

INSURANCE MATTERS

A Newsletter for Delawareans

February 2026



What you need to consider when combining your insurance coverages.

If you or your significant other picked Valentine's Day to pop the question, there's plenty of work ahead to plan your life together. Among the wedding plans and post-wedding plans, don't forget to talk about the insurance implications of combining your households. From your car insurance to your health insurance, getting married can affect all of your coverages. To help understand these changes, the Delaware Department of Insurance ("DOI") offers these tips to help soon-to-be-wed couples.

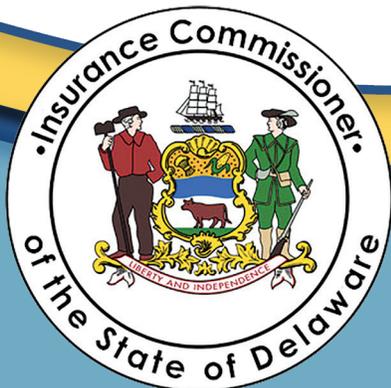
For some couples, one of the first decisions to make is where to live – whether to stay in one of your current residences or find a new home together. Either way, you're going to have to decide if you'll stay with one of your current insurance companies, or find a new one. There are several things to consider:

- Compare the premiums. Remember, location, size and construction type are considered when calculating your insurance premium. Essentially, if one home is larger or in a different area, the insurance may be significantly different.
- Premium rates on a home that's been insured for a long period may have more discounts (e.g. claim-free or multi-line). Check your current policies for these types of discounts.
- Whether or not you're moving, get quotes from both of your insurance companies and from other insurance companies, but make sure the quotes are for the same coverages so you're making a fair comparison.
- If you or your partner has valuable artwork, collectibles, or jewelry – you may need a personal property rider on your policy to provide adequate protection against theft, accident or natural disaster.

To find out more about combining insurance coverages continue to page 2

In This Issue

- *What you Need to Consider when Combining your insurance Coverages*
- *What to Know About an Insurance Endorsement or Rider*
- *Ask the Commissioner*



Trinidad Navarro
Insurance Commissioner
Delaware Department of Insurance
1351 West North Street, Suite 101
Dover, DE 19904

WHAT YOU NEED TO CONSIDER WHEN Combining Your Insurance Coverages



Canceling a Policy

If you decide to cancel one or both of your current homeowners or renter's policies, cancel your coverage effective the first day you're no longer physically living in the home. That way if you're moving out in stages, your insurance continues for any possessions you leave there. If you're selling a home with a mortgage, your lien holder may require you to maintain insurance coverage until the home is sold. Check with your mortgage company for its requirements.

Most insurance companies will require you to submit a cancellation request in writing. Check your policy or talk with your agent to see how much notice you are required to give the company and where to send the request.

Leaving a home vacant while you're moving can change your insurance risk. Vacant homes can be targets for vandalism or break-ins and there's a higher risk for unforeseen damage (e.g. burst water pipes, fire). Insurers can impose coverage limitations once a home is vacant for a certain number of days. Check with your agent if you will be leaving a house vacant for an extended time, because you might be able to purchase a supplemental endorsement that provides coverage while the home is vacant.

Auto Insurance

With auto insurance, married couples have the option of combining their insurance policies. However, if you decide to combine your coverage, be aware that all licensed drivers in your household are then generally used to rate all of the vehicles covered. Newlyweds may find they are eligible for new discounts. Some insurance companies consider married couples a lower risk and may lower your rates. In addition, if you combine your auto policies or add auto coverage with the same company as your homeowners or renter's policies, you may be eligible for additional volume or multi-line discounts.

In Delaware, insurance companies can use credit information to determine auto insurance rates, but with significant restrictions under Delaware law (18 Del. C. Ch. 83). Insurers cannot use credit scores to solely determine rates or renewals, and they must not use prohibited factors like income, gender, or race. However, not all auto insurers use credit scoring in their underwriting. Talk to your agent to find out if your carrier does or does not consider credit scoring. You may wish to shop around.

Health Insurance

When deciding what to do about your health insurance, start by evaluating your current and future health care needs. Review the provisions of the policies you are choosing between with those needs in mind. Remember to check for any policy exclusions or other limitations on pre-existing medical conditions.

If you have group health insurance, you are allowed to add your spouse to the plan outside annual open enrollment because marriage is considered a qualifying major life event. Contact your benefits administrator to find out what you need to do. However, be aware – some insurance companies require formal notification of marriage within a certain number of days.

Life Insurance

A life change – like marriage – can be a good time to consider life insurance. It's never easy to talk about these things during such a happy time, but life insurance helps secure your family's financial future. It also helps ensure that your estate will be allocated to the beneficiaries you have chosen.

If you already have life insurance, you'll probably need to update your beneficiary information to include your spouse. Contact your insurance agent or company for the necessary forms. If you have questions about choosing a beneficiary, consult with an estate attorney. Or, if this isn't your first marriage, you may need to consult an attorney to see if there are any legal restrictions to changing your beneficiary information.

Blended Families and Health Insurance

If your newly combined household includes children and you need to provide insurance coverage for them, review your options. If you have group health insurance through your employer, you can add new dependents to the policy outside of the annual open enrollment period. Contact your employer's benefit administrator for the specific requirements and enrollment forms.

If you have an individual health insurance plan, proof of insurability may be required to add the child(ren) to your policy. Make sure to review any limitations of coverage for pre-existing conditions before enrolling your child(ren). You will need Social Security numbers to add dependents to your individual or group health insurance coverage. And be aware that the insurance company may require you to provide documentation proving the relationship between you and the child before providing coverage.

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT AN INSURANCE ENDORSEMENT OR RIDER



What is an Insurance Endorsement or Rider?

You've just purchased a beautiful, expensive piece of jewelry that you want to protect if lost, damaged or stolen; so you ask your insurance agent to add a provision to your home insurance policy. As a small business owner, you add a provision to your insurance policy that would exclude or eliminate coverage for a particular type of risk to your company.

Both of these examples require making a change to your current, existing insurance policy; you can do that with an endorsement. An endorsement, also known as a rider, adds, deletes, excludes or changes insurance coverage. An endorsement/rider can also be used to increase standard limits of coverage and take precedence over the original agreement or policy.

How an insurance endorsement/rider works. An insurance endorsement/rider is an amendment to an existing insurance contract that changes the terms of the original policy. An endorsement/rider can be issued at the time of purchase, mid-term or at renewal time. Insurance premiums may be affected and adjusted as a result.

You can have an endorsement/rider on your homeowners and renters policy, life insurance and auto insurance policies. It can include adding or deleting people and locations to your current insurance policy. Endorsements/riders are important because they address issues or items not in the original contract or policy.

- **Additional Coverage** - An endorsement that adds or includes coverage that would otherwise be excluded.
- **Exclusions** - Some endorsements exclude coverage for certain types of claims.
- **Modification of Coverage** - An endorsement can expand the scope of existing coverage.

THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER

- An endorsement/rider alters the policy and becomes part of your legal insurance agreement, and it remains in force until the contract expires. The exception would be if the endorsement/rider has a specific or limited term to which the endorsement is valid. It may renew under the same terms and conditions of the rest of your policy.
- Always keep a copy of the new document after making the policy change that shows or specifies the new endorsement.
- When an endorsement reduces or increases coverage, that can have an impact on your premium.

THE DOI CORNER

We would like to congratulate and welcome the following employees to our DOI Team!

DOI Welcomes

Tori Lantz

Insurance Financial Analyst II

Jennifer Clapper

Life and Health Insurance Forms and Information Analyst

Kennadie Cook

C/S Management Analyst III

DOI Welcomes

Amanda Vawter

Market Conduct Examiner

DOI Promotions

Jennifer Murray

Market Conduct Examiner

ASK THE COMMISSIONER

If My Car Breaks Down, Will Insurance Cover My Rental Car?

The answer depends on why your car is in the shop and what coverage you selected when you purchased your policy.

In most cases, standard auto insurance does not cover a rental car if your vehicle simply breaks down due to mechanical failure or normal wear and tear. Insurance is designed to cover sudden and accidental losses, not routine maintenance issues or mechanical problems.

However, if your vehicle is being repaired because of a covered claim, such as an accident or damage from a storm, theft, or vandalism, and you purchased optional rental reimbursement coverage, your insurance policy may help pay for a rental car. Rental reimbursement is an add-on coverage that pays up to a daily and total dollar limit while your vehicle is being repaired due to a covered loss.

Delaware law does not require rental reimbursement coverage, which means it is important to review your policy carefully and speak with your agent about what protections you have in place. For a relatively low cost, rental reimbursement can provide valuable peace of mind.



Trinidad Navarro
Delaware Insurance Commissioner

Main Office
1351 W North St
Suite 101
Dover, DE 19904

Georgetown Office
28 The Circle, Suite 1
Georgetown, DE 19947

Wilmington Office
Rockwood Office Park
503 Carr Rd.,
Suite 303
Wilmington, DE 19809

The consumer comes first.

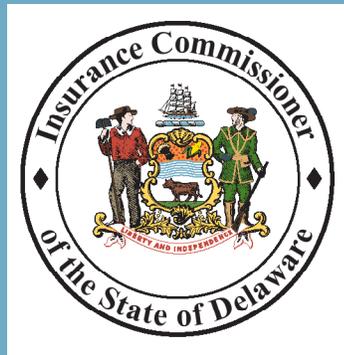
Our office is here to help if you have questions about or problems with your insurance coverage or insurance company.

Questions about insurance or complaints about an insurance company or insurance agent can be made to the Consumer Services Division by phone, by fax, by letter, by email or with an online complaint form.

Phone: 302-674-7300

Fax: 302-739-6278

consumer@delaware.gov



Our Mission

Protecting Delawareans through regulation and education while providing oversight of the insurance industry to best serve the public.