part of the back-to-school checklist,” says Commissioner of Insurance Jim Riesberg.

For personal belongings, college students who live in on- or off-campus housing can be covered in one of two ways: by having their own policies, or through an extension of their parents’ homeowner or renter insurance policies.

Parents should contact their insurance agent or company to determine whether their homeowner’s insurance will cover a student away at school. Most policies extend 10% of contents coverage anywhere in the world and away from the residence premises, including dorms. However, if the college student is independent and living in an apartment a separate renters’ policy would be appropriate.

Students living away from home can experience loss of belongings through fires and thefts.

The federal Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) reports that in 2009, 14 fires and 10 cases of arson occurred in on-campus student residential facilities at public colleges and universities in Colorado. In addition:

- May 2008: a fire damages 31 units at a Boulder apartment complex; many of the residents are students at the nearby University of Colorado. Asbestos found during the fire results in the residents being displaced for months.
- July 2008: 50 tenants at the Hill House apartment in Boulder, many of them college students at nearby CU, are displaced; asbestos also was found in that building.

Renters’ insurance may cover the extra costs of living elsewhere when the loss of the residence is due to a covered incident, like a fire.

A renter’s insurance policy can cover the loss of belongings due to theft or other non-fire-related incidents. The OPE reported 63 burglaries at Colorado college and university campuses with residential facilities in 2009.

And renter's insurance is fairly inexpensive: the monthly premium is about the same as a couple of lattes at the nearest coffee shop.

Auto liability insurance is mandatory under Colorado law, and that law doesn't end at the college entrance. Minimum insurance coverage varies from state to state. If your student takes a car to school, check with your agent or company to make sure your policy is rated correctly and coverage is adequate. If your student goes away to school and does not take a car check to see if your company offers an "away at school" credit on your automobile premiums.

College students and parents also should be sure a health insurance policy is in effect when the student heads off to campus.

Federal health care reform that went into effect on Sept. 23, 2010 allows adults up to age 26 to be covered under the parents' health insurance policies. The law states that the covered young adult does not have to be a dependent on the parents' tax returns or even live with the parents.

If the student's current coverage is being provided through a health maintenance organization (HMO) or an exclusive provider organization (EPO) plan, the student may only be covered for emergencies if he/she is attending a college outside of the plan's service area.

Students who do not have health insurance through a parent's health insurance policy, or who have limited coverage, may want to consider buying a student health insurance plan. Student plans are sold by an insurer that has contracted with a college to offer coverage to its students. In general, these plans may have more limited benefits and more exclusions than traditional health insurance plans, and may require the student use a campus-based student health service rather than a provider in the community. Some colleges may require students purchase the student health insurance plan if they don't have other comparable health insurance coverage.

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*DORA is dedicated to preserving the integrity of the marketplace and is committed to promoting a fair and competitive business environment in Colorado. Consumer protection is our mission.*